OF ALL THAT HAS BEEN WRITTEN about the racial riots in America in July, perhaps the best and most searching analyses were those published in Britain's The Sunday Times and The Times, and in a document issued by the National Committee of the Communist Party, U.S.A.

The C.P. document, in fact, was published in June, a month before the rioting, the worst in American history, predicting that it would happen ("What may well be the longest, hottest and bloodiest summer has already begun") and setting out, lucidly and forcefully, the reasons it would happen.

The articles in The Sunday Times and The Times appeared in late July, at the time of the rioting.

The C.P. document, An Open Letter to President Johnson, over the signatures of Henry Winston, National Chairman, and Gus Hall, General Secretary charged that responsibility for "this imminent danger to the Negro people and our country rests above all with you (Johnson)" and that:

—Conspiracy is afoot in our land to provoke and slaughter militant Negroes desperately struggling to end decades of black oppression and to claim their century-denied constitutional rights.

—With your (Johnson's) knowledge and silent consent the crumbs of the carrot offered to a relative handful of Negroes in 1965-66 are now being snatched away.

—This assault is being directed against the Negro people because their courageous militant fight for an end to ghetto slums, segregated schools and permanent black depression and for jobs is stimulating national resistance to the unjust war in Vietnam and exposing the decay of our 'free enterprise' system with its immoral anti-human priorities.

—The purpose of this attack is to single out and crush the most militant force today struggling to reverse these priorities and to compel our government to use our great resources to make our cities livable for Americans instead of making Hanoi, Haiphong, Saigon unlivable for the Vietnamese.

—The present crisis has its roots in the war in Vietnam and particularly in your (Johnson's) 1967-68 budget which provided more than $2 billion a month for that war and little more than a billion a year for the war on poverty.
The document then listed several instances of police and fascist violence against Negroes and charged that, encouraged by these assaults, racist vigilante bands were being formed by the John Birch Society, White Citizens’ Council, Ku Klux Klan, followers of George Wallace and George Lincoln Rockwell (since, alas, departed) and the Minutemen.

It demanded an immediate emergency program to include:

1. An immediate $5 billion appropriation for a summer job and reconstruction program for Negro ghettos.

2. Immediate Federal intervention in Cleveland to reconstruct the Hough area (which became one of the centres of Negro revolt a month later) and to protect the Negro people of that city from threatened police and vigilante violence.

3. Federal prosecution of those responsible for police and National Guard assaults on Negro colleges and release of all Negro students jailed.

The document was republished in full in *New Times* (Moscow) Issue 32, August, 1967.

*The Sunday Times*, London, in a well-documented, dispassionate analyses of the race riots, pointed out that, while people in Britain were not used to thinking of America in terms of poverty, "there are some blunt facts (which) give some idea of the scope and subtlety of the corruption which has taken over the American cities." It listed them as:

—One in three of the Negroes in most northern cities are unemployed or as good as unemployed.

—Thirteen years after the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed it, there is more segregation in the schools than ever before.

—In a period of unparalleled boom, after six years of steady economic expansion, median incomes in the urban ghettos (where most Negroes live) have decreased during the 1960s.

The survey continues:

This is also after several years of unparalleled promises to the Negroes, hardly one of which has come true.

A tragic, automatic mechanism has been exposed in American society, through which nearly every attempt to help the poor—and the poor are, basically, the Negroes—has been transmuted into a device for making the rich richer and the poor poorer . . .

Against this background . . . the apostle of Black Power calls for guerrilla war against the whites. It is an immoderate and violent demand. But the current predicament of the Negro is immoderate. The violence is part of a context in which 36 murders in the South, of Civil Rights workers, have produced only three convictions, and no sentence of more than ten years.
The Sunday Times quotes the following by Walter Lippmann, ‘America’s most respected commentator’:

The race problem as we know it is really the by-product of our planless, disordered, bedraggled, drifting democracy.

Until we have learned to house everybody, employ everybody at decent wages in a self-respecting status, guarantee his civil liberties, and bring education and play to him, the bulk of our talk about ‘the race problem’ will remain a sinister mythology.

In a dirty civilisation the relation between black men and white will be a dirty one. In a clean civilisation the two races can conduct their business together cleanly, and not until then.

The Sunday Times comments, acidly: “The sluggishness of America’s response is indicated by its date. Lippmann was writing in 1919.”

The survey quotes the results of the U.S. Supreme Court judgment of 1954 against segregation in schools as “going far to explain the growing Negro disdain of Government or Supreme Court promises of action.”

The results: In 1963 1.8 per cent. of Negro pupils in the South went to integrated schools: by 1965, 5.8 per cent.; today, only 13 per cent.—almost 14 years since the highest court in the land ruled it as every child’s right.

On the economic plight of Negroes, The Sunday Times quotes a recent U.S. Department of Labor report which revealed real unemployment among Negroes in northern cities as high as 33.1 per cent. and in the South as high as 47.4 per cent. The report “exposed for the first time just how inadequate were the incomes of Negro city-dwellers . . . worsened by the fact that food prices in the ghetto may actually be higher than in better class suburbs . . . and made worse again by the prevalence of hire purchase interest rates . . . up to 289 per cent, and higher for cars and 285 per cent, on television sets.”

The Sunday Times adds: “Such economic deprivation would surely be enough to spark riots on its own. But for good measure, the Negroes have been given sharp—and increasingly frequent—doses of political frustration over the last decade since the Civil Rights Bill passed Congress.”

It points out, as a result of such frustration, the high hopes raised when President Johnson swept into office with a strong civil-rights program . . . but, in his January, 1967 Message to Congress, Mr. Johnson devoted just 45 words to civil rights; but lingered sternly on ways to fight “crime in the streets”—the accepted Goldwaterism for rebellious Negroes.
The most shocking part of the survey comes towards the end: 1966 marked the real beginning of the end of hope among the Negro leaders. By summer 1967 the posters of the Black Panther party ("Move on over—or we'll move on over you") were proliferating on the ghetto walls.

Intractable, perhaps, but so was Congress. Last year 14,000 children were killed or maimed by rats in the U.S.: on July 20, Congress killed a rat-control bill with laughter about 'rat patron-age' and proposals for a 'bug corps'.

Ultimately, what is terrifying about the figure of 14,000 children killed or maimed by rats, is that America is a society sophisticated enough to produce that kind of statistic but now apparently too irresponsible to do anything about it.

The Times, London, turned over half a page in its magazine section to Negro Dr. Nathan Hare, 33, professor of sociology at Howard University, "who recently resigned as head of Howard's chapter of the American Association of University Professors to spend more time organising Black Power groups in Negro colleges".

Dr. Hare is a very angry man and these quotes from his article will explain why:

—The (Negroes') lack of faith in the ways of gaining freedom . . . is a product of the moral decadence of American society—a decadence born in part of the conflict between what white Americans preach and what they practise, particularly in matters of race and color.

—Most black residents of urban communities . . . find . . . instead of the freedom they sought, more disillusionment and despair. Theirs is the dual alienation of what many white youth feel about U.S. activities in Vietnam, coupled with the scars of four centuries of abuse and cunning treachery to which black people are subjected in America.

—The most recent census, in 1960, showed virtually no gains, collectively, for black people in income, occupational advancement, or residential or educational desegregation. Negro family income is barely more than half that of whites, just as it was over half a century ago.

—While Negroes moved up very slightly in the 1940s (when they were needed in war industry) they failed . . . to gain ground in the 1950s. Today, a dozen years after the Supreme Court decreed desegregation, most schools (like most churches) are still virtually all-black or all-white.

—There is today slightly more residential segregation of the races than there was in 1940. Five out of every six U.S. cities with more than 5,000 white households show indexes of segregation above 80 (complete segregation would produce an index of 100, absolute desegregation an index of 0). Two-fifths of all black people are imprisoned in the ghettos of the 12 largest cities with indices over 90.

—Efforts to snare black allegiance to the Vietnam war, fighting and dying in a foreign land for a freedom they do not have in their own country strike them as no less than appalling.
Dr. Hare concludes:
There is this new awakening of the black man in America . . . Can the problem be solved this side of an out and out racial war? . . . Right now nobody, least of all the White Establishment, appears genuinely to think so, although nobody but a sadist or a maniac courts violence unnecessarily. But the United States is testimony to the fact, black people increasingly believe, that maniacal beliefs and acts can become collective and socially approved.
On the other hand, many people believe that, given the high degree of social organisation and technological control, a revolution in the United States is close to impossible. Even if a revolution is not possible, a civil war is, and “you can’t fight in Vietnam and at home too” is the way one black rebel put it recently.
It may not be possible to overthrow a racist white America, but clearly America can be destroyed. The choice may no longer be left to her.

MARX ON NATIONAL FREEDOM

Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded.


No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations.


A people which enslaves other people forges its own chains.

* Resolution of International Workingmen’s Association, 1869.

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THE MIDDLE EAST is the capitalist world’s richest oil region, with prospected deposits of 32,000 million tons compared with 5,000 million in the United States.

American capital controls more than 50% of the oil output, British capital 34%, French about 6% and Japanese about 4%. The selling price ranges from $US11 to $15 a ton, while production cost is between $1 and $2.