

The black alternative of America

Il programma comunista no. 6, 25. Maggio 1965 Translated by Balance y Avante 2024

The assassination of black leader Malcolm X and the more recent events in Alabama have abruptly brought the drama of the racial problem in America back into the limelight. The easy prediction that the Civil Rights Act passed last June could not be the solution to the serious problem of relations between the black minority and the white majority is once again confirmed by the first bloody event and the other episode of violence that followed it: the burning down of the Muslim mosque in Harlem, of which Malcolm X was the religious leader, before he split with Elijah Muhammad's black Muslims and opposed their policy as head of the "Organisation for Afro-American Unity". The facts show precisely that the conquered (not a gracious gift of Kennedy) law of "civil rights" was to be for the blacks of America nothing more than a new starting point for other violent struggles, if only for its practical application.

Let the God-fearers and the preachers of non-violence howl, only anxious to throw water on the fire in order to avoid major headaches for the American state machine and make it easier for it to control every black resistance movement. No one should be under any illusions; least of all those concerned: the Gandhist principles of non-violence in which the majority of the leaders of the black organisations show so much faith sound increasingly anachronistic. To persist in ignoring reality, or to represent it according to naive and pious desires, is only to want to make people spill more blood and delay the achievement of any future goal.

This is because pacifist principles disarm the oppressed and resign them to their state of inferiority and subjugation, whereas they need that virility and courage that only struggle and the spirit of struggle inspire, and which are nourished by the holy hatred of the exploited. But, to hate the white man in general and in an indiscriminate and qualitative manner, though understandable, is to hate blindly. What is needed instead is conscious hatred: class hatred against capitalists of any country and any colour.

Let the exploited blacks of America not forget that at the root of their problem is the classist foundation of bourgeois society, there is the whole history of Yankee capitalism, and that from this originated the other manifestations of violence to which the American social fabric has often given a gangster's stamp of a crime story and the fanatical tone of religious and xenophobic struggles.

It was mainly the needs of class defence, in both the black and white camps, that drove the search for the best tactics to use and the best way to organise. This gave rise to divisions and even internal struggles in each camp.

Shortly before the passage of the Civil Rights Act, one saw the ruling bourgeoisie itself split between integrationists and racists. The first of these fractions, Kennedy's progressive fraction, raised the banner of the 'new frontier' and succeeded in getting the Civil Rights Act passed. But make no mistake: humanitarianism had nothing to do with Kennedy's vaunted reformist progressivism, since this law, for the less reactionary political leaders, did no more than take note of a conquest already wrested by the blacks through struggle and was only aimed at class-preservation purposes. Well, in spite of this, Kennedy was to be killed by the hand of whites in the service of powerful racist interests.

The assassination of Malcolm X was in turn the product of division and infighting among exploited black people, complicated by extraneous religious motives. But - as the vanity of racial pacifism shows right now - the chain of violence will not end there, and unfortunately those who will pay the most will be the black people, whose internal rifts are not only the result of contention between groups aspiring to take the leadership of the movement in order to impart it a course that is either pacifist or violent, but are also artfully fostered by the ruling class.

The effective civil and political equality of the races in America, unless it is to be reduced to a simple "freedom to vote" for all citizens, will never be fully achieved as long as the "big society" remains bourgeois. A multi-racial society, considered perfect only because it offers equality before the ballot, may it be the ideal of the staunch democrat; it will never, even if it were realised, be the ideal of the revolutionary proletariat. At most, it would be worthwhile to open the eyes of the great masses of black proletarians to the necessity of demolishing all their fictions, of destroying their class reality. Then the realisation of "civil rights" would only appear as a stage in the process of social liberation that the proletariat not only of America but of the entire world awaits from the violent action and revolutionary leadership of its one world party, the Communist Party.