It is curious but not inexplicable: 1968 was perhaps the worst year in American history, yet it is a year for which many people are nostalgic.

George F. Will, syndicated columnist
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A CALENDAR FROM THE

BELLY OF THE BEAST

Twenty years ago this week, Black people rose up in more than 100 cities across the U.S. And from revolutionary China a message was sent by Mao Tsetung. It was a political storm the likes of which had not been seen in the heartland of this cocky empire, the United States.

So it seems right on the anniversary of this big historic storm to celebrate with a brief calendar of some of the high points of the year 1968. This calendar takes special aim at the belly of this beast, but all over the world things were turning upside down.

Twenty years have passed since 1968, but it was one of those years which left its mark on the planet. Karl Marx once said about world history that “in developments of such magnitude twenty years are no more than a day, though later on there may come days in which twenty years are embodied.” And 1968 was full of those kinds of days. It was a very bad year for the men who rule the United States and their allies. It was a very bad year for their act-alike social-imperialist rivals in the Soviet Union. And it was a fine year for the oppressed people of the world.
January

Revolutionary Union, forerunner to the RCP, USA, founded in San Francisco Bay Area

1 Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution continues in China — New Year's editorial in Chinese press calls for political rectification of communist party and recruitment of advanced proletariat

5 Boston 5 indicted for draft resistance conspiracy

18 Singer Eartha Kitt denounces Vietnam War at White House luncheon

23 U.S.S. Pueblo captured off Korea

30 Tet offensive launched by Vietnamese against U.S. forces marks turning point in Vietnam War

February

8 Three Black students murdered by state troopers and 27 wounded during protest against segregation at Orangeburg, South Carolina

12 Eldridge Cleaver's Soul on Ice published

17 International student conference against Vietnam War in Berlin

18 Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) merges with the Black Panther Party

29 Kerner Commission report on Civil Disorders in U.S. released
March

9 Westmoreland asks for 209,000 more troops for Vietnam

12 Eugene McCarthy upsets New Hampshire primary on antiwar ticket against President Lyndon B. Johnson

13 Autonomous student union formed in Czechoslovakia

16 U.S. troops commit My Lai massacre in Vietnam

17 30,000 demonstrators protest Vietnam War at U.S. Embassy in London

19 Secretary of Defense McNamara resigns

21 Battle of Karameh, turning point in Palestinian struggle

22 General Westmoreland removed from command in Vietnam

22 French students occupy University of Nanterre, French general strike movement begins

25 Foreign policy "Wise Men" meet in Washington, LBJ fired by ruling class

28 National Guard called into Memphis against Black protesters

29 Spain: Madrid University closed because of student unrest

30 Police attack Yippie demonstration in New York's Grand Central Station

31 LBJ announces he will not run again

Republic of New Afrika organization formed
Some days ago, Martin Luther King, the Afro-American clergyman, was suddenly assassinated by the U.S. imperialists. Martin Luther King was an exponent of non-violence. Nevertheless, the U.S. imperialists did not on that account show any tolerance towards him, but used counter-revolutionary violence and killed him in cold blood. This has taught the broad masses of the black people in the United States a profound lesson. It has touched off a new storm in their struggle against violent repression sweeping well over a hundred cities in the United States, a storm such as has never taken place before in the history of that country. It shows that an extremely powerful revolutionary force is latent in the more than 20 million black Americans.

The storm of Afro-American struggle taking place within the United States is a striking manifestation of the comprehensive political and economic crisis now gripping U.S. imperialism. It is dealing a telling blow to U.S. imperialism, which is beset with difficulties at home and abroad.

The Afro-American struggle is not only a struggle waged by the exploited and oppressed black people for freedom and emancipation, it is also a new clarion call to all the exploited and oppressed people of the United States to fight against the barbarous rule of the monopoly capitalist class. It is a tremendous support and inspiration to the struggle of the people throughout the world against U.S. imperialism and to the struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialism. On behalf of the Chinese people, I hereby express resolute support for the just struggle of the black people in the United States.

Racial discrimination in the United States is a product of the colonialist and imperialist system. The contradiction between the black masses in the United States and the U.S. ruling circles is a class contradiction. Only by overthrowing the reactionary rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class and destroying the colonialist and imperialist system can the black people in the United States win complete emancipation. The black masses and the masses of white working people in the United States share common interests and have common objectives to struggle for. Therefore, the Afro-American struggle is winning sympathy and support from increasing numbers of white working people and progressives in the United States. The struggle of the black people in the United States is bound to merge with the American workers' movement, and this will eventually end the criminal rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class.

In 1963, in my "Statement Supporting the Afro-Americans in Their Just Struggle Against Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism" I said that "the evil system of colonialism and imperialism arose and threw with the enslavement of Negroes and the trade in Negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the complete emancipation of the black people." I still maintain this view.

At present, the world revolution has entered a great new era. The struggle of the black people in the United States for emancipation is a component part of the general struggle of all the people of the world against U.S. imperialism, a component part of the contemporary world revolution. I call on the workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals of every country and all who are willing to fight against U.S. imperialism to take action and extend strong support to the struggle of the black people in the United States!

People of the whole world, unite more closely and launch a sustained and vigorous offensive against our common enemy, U.S. imperialism, and against its accomplices! It can be said with certainty that the complete collapse of colonialism, imperialism and all systems of exploitation, and the complete emancipation of all the oppressed peoples and nations of the world are not far off.
April
3 National draft card burning events
4 Martin Luther King is assassinated
5 Black rebellions erupt in more than 100 cities across the U.S.

6 Black Panther leader Bobby Hutton, 16 years old, murdered by police
10 Civil Rights Bill is passed with "Rap Brown amendment" attached, which makes crossing state lines to incite riot a federal crime
11 German student leader Rudi Dutschke shot
16 Mao Tsetung issues Statement in Support of the Afro-American Struggle Against Violent Repression
23 Students seize Columbia University in New York
26 National Student Strike
I million college and high school youth participate
27 Police attack major anti-war march in Chicago
200,000 demonstrate in New York City
30 Police storm Columbia University
May

10 FBI's COINTELPRO goes into full operation
10-11 Night of the Barricades in Paris, France
13 French general strike
15 Poor Peoples campaign opens Resurrection City in Washington D.C.
18 Wedding of South African exile Miriam Makeba and Stokely Carmichael
20 Miriam Makeba is practically banned from U.S. concert stages
20 State of emergency laws passed by W. German parliament
29 Police attack students occupying University of Dakar in Senegal
June
5 Robert F. Kennedy is assassinated
15 By June 15 there had been 221 major campus demos, 417 arrests, and 59 building seizures at U.S. colleges
29-30 Police attack 10,000 student demonstrators in Zurich, Switzerland, 2,500 are arrested

July
5 Burning and ruining of the American flag made a federal crime
14 Martial law declared in Uruguay in response to Tupamaros
23-24 Black rebellion in Cleveland, National Guard mobilized
27 Chairman Mao calls for Chinese workers to lead struggle-criticism-transformation in Cultural Revolution — workers are invited to universities to change the education system
27-28 Black rebellion in Gary, Indiana
29 All schools in Mexico City closed because of student unrest
August

8  Nixon nominated in Miami at Republican convention
   Six Black people killed in Miami rioting
16  Major GI rebellion at Marine brig in Danang, Vietnam
21  Soviet Union invades Czechoslovakia
23-24  Black troops at Ft. Hood refuse to board planes for riot duty
   at Chicago Democratic Convention
26-29  Democratic Party National Convention nominates Hubert Humphrey;
   Chicago Mayor Daley sends police against demonstrators
30  250 GIs rebel at Longbinh Jail in Saigon (a.k.a. LBJ)
   and take over the prison for almost a month.
Demonstrators arrive in Chicago. Democratic National Convention, Chicago.
September

Revolutionary Union key founding document, "Statement of Principles," is circulated publicly.

7 Women’s liberationists throw high heels, girdles, bras, and other "instruments of female torture" into "freedom trash can" at Miss America Contest in Atlantic City.

12 Albania withdraws from Warsaw Pact.

18 Police occupy universities in Mexico City.

October

2 Massacre of student protesters in Mexico City.

7 Trial of Catholic activists, Catonsville 9, begins for destruction of draft records.

12 Hundreds of GIs take part in San Francisco peace march.

12-27 Olympic Games in Mexico City climax with Black power salutes.

31 High party leader Liu Shao-chi is expelled from Chinese Communist Party -- a key juncture in Cultural Revolution.
November

1  LBJ announces halt in bombing of North Vietnam
6  Longest student strike at San Francisco State College demands full status for Black Studies
7  Nixon wins U.S. presidential election
In Japan, young workers and students protest Japan-U.S. "security treaty" demanding the return of Okinawa
24  Naxalite revolutionaries launch guerrilla warfare in Srikakulam, India
25  Student riots in Alexandria, Egypt
27  First National Women's Liberation Conference held in Lake Villa, Illinois.
December

- Black students form South African Student Organization in Natal, South Africa
- Student demonstrations in U.S. burn ROTC buildings to ground
- Successful National Organization for Women (NOW) campaign to stop newspapers from segregating job advertisements by sex
- San Francisco state suspends all classes
- Gomulka government falls in Poland after strikes and demonstrations
- SDS meets in Ann Arbor with 1,200 students as political lines sharpen in student movement over which way forward