THE EXILES— Kathleen Cleaver's ideas of Revolutionaries

By MADELIN MURPHY
(Last of Series)

Though nostalgically repeating herself, Kathleen added, "Yet here, you see a broader scope and how we are part of the international picture."

Warming to the subject of the international picture, Kathleen developed the subject of imperialism by saying, "As the U.S. becomes more involved in its own internal war, it will cease its imperialism, interfering with struggles, ideas by superimposing the U. S. ideals.

"The U.S. infiltrates, uses sabotage, doesn't relate to peoples' rights to decide what their own lives should be.

"They support armies, air forces, businesses to further the aimes of the U.S., forcing their economic, social and political ideas on South East Asia, Africa, South America, Israel, South Africa.

"They have two spearheads directed at Africa in maintaining, through a base in South Africa, boot lickers, to mess with all peoples in South Africa, in other countries, to subvert the struggles of people in South Africa, Black Africa.

"They use blatant exploitation, yet offer no technology, no education, no medical care. All that wealth and no help for the people. All that wealth being developed and exported to Europe.

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"For example," she continued, "you can't fly from East Africa to West Africa: the U.S. and Europeans control direction and flow of air routes.

"Phone calls to Nigeria from Algeria must go through England. Mainly to benefit Europe — Europe and U.S. join hands to exploit Africa.

"When I went to Mali on the way to Congo, in the main city, I saw the central market place where there were artisans making shoes, handbags, but the physical condition of the people was horrible. They are poor and tired, there is no happy, health, bustling atmosphere. It reminded me of scenes of black Afro-Americans in slavery. There is no excuse for this with advanced technology, no reason for the people to suffer as a colony of France.

"You can't find anything resembling these conditions in France.

"Maceo's environment, his whole way of looking at the world is technological. An African child has no concept of this. The level of resources in the U.S. are more advanced.

"Yet the brothers and sisters in Mozambique, Angola, South Africa with so few resources are waging war, they know they are waging war, they really have got nothing to fight with.

"When you see this in comparison to the U.S., the struggle of black people in the U.S. should be moving at a more rapid pace."

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When I asked Kathleen how this sturggle could be accelerated, Kathleen rattled off the following as if by saying it faster, liberation would come about:

"Especially at this time, the element erupting is the intensity of the liberation struggle. More and more explosions, black convicts inside the penitiaries being killed for radicalizing prisoners.

"George Jackson is the best example. There have been prisoners with less political understanding than he, less following, who have been murdered.

"The black populace is in a condition of mass imprisonment. We must break out.

"We must educate the institutional Army, the young blacks recruited, forced to serve to be sent overseas. Black soldiers in West Germany are moving toward a revolunionary struggle and we are counseling them. This is true of black soldiers all over the world.

"We want to see the people in the black and white community in a very intense struggle in prisons, in the army, the schools, and in general to take a positive and helpful attitude toward the struggle — not the typical condemnation: to run and tell and sabotage the situations of prisoners and political prisoners caught in court and going to jail.

"We must relate in our own area in aiding the prisoner railroaded into courts, use it as a 'test' to see how much people will take.

"We will see hundreds and thousands of Jonathan Jacksons.

"We must relate to prisoners as an example of the most extreme form of oppression. We must develop a very high degree of national consciousness and unity.

"The prisoners, have a great need for money for legal defense, reading material to keep them from being destroyed by isolation. This is the transition phase — the need for mass support, mass action, money raising to develop more and more politcal orientation of the masses.

"The ideological split in the Black Panther Party prevents us from having communication.

"We are reorganizing to developa communication/information net-work through the Revolutionary Peoples Communication Network and in a New York paper called "Right On." We shall continue to publish our bulletin.

"Our Telex Machine Number is 9195 RPCN, Algie. Telephone 78-21-65."

As she gave the number, Kathleen stressed, "We need people sympathetic to the revolutionary struggle. Every black person in whatever position she or he has in Babylon (U.S.) must make a contribution with money and work and action."

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Since we had been discussing ideology, black political prisoners, black women revolutionaries, it was only natural to ask about Angela Davis and the Communist Party.

Kathleen vehemently scorned the Communist Party and characterized its manipulation, as she called it, in this way:

"The Communist Parties in France, Italy carry the revisionist line to obscure, to hide anything to do with Jonathan Jackson, to serve their interest.

"The Communist Party in the U.S. has done nothing. It can't do anything for black people in the U. S. It is using and exploiting black peiple to further the aims and objectives that have nothing to do with blacks.

Angela Davis is being used as a ploy of the Communist Party and is being used voluntarily to convince people trere is some hope in the U. S. judicial process. They don't even say she is black.

"Their fighting on a class basis carries no real condemnation of the real revolutionary violence, for there is nothing in their rhetoric which supports Jonathan Jackson and Ruchell Magee.

"If only Angela Davis would share the attention with the revolutionaries who engage in violence. Not doing so is part of the deception.

"I am not attacking Angela Davis, just the manivulation being made of her by the Communist Party.

"You see, people are intimidated by the Panther cases of death, blood and violence. The case of Angela Davis will be able to prove that the state is wrong and that the Communist Party supports her in order for them to achieve a higher mass base of support."

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Considering her middle-class background and life, my natural curiosity about Kathleen's involvement in the Black Panther Party, prompted this candid response:

"I started working in the Civil Rights movement with SNCC in New York until December 1966, then I went tt Atlanta to natitnal headquarters to work from January 1967 to July 1967. I then went to California for a vacation and to see Eldridge Cleaver.

"I found the Black Panthers to be more advanced than SNCC. SNCC in the South was pretty much exhausted. There was a need for an organizational cadre to work in urban areas, they couldn't get it together in the Northern cities.

the movement, with Eldridge and the sipated all my earlier apprehen-

"We went to let the Afro-Amer struggle. There is yet a vague possi- guerillas, guerrilla warfare, using small groups with specific tasks." tionwide speaking tour in support of what she said was the urban guerrilla struggle."

"I was I was impressed with what the Black Panther Party was doing. It was fantastic! I fell in love with the movement, with Edlridge and the San Franeisco Bay area.

"I felt this would be an opportunity for the most positive contribution I could make at that time."

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To be there in Algiers, the fading the darkened room, interviewing a daylight making it harder to see in frail young woman for more than two hours, not much older than my eldest daughter, a young woman whose kindness and steely resolve had dissipated all may earlier apprehensions, I wondered how Kathleen expected liberation to be accomplished for Afro-Americans.

Having worked for five years through the changing modes of civil rights, through the splits and schisms, from demonstrations fo political imprisonment, and ultimately self-imposed exile, Kathleen answered my thoughts in this way.

"We want to tlet the Afro-Americans know that the revolutionary struggle is still going on and that the IBPP needs some indication from them. We want to hear from them. We want them to know they are a part of the world struggle. We want to know: Why aren't you fighting more?

"The hardest thing to do is to take some land. You can, however, interfere with the functioning of the apparatus. We see it as a highly mobile struggle. Thre is yet a vague possibility for holding areas.

"We see the struggle as highly political therefore, we must apply force and violence with the strategy of guerrillas, guerilla warfare, using small groups with specific tasks."

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Subsequent to this interview, Kathleen Cleaver has interrupted her exile to return to the U.S. for what the white press characterizes as a "nationwide speaking tour in support of what she said was the urban guerilla struggle."

Perhaps her interview with em was just a warm-up for a trip to the U.S. already planned in September.

That she had even then intended to return to Babylon to experience again "the day to day involvement with the struggle . . . to communicate on a mass level."

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A little more than a month after Kathleen returned to the United States, she did indeed communicate the position of the International Section of the Black Panther Party in regard to the Afro-American National question.

In her appearance before the People's Center Council, New Orleans Nov. 25, 1971, she reaffirmed the International Black Panther Party's adherence to point 10 of the Black Panther Party Program and Platform to seek a United Nations Supervised Plebicite.

Kathleen stated: "We must require the people of the world to recognize the truth of our history, our existence as an oppressed people, a nation trapped and held in bondage inside another nation, our right to be secure in our Human Rights; and the political nature of the imprisonment of thousands of Afro-Americans held within the confines of the political and military Concentration Camp Prisons of the United States of America."

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Concluding that the United Nations is "one of the most important instruments available to us as people at the present stage of our struggle," Kathleen Cleaver called for: "A United Nations-supervised plebicite to be held, for the purpose of determining the will of the Afro-American people as to our national destiny."

"Also," she added, "The stationing of the United Nations observer teams throughout the United States to help halt and check the stepped-up slaughter, political imprisonment and persecution of our people by racist government and ruling class of the United States."

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Meanwhile, Kathleen suggests that, "An Afro-American Peoples Militia be organized immediately, with units wherever Afro-American people are found, for the purpose of securing our people against genocidal attacks.

And she adds, "That an Afro-American Liberation Army be organized immediately, openly when we can, clandestinely when we must, to guarantee the implementation of this proposal, and to eliminate obstacles and enemies both within and without our ranks."

Not long after this speech, in Volume 1 of the bulletin, dateline Jan. 22, 1972, Algeria, "Information, Revolutionary Peoples Communication Network," news of Eldridge Cleaver's resignation was announced:

"On Jan. 16, 1972, Eldridge Cleaver, founder and head of the International Section resigned in order to concentrate full-time on his work as a member of the Afro-American Liberation Army."

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Prefacing the statement of Eldridge's resignation, the reasons for the formation of the Revolutionary People's Communications Network were reiterated: "to replace the former Ministry of Information of the Black Panther Party, to provide a new structure for dissemination of information and mass organization in keeping with the new conditions of struggle and to structurally and organizationally separate the aboveground and underground apparatus of the revolutionary forces fighting inside the United States."

Announcing that Pete O'Neil, founder of the Kansas City, Mo. branch would head the International Section of the Black Panther Party, assurances were given that "the International Section will continue the work that it has been doing in the past and plans to greatly expand upon it."

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It would seem that Eldridge and Kathleen Cleaver, dis-associating themselves from the static conditions of Algeria, will work on U.S. soil as well as abroad to carry the message that a black liberation army is the most feasible way that black people can gain solidarity and self-determination.

In the madness of racism in the 70's, one wonders if this is a movement toward self-determination, or rather a counter productive movement toward self-destruction.

Only history will record the solution to this depressing dilemma of black liberation.

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