

Minutes of REB Meeting of June 28, 1983

Agenda: I- Report on Paper for Convention -- Eugene; II- Draft of
New Introduction for 4th edition of ACOT -- Raya; III- On-
going Activities -- Mike; IV- G&W

REB, June 28, 1983 -- page 5

Raya limited her discussion to the question of form; which she said it was clear the entire REB felt was excellent -- as was the Title Eugene had given his report, except that she wished to make sure he added two words. It is, N&L as Marxist-Humanist Organization-Builder that we cannot take for granted. Raya took up three points on the form: 1) We always start with the objective situation, and in this case that can be the intermerging because of the Marx centenary. An Introduction is always also a conclusion for us -- and for this report it starts with the objective situation because it is also the subjective -- so that everyone was celebrating the centenary in a most specific way, as we saw, for example, with the Black movement.

2) Concrete and totality must be made as a single point. When we see how great the paper was on the Latino dimension this year, the organizational dimension should be brought in right at that point, very early. It has been great because everyone has a particular contact, gets a particular report, works it out in a particular activity.

3) RVs is very important in the question of methodology, because RVs represents correspondence with locals and with individuals and with history. Unless history is in it, it isn't our kind of RV -- by which I mean that no matter what is said, whether it is in response to an objective event or something that has appeared in N&L, the relationship to objective and subjective is already posed. The RV means more than just what was said, because of the context in which it has been placed. The movement between objective and subjective is what is important.

One of the greatest points the report makes is that a conclusion has to flow from something. The question of the fifth W -- why -- needing to flow from the other four Ws is most important to grasp.

II. Before Raya read the Draft of the proposed Introduction to the new fourth edition of American Civilization on Trial, she said that she wished to propose that the four letters she had received in response to her request for suggestions for the Introduction be included as a special section of the first pre-convention discussion bulletin (the letters are from Diane, Tommie, Lou, Susan). A xerox copy of the draft read at the REB will be sent to the NEB in each locality, since this is issued as a Statement by the National Editorial Board, and any suggestions or comments they choose to make

15957

will have to come in within a week of receipt of the draft, since the deadline for the finished Introduction to be ready for the printer is July 15. We are aiming to have the pamphlet off the press by August 1 if at all possible.

Raya then read the 13 pages she had drafted, which are briefly summarized here:

On this 20th double anniversary of the famous 1963 March on Washington as well as of the first publication of American Civilization on Trial, the struggle continues and will reach one type of climax with the August 27, 1983 MOW. That this occurs in the Reagan Retrogression era, when the deep recession spells Depression for the Black world, makes it more imperative than ever not to leave these stark facts at the factual stage alone. Inseparable from and simultaneous with intense new forms of revolt over the past two decades in the Black Revolution both in the U.S. and in Africa, was the Marxist-Humanist banner that ACOT raised, in the context of the whole 200 year history of the U.S., whose civilization had been put on trial and found guilty. What ACOT disclosed was that, at each historic turning point of development in the U.S., it was the Black masses in motion who proved to be the vanguard.

The birth of a whole new Third World in our age has cast a new illumination on the little-known page of Black history which has recorded its anti-imperialist struggles as far back as the end of the 19th century. At the same time, we can see what impact Black struggles have had on great Marxist theoreticians. (Here we include a quote from Luxemburg, written in 1899, the same year that the Anti-Imperialist League was formed.)

The new moments in the last decade of Marx contain a trail to the 1980s as new paths to revolution open up. Post-Marx Marxists, however, have displayed such insensitivity to what Marx projected -- including the possibility of revolution occurring first in the East rather than in the West -- that it became the task of Marxist-Humanism to work it out in RLWLKM. What relates very much to the Black world is the change Marx introduced into Capital itself on the relationship of advanced to technologically backward lands -- seen in the way Marx referred to the "so-called" Primitive Accumulation of Capital to show that the carving up of the Asian and African world did not characterize only early capitalism, as well as in his refuting those who claimed "The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation" was a universal. It was his Promethean vision of new paths of revolutionary development which became his preoccupation in the last decade as he studied all pre-capitalist formations in his Ethnological Notebooks.

Long before this was all developed in the latest work of Marxist-Humanism, RLWLKM, Marxist-Humanism practiced listening to and developing the voices heard from below as a movement from practice that is itself a form of theory and which demands that the movement from theory rooted in it reach to the point of philosophy -- a philosophy of world revolution. (Here is developed the way in which a whole series of pamphlets with voices of workers, Blacks, women and youth, followed Marxism and Freedom; as well as a full paragraph on Indignant Heart, with special focus on Part II and the 1970s.)

What ACOT did was to cast a new illumination on the two-way road between Africa and the U.S. via the West Indies. Rather than the capitalists' triangular trade of rum, molasses and slaves, it was

RE, June 28, 1993 -- page 7

the triangular development of internationalism, masses in action, and ideas that is ever-live and remains the dominant force to this day. (Here Raya developed both Frantz Fanon's "new humanism" as well as the exciting events now going on in South Africa, especially as seen in the mine workers organizing and thinking their own thoughts.

The mass unrest today throughout the world, the deep recession we are in, and the many political crises we face compel intense new activities, whether on the production line or in the massive anti-nuke campaign or in the Black revolutionary movements -- unseparated, in this Marx centenary year, from new passion for philosophy and revolutionary direction. That revolutionary direction can be seen as Marx worked it out concretely for his philosophy of revolution in permanence in relation to the Black world: (Here we would have the paragraph printed in Worker's Journal in the June N&L.)

In the specific case of the Civil War in the U.S., it was not only a question of theory or of national action, but one of international organization as he established the First Workingmen's International to come to the aid both of the North, especially the Abolitionists, in that Civil War, and of the European working class struggles, especially the Polish revolt against Russian Tsarism. As Poland shows all over again today, freedom fighters do not give up their struggle even when compelled to work under the whip of the counter-revolution. And as the ceaseless struggles against the attempts to push back all the gains of the past two decades shows right here in the U.S., it is precisely the Reagan Retrogression that gives urgency to this new fourth, expanded edition and fifth printing of American Civilization on Trial. ** * **

RD said she would welcome any new suggestions, but reminded all that they would have to be sent to her within the week for her to meet her deadline of July 15.

Motion: To accept the line of the draft, and ask RD to complete the finished Introduction by July 15, with an off-the-press date of August 1 as our goal. Passed.

15959