

1- RD Lecture IV 5/14/60
WORLD VIEW OF THE NEGRO QUESTION

We are taking up not only the Organizational Interlude, Chapter 9, but also the origin of white civilization. Despite that fact, I will not begin with the historic origins either of civilization or of the Negro in his homeland, but on this continent -- in other words, the American Negro. Because from a Marxist Humanist point of view, the critical and decisive point always is what stage of production are we in. That determines the relations of people at production -- in other words management and worker, and many people who are not in production, whether it's student or white collar worker or artist, and who do not like to be placed outside of this central core which decides the type of society you have, and the type of relations you have. The fact is that the other element to this stage of production -- the extra leven -- is provided to make history, the human force besides the working class is that which is provided by the minority groups -- or what is known as the national question. We will get down a little later when we discuss ideologies as to whether the Negro is a national question. It used to be denied, even though it is not denied now. And therefore both from the point of view of what is the stage of production, and what is the necessary other ingredient on the human factor, that is what is provided by the national question in this country is this decisive proof that both of these elements will show you the course of history.

We therefore must view the question, even though it's a world view of the Negro, in the context of American history, of which the Negro is the most integral part, in fact an indivisible part.

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So our first division will be American History, the later part of it, and our second division will be the World View. Now, under American ~~history~~ history, we will have ~~E-~~ From Slavery to Civil War and Reconstruction. That will take us approximately from the early 18th century when they began being brought here as slaves to approximately 1876 when there was the so-called gentlemen's agreement to withdraw the troops from the South, and allow the Southern Bourbons to re-establish their rule.

II The Populist Movement and the Industrial Workers of the World. That will be the 1880's through 1905 (1905 was the same year of the Russian Rev'n and the IWW in this country).

III The Heavy Industry and the Basic Ideology, which will bring us up to WWII and have the following sub-divisions:

- 1- WWI and the appearance of Garveyism
- 2- NAACP, Socialism and the Communist International
- 3- 1930's, CIO, Trotskyism

We will not consider WWII until we come to the World View.

I From Slavery Through Reconstruction

(Refer to TW on Exclusion of Negroes warps minds of whites) One of the established myths and bourgeois ideologies which has nothing to do with the truth is that the Negro who was brought here was just so happy with his master that he was even on the master's side when he was supposed to get freedom. In fact, the whole history of the Negro in this country, is a history of Negro Revolt, and none more so than the period of the slave revolts. This article which deals with the slave revolt in general, deals not so much with the revolt as ~~XX~~ an article -- a little pamphlet of 76 Pages

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that was written by a Negro, a freed Negro called David Walker, called "An Appeal to the Colored People of This Country". And he had dared take issue not only with the whites in general, but as high as the Presidency and the President who had written the Declaration of Independence -- Thomas Jefferson, who himself had leaves even though he had written that all men were created free and equal. And when he dared say in his statement " your race prejudice will yet wipe you off the face of the earth" -- just consider somewhere in the late 1820's, when the Negro is considered both docile and a slave and savage unless we have domesticated him or something-- what it created, in the country as a whole. Every Southern Legislature was called into session and there was a price on his head. Naturally the pamphlet was banned, but it was a best-seller, even though the Negroes who were slaves were mostly illiterate they knew every word in that pamphlet. Those who couldn't read would go to somebody who could. There are several reasons why it is very important. First of all, the ideology, the dynamism of ideas that came out of this David Walker, was far superior to anything that existed in even the highest, most liberal, most glorious whites in the world that I'm always playing up -- the Abolitionists.

I am always talking about the fact that the Abolitionists added a dimension to the American character because the white New England intellectuals associated with the runaway slaves following the North Star to freedom. Because they had given up everything to be the social medium for this precise struggle for freedom. Now I want to turn it around and tell you that the Negro added this dimension to the white. He was a vanguard even in this.

several?
Not until 7 years after Walker's pamphlet did we have the first appearance of the great abolitionist paper "The Liberator" and its slogan is "the world is my country." That is another great rev'y fact, because here in 1831 Wm. Lloyd Garrison says that the national boundaries are insufficient to give him a country. It is at that point when the white intellectuals come toward the struggle that the actual revolt in the South led by Nat Turner and before him Vessey and before him someone else -- that the two forces unite to form the great forward movement for 30 years before they finally achieved the Civil War in the U.S'

In this struggle the women -- both the white women in the North but more especially the Negro women in the South, who didn't know how to read but were great do-ers and revolutionaries and thinkers, and particularly the 2 greatest of them Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman. There was not a single meeting that they addressed that didn't create a riot or a new movement, and no one dared compete with them. Harriet Tubman was a leader in the Underground ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ^{Railway} which most of you know was neither underground nor a railway -- it simply meant that you as a slave, would take the chance of following the North Star to freedom even if it meant you might be shot dead or bitten to death by the viscious dogs that the slave owners used. Harriet Tubman was a conductor in this railway. In other words, she would return to the South which had been her home and take a group of men, women and children, and lead them North to waylay stations. In all her trips she never lost a passenger -- not once. She did the same glorious work in the Civil War, for the Northern armies. They had a hard time convincing Lincoln that the Negro should have something to say about his own freedom. It was not only that they were so great as leaders for

for the struggle for freedom for their own people, but they were very great in stimulating the struggle for white women. In other words there were -- say, the abolitionists -- stood for the abolition of slavery, but they were opposed to the women having their rights. The struggle for Negro freedom stimulated the struggle for women's rights -- that's when the struggle for the vote began -- and that's when there was no man who would chair their meeting (don't ask me why they wanted a man to chair) -- except Frederick Douglass.

Now, very peculiar things happen at a much later stage in life. Say a hundred years later when you forgive somebody for being a revolutionist and want to interpret things differently. 1848 was the year of the great European rev's which gave birth to Marx's Manifesto and the struggle for the abolishing of all class societies not just slavery. And it's the same year as the struggle for women's rights. Their first convention was in 1848. In 1948 the Women's Dept. of the Dept of Labor celebrated that(undecipherable on tape).

I want to read 2 quotations, not on women, but ~~XXXXXXXX~~ from the TW on the Appeal. "The Cambridge Modern History writes"

The last part in this period from slavery through reconstruction is that after the slaves were freed, there was the first introduction of public education in the South. The black legislators during reconstruction instituted public education. The so-called gentlemen's agreement, like all gentlemen's agreements is a great big fraud and conspiracy. It consisted of the fact that the vote was so close

between Tilden and Hays ~~XXXXXX~~ that the only way the Republicans could keep up their rule would be if they had an agreement in the voting in the electoral college to go the opposite way of the public vote. The Southerners said okay, we'll give you the presidency even though he lost, provided you remove the troops from the South, let us rule as we choose down there (in other words transform the freed slaves into sharecroppers), and if you start any industry at all it is to be white industry, Textile which was the first was all white, so the Negro was forced to be a share-cropper. This ends the first period -- and the propaganda all tries to tell you that even if all that I have said is true -- the prejudice against the Negro outside of the stigma of slavery arises at this period. In other words they never want on to any white and Negro collaboration. That is one other great big lie. Despite the fact of the black code, despite the fact that the Southern way of life had free rein all over again, just ten years after this happened, there grew out the greatest mass movement this country has ever since until the CIO -- the Populist Movement. They practically won the presidency, and they did win many, many state offices and so on. ~~As~~ This Populist Movement in the standard books, even Commons, is referred to in footnotes as an organization one and a quarter million strong in the Deep South, ten years after Bourbon rule was reestablished. Not only does that abolish the myth that the Negro is incapable of organization and hadn't organized himself -- but proves also that even though they had their own orgn, they collaborated with the whites. In the North they were mostly white, and in the South mostly Negro. It was ten years before they were defeated. The best book is Tom Watson- Agrarian Rebel. (the best for slave revolts is "History of S R" by Aptheker)

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by J. Vanh Woodward. Tom Watson is the straggest character this country has ever produced. Began in 1890 by putting his life down against anyone who dared to touch the Negro. By 1914 a real chauvinist as bad a Eastland. It shows what we mean by a stage of production and an economic period. All con/trastrated in one man. Imagine what it implies for the collaboration that must have existed in he rank-and file white and Negro.

The Populist Movement was an agrarian revolt, against oppression by the big industrialists when they had just begun to get started. The IWW is a very different movement, the birth of proletarian in this ocuntry in the basic industries like lumber mills, the mines etc. -- and some of the bloodiest battles in American history were fought in this period. I put it in this same period because, since they also included miners and miners were Negro in the South. They excluded the Negro from light industry -- but the mines and mills were considered dirty and hard and Negro's work, and to organize these industries you had, therefore, to include the Negroes. Again, these were the only proletarians at that time that collaborated. To this day those were the people that J.L. Lewis used in the 1930's who had had that experience.

During this period which will bring us up to WWI, I want to show you what had gone on in ideology. It was just before the Abolitionist movement that you had David Walker's Appeal. In the period of the Populist Movement the ideology was no different on the part of the white and Negro -- even though they felt kinship towards the nowly arisen working class in heavy industry, on the whole farmers were more numerous and were the decisive factor until

the turn of the century Various movements then began, of a different nature, the IWW etc. on the part of the Negro. By this time the Negro in the North was beginning to develop a Negro intellectual. The greatest of these was WEB Dubois, who plays with the G'ists now, but when you're 90 you can be forgiven a little. He is one of the finest products as a writer and as an hisotrian. His book, Black Reconstruction, is superior to any white history on that period, because none of them have revealed with such documentary force, the role of the Negro in reconstruction. In this period he started the movement called the Niagara Movement, which was the fight for Negro rights -- political, economic, and social. It was this first movement which began to fight within the Negro community -- he was fighting Booker T. Washington -- who had arisen as the first Negro leader to accept the conditions of second class citizenship. He said that's nonsense and Uncle Tomism in the intellectual field and I will have none of it. It was this movement that was swallowed up by the NAACP. It was those who said if we don't want a complete rev'n we better do something who established the NAACP, but the Niagara movement came before and was very superior.

There were 2 differences with Marxists??? One was about the talented tenth. He said without the talented tenth to lead you to freedom we are nowhere. He wanted a thinking intelligentsia to lead the working class. We don't feel any movement should be subordinated to a leadership whether it is their own leadership or not. The second point was Pan-Africanism He did, however, write some good things. For example that even though the American Negro does not consider himself ^{African} Negro and doesn't know the African language or

nevertheless Africans and American Negroes have something in common. His peculiar idea of this was that we will appeal to established organizations--in other words, the very people who are oppressing you, to recognize this fact.

We'll jump to our own era ahead of time for just a minute. ~~XI~~
In 1943, the greatest Negro library in this country -- the Shenberg collection in N.Y. -- had a series of lectures called World View of the Negro and invited important speakers, the most important of whom was Dubois. I attended. In that same period there were an awful lot of people from Africa who wanted to go back to their country and fight for African freedom -- African exchange students. They also came to these lectures. The names didn't mean anything then, but you'll recognize them now -- one of them was Kwame Nkrumah, now the head of Ghana; the other was Azikwe, now the head of Nigeria. Dubois gave a speech which he had prepared as the educational director of the NAACP, to be given to the soon-to-be-establish UN, in which he appealed for freedom for the African people. He spoke for an hour. When he got through I said I wanted to ask a question, but first I had to motivate it-- and therefore wanted to say openly that I was a Marxist, and believed in the freedom of all the peoples and all the workers, and therefore could not understand how you could appeal to the UN which would consist of Britain, France and Portugal, all of whom have a part of Africa, to give you your freedom. So I wanted to know what was behind the appeal and why it was being handed in to this institution. Dubois is a very polished man, a graduate of Harvard, Heidelberg and so forth -- speaks with an English accent, even though he's from South USA, and

in general very sophisticated -- and here was I a little rank and
filer. He says, the lady says she's a Marxist, so I don't think
she deserves an answer. He was really only making a speech, he
wasn't asking for any questions. There are about 5% whites and
95% Negro, and all through the hall there's a great tumult saying
she certainly does deserve an answer -- and not only that, WE want
to know, we agree with her, not with you. And the two who jumped
up to defend me and demand he answer were Nkrumah and Azikewew
At the end of that I had more people around me than Dubois had
around him -- and all of them had pamphlets in their pockets. If
you were from under British rule, you had one against British
imperialism ... everybody was trying to get something published.
Nkrumah said he would go back and lead a strike in his country and
that was how he would win freedom, not by asking (gets
too fast and impossible to understand).

In this expression of talented tenth, even though he brought up
culture (Dubois), the thing that embarrassed him the most was the
big new Garvey movement, in 1919. The Negro had his first chance
since he was put back in his cubby-hole in the South, for a
great mass migration to the North, because they needed him for
industry, so finally they let him out. He thought it would be
paradise, but when he came to the North, he found no paradise
whatsoever, the only difference in the discrimination he found
was that now he had a job. There were quite a few outbreaks of
riots, especially about housing, because they had no place to
live. Marcus Garvey was an African, or rather West Indian,
and called for a movement back to Africa. These Negroes knew
nothing about Africa, weren't interested in Africa, they were
all Americans. But they were so completely frustrated at finding

at finding the same conditions in the North that they had found in the South, that they joined this movement in the millions. Six million. A peculiar thing happened with their leadership -- the talented tenth. There wasn't one single one in that movement. Everyone from Dubois to the NAACP leader, Pincus or Pickin?????? Walter White -- all attacked it, all said it shows the Negro is still backward, and this man is a faker. Garvey had some fakery in him, true, but on the whole he represent³d the most important movement in America since the Populist movement, and one a great deal more numerous in importance.

At the same time came the Russian Rev'n, which took up the Negro question -- but before I come to their decision, I want to say what Socialist did before that. They do not have an enviable record in this country on that question, quite the opposite. Some of you know that when the so-called Marxists in this country tried to say that they were opposed to all slavery, wage and chattel and couldn't take a position on the Civil War Marx said if this is Marxism, I am not a Marxist. He took the part of the North. Then between 1905 and 1914 when Debs became a socialist,..... but on the Negro question he revealed that he had plenty of prejudice. If you read any of the journals, you will find it disgusting. A P.Randolph became a Socialist at the end of WWI -- he knew you couldn't win unless you were with the laboring class. The majority of the Working class was white even though his own union was all Negro. So because he felt strongly the need to have the white worker with him to win the struggle he closed his eyes to the other parts of the program on the Negro question. He led a marvelous fight during that period, and edited the best paper this country has seen, the Challenge --they took
Negro

him before the committee that was the beginning of the current HUAC. J. Edgar Hoover was a lieutenant, subordinate to Palmer and the committee in N.Y. was called the Love(?) committee, and AP Randolph was brought before it for subversion because what he had shown in his paper in a big cartoon was the American flag being trampled to death by the fires of a lynching.

We come then to the CI in the good days -- when they had to intervene and said it is clear that there is so much prejudice in that horrible country called the U.S.A. that is supposed to be so democratic, that even the socialists don't know what the socialist position is, and we have to intervene on two counts:

1-to show the Negro question is part of the national question. Lenin said don't give me lectures on the fact that the Negro in America is American, I know that; that he doesn't want to go back to Africa, I know that; that he's got to remake America; and don't tell me he has no language separate from Americans, which are supposed to be the 3 things that define a nation-- the fact that they suffer double oppression makes them a nation. They have extraordinary problems and must get extraordinary attention. Claude McKay, the great Negro poet, was present and broke away with a few others from the Socialist movement to join the C'ist movement. In the early movement there was no difference between black and white, even here in America.

In this same period there was one other way the Negro was brought up from the South by the white industrialist in the North, and brought in as a strike-breaker. The Negroes didn't know this. The big strike after WWI was the steel strike-- which was broken not only by the police and Pinkertons, but by the

use of these strike-breakers. In the same way as the stupid unions are not permitting the so-called wet-backs and the Mexican laborers because they would depress the wages instead of trying to unite with the Mexicans both as laborers to fight against the bosses, the union movement instead of appealing to the Negroes and telling them they were being brought in to break the strike, began saying they were for the Chinese exclusion act, against Mexicans, Negroes..

Up to my break with the T'st movement, my greatest fight was with the T'st Negro leader Coolidge who kept repeating that the Negro was a strike-breaker in 1919 and therefore was in a lower position than the others, even though there couldn't have been a CIO without the Negro at another period. Instead of pointing out that he was brought here as that -- and that the union didn't try to unite the two, but took advantage of the prejudice.

The 1930's and the CIO now: In the 1930's there was a great world depression and people were starving by the millions. The capitalists try to use unemployed against employed, white against Negro, etc. -- in other words, divide and rule. For the first time the talented tenth was being used in the labor movement as labor leaders. The established union was the AFL which excluded Negroes, ^{and unskilled} And there was no way at all of organizing any big basic industry where the majority of the workers were unskilled and where white and Negro worked side by side. The minute you have a mass movement, strikes, unemployed groups, etc. -- of the big common man, then a leader gets it into his head to make a generalization about it. The specific leader in this case was John L. Lewis.

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Lewis gave the most famous punch in the world to Hutchins??????
It officially started the CIO. He had previous experience with
the IWW and had a core that was ready, knew how to work, and knew
the Negro would be as great a vanguard here as in the other. He
first made a motion that they organize an industrial union dept.
within the AFL -- and when it was defeated he said we'll be an
industrial union, then, or fall apart -- whereupon Hutchinson
made some crack against him, and Lewis punched him and walked out
to organize the CIO.

So that, for the first time you had black and white labor united
and meanwhile we had mass production and you had the unskilled which
had also been excluded.

When something great like that happens, it takes the shape of a form
of organization which you as a supposed vanguard hadn't seen --
you think only the Marxist in Marx's day didn't know how to act,
or the Socialists in Deb's day? -- even after the CI had established
that the Negro question was part of the national question, and of
the labor question, and that you.... nevertheless at that point, the
T'ists decided that it was only a union movement, and backward, and
they weren't sure whether they were even going to recognize it. In
fact they didn't until about 1940 when it was already bureaucratized.
I will say one thing for Trotsky as different than the T'ists, at
least. When I was his sec'y -- the T'ists controlled one union in
this country at one time, in Minneapolis, the Teamsters -- and they
were very proud of it, and it was a good union, and started industrial-
ization even before the CIO -- we would have big, big headlines in
the Militant on Local 554, and here was the national CIO that would
only get a paragraph. One day Trotsky called me in and said, "Raya

are you for the CIO?" And I said, "What kind of a stupid question is that?" He said, "Well, I read your paper and I see Local 554 all over and I wonder if you're not going to recognize the CIO?" He had to call down the whole National Committee to Mexico to give them a lecture about that fact that if a mass organization chooses its own form of organization instead of yours, you can't just disregard it.

Also on the question of the Negro, Trotsky had the old, good, CI position that the Negro question was part of the national question. And they were supposed to agree with him -- but whenever you said that the Negro in American history was the vanguard, they would just die. They just couldn't swallow that word vanguard, for anyone but themselves who were supposed to have read Capital.

The one thing Trotsky did not differ with them on was the ^{next} stage of the economy -- which we are coming to and that brings us to the onset of WWII. Now we are coming to the World View of the Negro.

A new stage is reached in WWII. Just as the American Negro was supposed to be backward, all you heard about the African was that he was a savage, or a pigmy. When the Africans began to take matters into their own hands, the white man began to look again. The anthropologists and all the rest of them began digging in the ruins of Africa, and discovered that was the cradle of civilization. They now think that the first man was a black man. And that therefore, if there had been a stage as there is now in which there are underdeveloped countries compared to the white man's countries, it must at least in part be due to the fact that the white man who came to Africa exploited it and did not allow it to

develops. Civilization started in Africa and then moved East -- in Greece? it advanced much further in the agricultural rev'n and the industrial rev'n -- and not a small part was due to black labor. There were 2 interventions of the white man in Africa -- the first, when we just stole them as slaves; the second during imperialism when he goes in and divides up the country and does not permit it any industrialization -- kills off rebellion. The Zulu rebellion happened at the same time as IWW here and the 1905 rev'n. The Zulus were the first ones that opposed this horrible bunch of creatures now ruling South Africa. The struggle between the Dutch in Africa and the Zulus was a stalemate. Nobody won that war, whereupon the British who were also fighting both the Africans and the Dutch, had their gentlemen's agreement that re-established in 1976 in this country the white domination over black. The British won over the Dutch who are now trying to throw out the British and hat them almost as much as the Negro. The British won, but because the Boers knew better the African land because they intended actually to live there -- they had this agreement for the Dutch to keep on running things.

You had the 19th century and half of the 20th when Africa didn't even know there had been an industrial rev'n. When the revolutions begin they first begin in West Africa, both the British and French parts -- after WWII. And they begin there because the African is there alone, there is no white settler colony. Thank heavens for the flies that the white man couldn't stand. In the East they were able to live in the climate of Kenya, in the South etc.

There is one more reason I've gone back to that and that's because the same policy of fighting for the particular role the national question brings on in fighting for the socialist rev'n, applied also in his argument with Trotsky on the Trade Union question. In other words, once you have achieved power the workers began to ask for their democratic rights. Trotsky was for the trade unions being absorbed in the state, and Lenin said it's a workers state and therefore the workers should have the right to unions. He then specified that the greatest danger to the rev'n after it has won power is an administrative type -- the same talented tenth we're talking about throughout history, the one who thinks he can do it better for the workers. There just is no such being. Either power will be in the workers hands or you will have the re-establishment of the counter-rev'n within the rev'n itself. Winning power is just the first stage of the new society, not the last stage.

When WWII broke out the C'ists who had long since become state-capitalists said to the Negroes in this country, forget your fight for democratic rights, we are now fighting a bigger fight against Nazism. They told the workers to forget their fight for better conditions, we should give the no-strike-pledge. In other words they took a completely capitalist role .

It is during this period that the following things occur at the end of WWII: the Negroes in Africa begin to develop an ideology that is different from either the C'ists or the capitalists. One of the latest things to come out is Negher's African Socialism and recognizes that without a total ideology you can't fight either C'ism or cap'ism completely. You have to show a different society altogether. Against that the backwardness of the Marxist

vanguard movement: the Johnsonites, who supposedly had our own position on state cap, nevertheless instead of unfolding a positive reconstruction of society made 2 significant errors ^{one of} which was a little opportunism -- that Ghana since it was first on the stage was played up without any criticism, and said it was the highest stage because it combined Ghandi and Marx. (quotes AA pamphlet on pan-africanism). The second error they made was that even though they began by saying philosophy was needed and not just economics, they now say philosophy is all dead. They therefore show they cannot interpret Marxism in the new stage where on the one hand in the Hungarian Rev'n against O'ist imperialism and on the other hand in Africa in the rev'ns against British and French imperialism, the Marxist Humanist idea was not just one that Marx had and we agreed with, but the actual banner for their freedom, in most advanced and most under-developed countries alike