

NBB MEETING OF MAY 29, 1984

Agenda: I. Sub-report on Black and Third World for Convention--Lou; II. Sub-report on Three Pamphlets for Convention -- Andy; III. Discussion on both; IV. Tentative Agenda for Convention; V. Ongoing Activities -- Mike; VI. GSW

Rava suggested a different form for Lou's presentation so that, instead of starting with what he called Part I, stressing "Where to begin?", he should start with the objective situation. By beginning with the objective situation, he could begin with Miami and the very phrase he had used in his column on Miami, that it is not a place but a condition, which would give him both the concrete and philosophic ground for what constituted his first Part. Moreover, the objective would not be limited to Miami but would include everything from Black in the U.S. to its international ramifications, and at the same time permit us to include discussion of the striking difference between Jessie Jackson's campaign as electoral politics and what the Black masses see as an expression of their demand for liberation. ACOT, for example, would show the revolutionary history of Black masses in the U.S. and, at the same time, become the transition point to CD in his very last column on the new edition of ACOT. It is at that point that Lou can develop some points on the difference between being a guest columnist and having the responsibility for his own column.

To a great extent the brevity with which Lou dealt with Latin America in his subreport was because I had suggested that these points be developed by New York and Los Angeles. I liked very much Lou's section on "At Home Abroad and Abroad at Home". I consider that is where he can take up Grenada, which would bring us both to the objective relationship of the U.S. and the subjective relationship of the Left, the Black Left. And, of course, it is important to end with Chicago because we always have to end up with what to do in this year.

As for Andy, I consider there is too much subjectivism in his report. For example, instead of dealing with the Nevada Document, I consider it more correct and concrete to relate the differences between CLRJ and RD to State-Capitalism and World Revolution. After all, it was there that there was no mention of the Miners' General Strike that had just happened and in which I was quite active while he was nowhere around. Philosophy explains the history of its time and that is where the breakdown came when CLRJ could not break through on the Absolute Idea. The only other exception I would take is that I think it wrong to use the expression "total refutation", because it makes it appear as if we weren't rooted in the past, and we certainly are rooted in Marx's Marxism and therefore it is more correct to say we reject post-Marx Marxism not "orthodox" Marxism. (Andy interrupted to say he agreed and meant to say "post-Marx Marxists" and not "orthodox.") Finally, of course, all of us have to end with what to do and that holds for all three pamphlets.

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June 2, 1984

Dear Lou:

Timing, as usual, is of the essence and it compels a self-discipline going beyond any quantitative measure; in fact, in a certain sense, telling the writer how much time any thought is given in relationship to what the writer wishes to express. Thus the fact that you have 25 minutes and the need is to begin with the objective situation "automatically" not only puts the subjective part of your report second instead of first but requires cutting. Perhaps the best way to keep in mind which points you want to express is by thinking in the framework of time. Thus, the objective situation would take 8 minutes; the subjective 6 minutes (but ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ of course you return to this subjective later, not on your column but on Chicago for 2 to 3 minutes); and the part on the 1980s as well as the Latino would take the rest of your time. When you realize that you spoke altogether too fast at the REB -- and much speak much, much slower at the Convention -- you will see you have a lot of work to do in reworking.

Here are some suggestions: The first part, which I refer to as "objective" should actually be called "Abroad at Home, At Home Abroad" and should start something like this:

The Black dimension has a way of both merging the objective situation with the subjective thought and nationalism and internationalism that makes us face at once the totality of the capitalistic crisis, as well as the revolutionary opposition to what is. Take Miami on the one hand, and the U.S. invasion of Grenada on the other hand. (At this point you give the facts of the Miami revolts and end with: The fact is that both the crisis still festers and the Black's total rejection of Reaganomics, Reaganpolitics, Reagan's retrogressionism in all Black matters will rise again and assure a continuous pre-revolutionary upsurge). Now look at Grenada. At that point you can take from p. 5 the first para., slightly changed so that, instead of the first sentence on second vantage point, it states something like: That the objective situation is ominous is most sharply edged in the Black dimension because there is absolutely no divide between nationalism and internationalism as is clear from Reagan's invasion of Grenada ... (incidentally, your last expression there about accords should have a "so-called" before accords ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ with an actual forced pact and therefore use Mozambique and Angola before South Africa). You must however also add quite a few other facts on Africa, both the actual starvation and naming different countries from Ethiopia and Somalia and Eritree to Tanzania. And only after that would you return to the second para. on page 5 on the global shift, at which point you give yourself ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ a couple of minutes on Latino, being sure you mention NY, LA and Chi. (Do read my letter to Peter on this in the office)

I think the transition point to the next part (which was your part I) is precisely when you are on the Black world objectively and the Black dimension subjectively; it is here you can mention CD's last column on ACOT which in itself shows the two way road between U.S. and Africa. This means some shifting around between p. 3 (first 2 paras) and only then p. 1, where you saw that in one sense you saw a relationship to 1841. Note, however,

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how many paras. I suggest cutting: Last para on p. 1, half of para. on p. 2, a question mark over p. 3 penultimate para., and the same is true of p. 4; what I mean is that whereas I decided you do not need to go into the 2nd and 3rd columns, I wanted to use part of it and merge it with what you had as a final para. Thus, I simply added one sentence: One more point here concerns the question of critique (and then proceed with what you have).

At this point we have an added difficulty because on the one hand I have renumbered what you used as Part II, "On the Road with the Trilogy..." from p. 5; on the other hand, I don't know really mean that everything from then on is to stay as is, especially when it also has to include "Some Thoughts on Chicago and the Black Third World." In a word, it needs a lot of trimming. For example, I do not think we need go back to the 25 Year History, and I certainly don't think CLRJ and Grace have to be brought in. I was on the point of cutting out page 9 altogether but then decided that where you begin "Whether accidental or not ..." you could use part of that, because it brings you to post-Marx Marxists. (Incidentally, so far as "Some Thoughts on Chicago", which I like as a title, I think it's important to cut out the last para. ; we definitely don't have to go back to 1920 and me; and it isn't necessary to refer to Terry and Diane as following up on contacts as that should be taken for granted. Instead, we should return to the current scene by mentioning here that with Chicago having a Black mayor and Jackson also being from Chicago, the electoral politics will both close some doors and open others.

Do have one rewrite of ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ your thesis before we meet again and we will have to meet one time no matter how briefly after you return from Chicago and before the Plenum on Friday. I hope I'll be clearer on when exactly I mean by the time you return from Chicago and call Olga.

Yours,

May 30, 1984

Dear Friends:

You can see from the Tentative Agenda that we will have two very full and busy days at the Convention and one very busy day before it ever starts, as the WL and the Youth are having their Conferences during the day and the Plenum begins at 7PM on Friday, July 6. We take for granted that the local organizers have their reports written out and sent on corrected stencils to reach Detroit no later than June 7, so that all the facts of our activities are known and the discussion at the Convention itself can take that knowledge for granted. As always, each local is to schedule a discussion on the two sub-reports heard at the REB last night -- one by Lou on "The Black and Third World" and the other by Andy on "The Three New Pamphlets."

Raya announced that her Dear Youth letter this year, instead of being sent directly to the Youth, will be given to the last bulletin issued by News and Letters Committees, as its essence is that it is being written by Raya as National Chairwoman who created the category of Youth as a specific historic phenomenon.

Mike's report on communications included the following news:
1) An Italian review of both P&R and RIWLKM has appeared in Dimensioni #30, 1984. This serious, four page review resulted from the correspondence Kevin has kept up with a young woman he met at a meeting in Germany some time ago. He is having it translated and we will send it around to the locals.

2) Gary from Cincinnati has written about his activities which will result in having three from Ohio at the Convention. We hope that everyone has reported to the office how many are coming from their locals. It is urgent for us to know as soon as possible to arrange for the housing under the very difficult circumstances this year. Gary also has asked that his bundle of N&L be doubled. We are sure he will prepare a fruitful meeting for Eugene with the contacts he has made in his locality.

Finally, this coming Sunday, June 3, the REB will hold its final pre-convention meeting on: "The Self-Thinking Idea" and the Dialectics of the Body of Ideas: What is New in the Concept of Leadership? As usual, this is an off-the-cuff type of discussion and is not reported in full, but as an "In Lieu of REB Minutes".

Yours,

RAYA

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