

Oct. 22, 1985

Dear Raya,

I was glad to get the copy of the draft to the new Introduction to FFSABT, since the main question on my mind since the Plenum has been how to more fully present the philosophic distinctiveness of Marxist-Humanism at the same time as making more explicit how internal, indigenous and objective are these ideas for any given reality. Since that is pivotal to working out our Perspectives, I want to frame my response to the Introduction in the context of that question.

What is great about the first paragraph of page one is that it concretely shows why philosophy is so imperative, in moving from the idea of freedom as the force behind the movement to the need for international solidarity to root itself in that idea of freedom. The way internationalism is treated here is very new, not only because literally every paragraph for the first three pages takes up the new in South Africa in relation to the international tasks, but also because the ideological content of solidarity is not left implicit. What you posed in the 1984 Introduction to ACOT on "the two-way road of freedom struggles and ideas" has here come to full bloom. As a result the critique of the divestiture movement does not come off sounding like you are "lecturing" them but would rather have them look to what is emerging from the South African reality that they may be missing.

Likewise, I very much like the "transition" from the new in South Africa to Marxist-Humanism's contribution (bottom of page 3 to top of page 4) because you can see our concepts as tightly related to the reality. But the part I found most illuminating was how you bring in the question of language. First, because it shows how wrong are those who argue that the new in Soweto 1976 is no longer a factor, just as it argues against those who deny that the new of Soweto characterized the whole three decades of revolt. Second, because the African critique of language creates an affinity with what Marxist-Humanism has been working out on Marx's last decade.

I recall that in your Marx Centenary Tour of 1983, almost every one of your lectures developed the question of sensitivity to language, culminating of course in the addition to RLWLKM on Marx and the Black World. And yet I don't think any of us on the West Coast caught at the time the significance of what you were doing: it was seen more as an interesting "aspect" of your talks, rather than as an illumination of how to concretely forge that trail from Marx's last decade to today. Likewise, it seems to me you are practicing what you asked us to do at the Plenum, when you said selling the new book as founders centers on working with the final chapters of RLWLKM and WLDOR: you have here taken one dimension of the additions to RLWLKM, the question of language, to trace in it the nodal point that links philosophy to practicality. I admit I did not fully understand why you wanted the two new appendices by Depestre and Ngugi until I read this section.

Frank
Precisely because it is so very important a concept, I would like to see it clarified a little more, especially at the bottom of

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page 4, the sentence that begins "we were moved not just by the new platforms..." ~~instead~~, I would like to see that read "Because we saw in the African critique of the dehumanization of language an affinity with what we as Marxist-Humanists were working out during that crucial Marx Centenary Tour, Denby was most anxious to produce a new edition of our 1963 ACOT" the next sentence on "we drew a parallel" continuing as is: this way, the link between sensitivity to language and philosophy would be stated more explicitly.

This way, by the time the reader reaches p. 6 the listing of the two new appendices by Depestre and Sguai would be seen, in terms of why they are included. For the third appendix on Grenada PPL, we would need at least one sentence on p. 6 after "who shot the Leader Bishop"; perhaps it could read something like "because we consider our analysis of that tragic development as touching on the whole question of how to overcome the legacy of unfinished and aborted revolutions, we include here as appendix..." I imagine you will want to put the footnote in to CLR at that point.

Also, the end of the first paragraph on p. 4 is a good place to use the quote from Cauter that you cite in your letter to Allen; however, I would also like to see there a footnote that refers both to chapter 11 of RLWLKM on philosophy/organization and which also refers the reader to fact that you are in process of writing a new book on dialectics of the party. Likewise, I suggest that a footnote to the new book be put it on p. 5 where you quote the addition on Marx and the Black World, so the readers can see the developments Marxist-Humanism has taken since 1978.

As a whole the Introduction reads very well and does not need to become much longer. It should certainly show not alone our readers, but also ourselves, how to present philosophy more totally and more concretely, without falling into the trap of missing the threads that tie the idea to objectivity.

As I mentioned at the start of this letter, concern with how to do this in face of several deadlines, meetings, forums, etc., has been a major activity in LA over the past few weeks. In particular, we had such openings as chance to speak at South Africa rally at CSULA, class series on the new book there as well, participation at Latin American Studies Conference, several important local meetings, and Michelle and myself doing reviews of new book, etc., The work that came off the best so far was the first class on the new book at CSULA, where we tried to discuss what is happening in South Africa at the same time as providing an overview of the new book. Though it was the merest of beginnings in terms of a presentation, we did see that attempting to relate philosophy and the concrete that directly elicited a fine response from one youth, who I am sure we'll be seeing more of soon.

Despite that we seem to elicit the best from the outside when we grapple directly with the whole question of how to break down philosophy in face of objectivity, we very much still face the tendency to think the key to our perspectives, whether in terms of membership growth or projecting philosophy or preparing for bi-weekly, depends on what happens in the objective situation outside us, as

if the internal re-organization isn't key in this period. That view came out at several of our local meetings, where the absence of outsiders moved several to say "how can we make it to the bi-weekly if some movement outside us doesn't emerge first". I hope a different kind of discussion develops at Sunday's meeting on Perspectives.

As for the new organizers-to-be, they each in different ways are responding to the challenge of taking more responsibility, with Michelle who sometimes is a little too anxious to take on more, and Gene, who is often still shy about doing so, both doing good work, especially in the past several weeks. Gene is doing a fine job chairing local meetings and is putting much effort into the local study sessions on the new book. Michelle has been busy making contacts about getting the new book into women's studies classes. While we still have a ways to go in covering the town with the new book, they are at least moving in the right direction. Some new developments have emerged in labor, where Dale took responsibility to create a leaflet for a Farmer John's strike (translated into Spanish by Silvia) where we have been very active.

I still assume that the trip of Gary, Isaac and Olga is on for mid-April, in which case I will arrive "in person" to the Center May 1; if that trip should change for any reason, I'd arrive April 15. I actually was hoping to help on the question of x getting Olga a platform this weekend at the Latin American Studies Conference in Las Vegas, since one panelist who spoke was from Fort Knox Kentucky: his response to us, however, was lukewarm at best. The Conference as a whole certainly did not show new human beginnings coming from academia: less than 60 attended, and though 40 attended the panel where I spoke, most xx treated xx me as "out of left field". I did manage to sell a copy of the new book to a woman from Texas (Patricia Hunt, 341 Birchwood, Garland Texas 75041) as well as contact two professors (one who heads Chicano Studies at San Jose) who took brochures to give around to other teachers at their school to see about teaching it in classes.

Though I am not in the habit of turning down a platform, I did decline to speak at a panel on the recent developments in the Middle East this week at Santa Monica College, as the atmosphere there is most charged in the aftermath of the killing of Palestinian activist Alex Odeh and fights between pro-PLO and pro-JDL students. The whole way the U.S. has decided to dislodge the Hussein-Arafat "peace initiative" has truly been sobering, and shows that Reagan will not let relations even with NATO get in the way of his bi-polar arrogance.

I have reservations to be in Chicago over Christmas week, arriving in Chicago (Friday Dec. 27 and leaving Thursday Jan. 2; I take it you already have a copy of the paper I delivered on Bolivia; I'm enclosing the latest, a review of the new book that appeared yesterday in the CSULA University Times.

Yours,
Pete

16800

Berkeley, Ca
Oct. 23, 1985

Dear Raya:

I think that the new draft introduction to the new edition of the FFSABT pamphlet is excellent. I can hardly add anything to its comprehension, method and style, but I would like to say a few things about the draft and offer several suggestions that could probably be included in its re-writing.

I like the way the draft brings together the ideas of revolution with the new forces of revolution that have come on to the scene of battle in South Africa since we wrote the FFSABT in 1978-especially Black labor-that has given a universal character to the struggle within South Africa. And then there is the emphasis upon the international dimension of this "Undeclared Civil War" that has made it so easy for Oliver Tambo to translate the struggle against apartheid to mean the struggle for a "New America". We, of course, have said this for a long time. It caused me to refer back to what you developed in the Oct-Lead about how in this nuclear age, the ongoing struggle in South Africa has to be put in a world context, both historically and philosophically.

It was great the way the draft dealt with the Marxist-Humanist role in this ongoing struggle by introducing first Denby, that is the Black American dimension of Marxist-Humanism. Denby's internationalism leads to the new moments in Marx's last decade and then on to the struggle of Africans for liberation and our relationship to that struggle. From the covering letter that came with the draft, I see that our relationship to these struggles will be expanded by reference to our Black-Red Conference, Biko's affinity with Fanon, etc. At this point I would like to say that there has not been enough in the draft about American Black masses and Reagan's retrogression or how it was Black people that initiated the tremendous anti-apartheid movement in this country.

In point two of the covering letter, you said that it is imperative that Fanon's position on the single party be quoted. I don't know how you're going to use it, but I was wondering whether this is tied in with your decision to include in the appendix an abbreviated form of the Grenada PPL.

I have no information on the GLJ interview that you wrote about. I will search for it.

As far as pictures are concerned: (1) I have the Denby negatives and its no problem to make a photo that similar to the one that appeared on the cover of the German edition of INDIGNANT HEART. (2) I may be able to make a print from the film that I have of you and Denby in the office. (3) I have several pictures, that I took of the demonstrations before Biko Hall in Berkeley. (4) I will search for the other photos that you mention.

Finally, I know that this is going to be a great edition of FFSABT.

Yours,

16801

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Nov. 30, 1985

Dear Lou and Raya:

In all the draft introduction is very good. It encompasses many ideas while focusing on the new that has arisen in both the So.Afr. struggle and the ten years since the first edition of FFSABT. Namely the role of Black Labor in So. Afr. and Grenada. Now I say Grenada even though it is not mentioned in the text of part 2 of the intro., but that is where I think the discussion on Negritude and the division between the Black leaders and ranks leads to. Thus, the appendix on the Grenada PPL and the Oct. 1985 Lead is on target.

At the same time I think that some type of transition is needed between Part 1 on So.Afr. and Part 2 on Negritude. This transition may include what I found lacking in the introduction, a discussion of the new battle grounds in the U.S.. Thus, your mention of our Black Red Conference would be appropriate here. For it would put focus on the U.S.. Also, it would in a way bring in the question of organization, which is also implied in Part 2 of the intro.

Another approach lies in point 2 of Raya's Oct. 11, 1985 letter to Allen on what is not in the intro. However, is the quote that she refers to so much stronger than what she herself had to say on the question of Black Leadership in "The Needed American Revolution (in 1969) on page 10, para.5.

Finally, I think the footnote on CLRJ, mentioned in point 3 of the Oct. 11th letter, would be very good; and would like to see her include some of what she gave in the summation of the New York Tour.

Following is a few comments on the draft introduction itself:

1. The 2nd sentence, "the struggle for freedom ^{for the people} are deathless", is this a typo or just very unclear, since there have been many deaths?
2. Paragraph 2, the 2nd sentence is unclear. I think that the point you are trying to make is that the Idea while a force of revolution itself, it is not the only one, since you go on to name them.

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3. Paragraph 4 has broken chains of thought. It is highlighting the new that was not present in the 1st edition, Black Labor. However, somehow the point is missed. I think that the sentence, "It is now clear..." is not a complete thought. Also, you had already mentioned the involvement of youth gave the movement the Childrens Revolution on page 1 in the 2nd paragraph.

4. Paragraph 5, don't you mean that it is good that the divestment movement has finally taken on some of the capitalistic nations within themselves, and that it must not stop there (not, must stop there, which is what you have). Then that the international activists must learn from the dauntless Azanian struggle and their articulation of a new humanism that is the only path... .

5. Paragraph 6, do you mean here, what is also new or another new, when talking of the present stage of the movement.

6. The jump from paragraph 8 on page 3 (on the youth struggle against Bantu Education) to paragraph 9 on page 4 (on Denby's 1978 edition quote on Black leaders and ranks) is too abrupt. It needs some sort of transition to show this change or shift in direction.

7. Somewhere within part 2 of the new intro, there should be some statement on who Denby was for those who do not know him.

In Struggle

Ray, W

16803

Thoughts on the draft of the new introduction to FFSAABT

DEC 5 1985

Dear Lou,

Sorry for sending this so late, I was in two minds whether to send it because I felt that I didn't have anything particularly profound to say. However comrades have convinced me.

What I find most interesting is how different this introduction is from the 1978 one, obviously the whole situation has changed especially in South Africa; I think that is why the whole first paragraph is quite beautiful. Especially as it ends with the question "What to do to correct this fantastic imbalance of forces" and we're not talking of guns but the recognition that the freedom idea is the force of revolution, is reason. And then "How this is to be achieved internationally?" I think it lays out the question for the reason for this new edition. At first I was disappointed that you moved straight to the divestment movement itself, I realise that you wanted to stay with actual movements but I was expecting something on Black reality in the US--where has the Black movement gone in the last eight years--whether that be one, two, three, four miamis and the little shorties challenging the Black leaders, or the staggering poverty and hunger among Black children. (I was expecting something on the visage of Hitler in Apartheid South Africa shows the Future the Rulers hold in store for all of us-- especially Reagan, and Thatcher (in my mind). Talking to people at work about Reagan and Botha in one breath doesn't create a stir, it is what people believe. And all the transit police being let off about the murder of Michael Stewart bodes very badly for the Black community in the coming period. Whether we see the revolt or not, the quiescence as you put it in the 1978 intro is not apathy but an attempt to break through the crisis in thought. There is a tremendous interest in the South African freedom struggle as well as the continual diving into Black thought, recently one of the xerox operators was reading Malcolm X whilst running copy jobs, and yesterday another Black man was having a heated discussion about Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. I am sure this goes on all the time. At the same time there still exists that crisis of thought that can be mostly clearly seen in the Grenadan tragedy. And I appreciate very much bringing the counter revolution in Grenada into that triangular trade of ideas that must be challenged. (I do think that RD's PPL on Grenada whether in total or abbreviated, is needed, not only because it has a footnote of CLRJ (and I think it is imperative to critique him at this

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time) but also because the whole question of what happened in Grenada is imperative to be brought up in relation to the South African civil war---the AZAPO/UDF killings now, and what that could bode for the future in terms of their being full and free discussions about what happens after the revolution--I think the Soyinka quote is very pertinent to this). What has also happened, burst onto the historic scene, since 1978, is that the triangular trade of ideas and revolts has found a fourth port of entry, actually three ports, Bristol, London, Liverpool. And whereas 100,000 march in an Anti-apartheid demo in London, calling for divestment, the Black revolt is demanding that those demonstrators not separate their fight against apartheid from the fight against racism at home whilst it, the black movement, is finding an affinity with the Azanian youth who are putting their lives on the line for freedom. To me this is how the idea of freedom crosses national boundaries and become concrete--challenging the movement itself, as it raises up human relationships within the movement.

I think the inspiration for all the artists getting together against Apartheid has certainly come from the Youth. On the album Sun City they are certainly not limiting themselves to divestment or not playing Sun city but talking of "Revolutionary Situation" and attacking "racism in our own back yard", and Reagan's backing of Apartheid. South African musicians so much wanted to be on the Album, and named, that they are prepared to put their lives on the line against apartheid. Some back up vocals are provided the Dunnes Stores strikers (from Ireland). So I think the youth are already trying to go beyond divestment in their activities and thoughts.

I think bringing in the category of Black Labour as the new is very important and the real dividing line between now and 1976. In the Black paper, the Sowetan of October 3 a delegate of the South African Black Municipal Allied Workers Union (Sabmawu) said at the 25th world congress of the Post Telecommunication Telegraph International (I don't know what the hell this is) , "The black workers in South Africa neither owns nor has any control over the goods he produces, and like his products the worker is reduced to the level of a commodity. The Black worker has a feeling of misery rather than well being, and does not develop freely his mental and physical energies but is physically exhausted and mentally debased. A low monetary value is placed on the worker's head and the cost of his labour assessed in the same way or even less than the cost of machinery or raw material." Sounds like Marx, but his name is not mentioned.

On page two of the introduction, and what really permeates right thr-

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ough is the articulation of a new humanism as the only path for revolutionaries--both in South Africa and the struggle against apartheid. However I feel the quote from Tambo doesn't really go here. He isn't talking about H^umanism, I guess I wouldn't call him a humanist. Why is it here? I like the rest of P3 especially "the Black youth of South Africa have made the process of unchaining the Black mind from the apartheid gulag the very method of revolution itself". That is very beautifully put. I always liked that quote from Denby on the relationship of Fanon to Biko and I think pages 4-6 are vvery fine and clear though I was hoping to see something more about Fanon on the divisions between the leaders and the masses but I guess the reader will find it in the text itself and if the Grenada PPL is included it will be found in there.

I think the final paragraph is very challenging and ending with the quote from Soyinka is very concrete as it leads to the actual pages of the pamphlet.

Now down to some nitty gritty!

The secon para of P1 I think should read "not only the idea-of freedom- that is a force" unless you are talking of idea in the hegelian sense, then I think that should be said.

The point about "children's revolution" is repeated on page 2, I think it only needs to be said once.

P2 para 2 do ypu think the quote, which is not in quotation marks, "which has made every revolt walk in the shado of massacre" be footnoted to WLDOR? Later in that para. there is a missing NOT "it must NOT stop there.". and a line after I think should read "dauntless Azanian". By the way is Phyllis Ntantala's in memoriam to Sobukwe in News & Letters?

Freedom,
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