

Jan 26, 1968

To the ABB
Dear Colleagues:

The current outbreak of neo-fascist racism, brought to a new violence by the 6 years of Reagan's retrogression, not only in the South, but in the North -- and not only in Forsyth County, Georgia but in Howard Beach, New York City, where a new kind of lynching (running over a fleeing black with a speeding auto driven by a white) was carried out -- makes it imperative to look at the whole history of how American civilization continues to be on trial. This history is not just a matter of a look at a single period. It demands the whole of the Marxist-humanist Archives before you can see the other, absolute opposite of this racism -- the revolutionary Black Dimension as ONGOING.

This is why I am glad to report that though this issue of NLI is one where Lou does not have to write a column, he has volunteered to write either a column, or an Essay, or an Editorial, on Black History Month. If Allen is doing the very same thing, then Hurrah! This is a very different Black History Month, and in fact I want that event analyzed not only by our Black columnists, but Kevin, in his Lead on the State of the Union, should do more than cross-reference to the other two, as they, in turn, will cross-reference the Lead.

Indeed, it is not a question for the REB-NEB alone. Certainly this Black History Month will be celebrated throughout the USA, and celebrated in a very new way. The newness, however, on the part of the liberals, cannot be made into an excuse to forget their own history. After all, the Civil War was the bloodiest and longest war seen to that time. And it was needed just to put an end to slavery in the U.S. It is that birthmark of American history that is still so deeply rooted that it becomes the target not just of Reagan's retrogression, as with what they are now doing with the anniversary of the Constitution, but what Kennedy liberalism attempted to do with the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1963. Which is why the very first Introduction to American Civilization on Trial, entitled "Of Patriots, Scoundrels and Slave-Masters", opened with:

"Subversive is a favorite expression of the FBI, the Presidency, the Attorney General and Congress. J. Edgar Hoover, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, not to mention Congress and the mad dog it considers its watchdog-- the House Unamerican Activities Committee-- are certainly armed with immense, with world-shaking powers, which they, in their search, harassment and persecution of what they conceive to be subversive, use individually and collectively. Yet all these king's horses and all these king's men can't seem to uncover the most openly read and popular hate sheet calling itself "Rebel Underground", circulated on the University of Mississippi campus..."

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Each local will, I'm sure, participate in the major events of Black History Month. Our new way of participating in it will concretize Black History Month by relating current events, history, dialectics of development in these retrogressive years, to the manner in which we are putting a special ad in this upcoming issue of NAL, directly following the end of Lou's article. The ad will offer a combination of ACOT, Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal, and a special 6-month sub to the biweekly-- all at greatly reduced prices.

This specific period I'm suggesting to Lou begins with the 1960s. We will have to "skip" the earliest history from the Archives (the 70s and 80s). Just as the period pointed a direction to the 1940s and 50s, so the 1940s points from the new stage of Black revolt with the March on Washington Movement against the Jim Crow Army to the beginnings not alone of the Black Revolution in the USA, but in South Africa. This will mean that the Archives need to be brought into the article in more than abbreviated form only with the 1960s.

It is of the essence to show that there has never been any separation between past and present and future on the question of the Black Dimension. And that holds both for the U.S. and for Africa. The reason it remains so important is that it was still in the 1950s when I considered that so crucial was the coming birth of a Third World as a new stage both historically and philosophically, that Nationalism, Communism, Marxist Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions needed to be made a category along with Marxism and Freedom -- a category directed against the administrative mentality which was the new enemy within the revolutionary movement. Nor was it an accident that it came precisely at the time when I didn't consider West Europe and the U.S. and all the "advanced" countries advanced philosophically, ideologically, or even culturally. The End of Ideology was my enemy and the joke against Bell was "the man is always in search of something and very deliberately doesn't find it."

Yours,

Raya

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