

SOCIALISM UNDER ATTACK:

Introduction

There is an organised ideological attack on socialists presently being undertaken by National Democratic elements. This has been under the cover of the struggle between 'populists' and 'workerists'. There is no doubt that syndicalism (the ideology to which workerists subscribe), which holds that trade unionism is the main or even the only basis for political involvement, must be rejected as being incorrect.

"Populists" are people who subscribe to the National Democratic struggle. This is the struggle against apartheid and includes members of all classes (including capitalists) who oppose apartheid. In fact, capitalists are not prevented from taking a leadership role in the struggle against apartheid (i.e. the national democratic stage).

There are some persons involved in the National Democratic struggle who believe that this is the first stage, the second stage being the struggle for socialism. However, no time limit is set for this stage. In fact, we may arrive at a situation where persons who were leaders in the National Democratic struggle will lead the fight **against** socialism. However, the strategy used by the 'populists' of labelling all socialists as 'workerists' is an attempt to tar them with the syndicalist brush.

Populist Strategy

The label 'workerist' has been used against socialists by those critical of their refusal to be aligned to the UDF. As a 'Work in Progress' contributor neatly put it: "These critics appear to mean that unions who have remained outside the UDF have adopted a position that workers should go it alone without allying to other popular forces. But insistence on a clear definition of where the working class begins and ends is not 'workerism'. It is sound socialist practise, and of concern to all organisations of the working class."

Why should socialists subscribe to an organisation which does not have the interests of the working class, as a class, at heart? There is no indication of this, either in the

UDF's express policy statements or in its strategy and least of all in the public statements by its leaders. It ignores basic principles of democracy like mandates, accountability and working class control. By calling people "workerists", the populists are attempting to coerce them into an alliance where they can be dominated and manipulated. One can almost detect a fear on their parts of workers being in control of their own democratic organisations, and making decisions for themselves. The 'workerist smear' is no more than a tactic by National Democrats to isolate and neutralise socialists. Even their earlier socialist rhetoric has died away.

National Democrats and Liberals

We see more and more appeal by the UDF and its allies to liberals and their representatives in the racist parliament, the PFP. They are willing to share platforms with these liberals, yet refuse to do so with other organisations in the liberation movement such as Azapo, National Forum, and with worker organisations such as the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU - previously Cusa-Azactu).

The UDF publicity secretary stated recently, "We have a special message for PFP supporters: Turn away from the racists, look towards the majority." (Sunday Star 19/4/87). Yet there has been no call from either the UDF or from any of its affiliates for a boycott of these elections. By implication, one must conclude that effectively they are saying: If you are going to vote, vote for the PFP. Why the contradiction and ambiguity when successful boycott campaigns against other racist elections like the tricameral system and the Black Local Authorities were mounted? What is interesting is that the UDF sees itself as having the same constituency as the PFP. Winnie Mandela actually called for whites to vote for the PFP! (Weekly Mail and Business Day).

National Democrats and big business

The ongoing discussions between

the largest liberation movement and big business are worrying because of the exclusion of an internal working class perspective to ensure that the latter's interests are not ignored. Tony Bloom, when asked whether he would operate in a nationalised industry, expressed reservations and said that he was assured there would "only be a change of shareholders".

Recently, we have had the controversy of the First National Bank (Barclays) providing the finance for UDF advertisements. Without going into who knew what, UDF's position as regards the Managing Director of Barclays, Chris Ball, is enlightening. The UDF treasurer has been quoted as saying that if the bank took any action against Ball, "the UDF will certainly take a very dim view of it, and the bank can expect wide reaction". (Weekly Mail 30/4/87). Can we in future expect the UDF to ask worker organisations to support one capitalist over another in their internal disputes?

A basic feature of capitalism is the conflict between the working class and the ruling capitalist class. True freedom through socialism will only triumph with the victory of the working class over the capitalists. Yet, when one points out this basic truth, one is accused by the National Democrats of being divisive and 'workerist'. We are called upon to work together with capitalists, the

**Bailing
out
the
system**



THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE

very people who gain the most from the present racist-capitalist structure.

Winnie Mandela, in a recent speech to the congress of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), said: "All responsible South Africans have a duty to save our country from the lunacy of apartheid. It is in this area that the importance of NUM, COSATU and all other relevant labour movements, in joint consultation with business sector cannot be overemphasised; even though only until recently the business sector has been part and parcel of the status quo and will be viewed with suspicion for a long time by the worker who has suffered just as much under business apartheid". She goes on in the same speech to say: "Hand in hand with true business patriots of this land, we shall ensure that the wealth of the country increases significantly and continuously and that it is shared equitably by all the people to ensure their democratic material and spiritual upliftment and well-being".

It was at this congress that NUM adopted the Freedom Charter, which is acknowledged even by its supporters to be no more than a national democratic document.



National democrats and socialists within its ranks

A criticism of proponents of the two-stage theory i.e. first the National Democratic struggle and then the socialist struggle, is that certain elements would hijack the National Democratic struggle, and ensure that the socialist revolution would not come about, even if it was through brutal repression.

In S.A., however, the witch-hunt has begun even before the attainment of the first stage. In the UDF's own publication, 'Isizwe', in an article entitled "Errors of Workerism", they refer to "Workerism in National Democratic clothing". They are critical of these "workerists in National Democratic clothing" who would like to see the UDF become a socialist worker's party". One is tempted to ask what is wrong with this. Surely it would be something every socialist should strive for? Reading on, one again sees that they are more concerned with the liberals within their ranks than with the workers: "There are also other patriotic democrats who are not necessarily socialist making a large contribution to the struggle. While encouraging debate and discussion about the nature of change in a future S.A., we must also safeguard and deepen our unity".

Having taken certain positions on socialism, debate is actively discouraged. The South African Youth Congress (SAYCO), having adopted the Freedom Charter, stated through an executive

member: "We consider it in its entirety and refuse to debate its socialist or bourgeois nature".

National democrats and trade unions

Any trade union outside the COSATU structure which does not submit itself to the control or manipulation of the National Democrats is labelled as reactionary. There are no serious attempts at looking at the policies of NACTU, a federation representing over 600 000 workers. This arrogance is compounded by refusing to share any platform with any worker from NACTU.

The strategy within COSATU is to apply the 'workerist' label to any trade union that holds a socialist as opposed to a national democratic position. A debate in the Witwatersrand Regional Congress of COSATU on the 12/4/87, is an indication of the strategy of the National Democrats: In a motion in connection with the white elections, there was a clause calling for "a non-racial, democratic S.A." The Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) proposed an amendment calling for "a non-racial, democratic, socialist S.A." A vice-president of COSATU objected to including 'socialist' in the clause as certain religious groups and sangomas would object!

The position taken by the General and Allied Workers Union (GAWU) was that the amendment would undermine the 2-stage struggle and that socialism was 'a secret



THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE CONTINUED.

weapon". Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) delegates pointed out that NUM had a banner at its congress proclaiming socialism. For workers, socialism meant workers' control of the means of production, distribution and exchange and asked whether the congress accepted this. Furthermore, historically, many religiously-inclined people have supported socialism.

After much discussion, whilst it was felt that the delegates arguing for socialism won the debate, the block vote of NUM was carried and socialism was dropped from the clause. Thus, the National Democrats are so confident of their position that they are even going so far as to drop the socialist rhetoric they initially proclaimed.

The Socialist Alternative

The ideological battle is far from lost. More and more socialists both within and outside of the national democratic movement are realising that to ensure victory

for the working class and socialism, the attacks by the National Democrats on socialists must be resisted.

In a political seminar on the 20/2/87, MAWU concluded that alliances with political organisations should be based on the following criteria:

1. The working class can only enter strategic alliances with:
 - (a) progressive anti-capitalist organisations
 - (b) organisations that agree with and advance the principles of the working class struggle for socialism
 - (c) organisations that are reliable – they cannot on the one hand support the working class and at the same time align themselves with capitalist organisations and institutions.
2. The alliance should be based on the following principles:
 - (a) political and organisational independence
 - (b) working class leadership

- of the alliance
- (c) the right to criticise and freedom of speech
- (d) mandates and accountability of leadership to a clearly defined constituency
- (e) worker control and active participation
- (f) socialism

Conclusion

All socialists should bear in mind what Marx said: "As soon as it becomes necessary to fight such a (common) enemy directly, the interests of both parties fall together for the moment And then, as soon as victory has been achieved, the petty bourgeoisie will endeavour to annex it for themselves. They will call upon the workers to keep the peace and return to their work in order to avoid (so-called) excesses, and then proceed to cut the workers off from the fruits of victory."

This is a lesson all socialists should remember. Our actions today will determine our future society. **The future lies in the present.**

SACOS CONFERENCE

The South African Council on Sport held its biennial conference on the 4-5 April in Newclare, Johannesburg.

Among the resolutions taken were:

- * the lifting of the banning on the use of so-called 'multinational' hotels
- * to mark June 16th, no sport will be played from the 13-17 June
- * to give support to the National Union of Mineworkers, which intends taking control of sporting activities at the mines
- * to support COSATU in its demand to establish a 40-hour working week
- * to enter into dialogue with all progressive political organi-

sations

At the conference, an attempt was made to oust president of SACOS, Frank van der Horst, and replace him with Rev. Arnold Stofile, a UDF leader in the Border Region. Later though Rev. Stofile's nomination was withdrawn. Rev. Stofile is on trial in Ciskei. Frank van der Horst retained the presidency of SACOS.

A delegate from NACOS stated at the meeting that the UDF was not happy with the present leadership of SACOS because of their non-aligned political stance. He went further to say that the UDF would take over SACOS. This attempt clearly failed.



Mr van der Horst presenting a sports trophy

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Rev. Stofile has been found guilty of terrorism by the fascist Ciskei courts and sentenced to 11 years imprisonment. We would like to express our solidarity with Rev. Stofile and all the other comrades languishing in detention and imprisonment.