

seventies. Notably, this wave of strikes comes in the wake of the cosmetic labour reforms introduced after the Wiehahn report which was conceived as a big confidence t r i c k by those who hatched it, the most 'flexible' Broederbond diehards. Included in this racists' 'calculation' was an attempt to draw the black trade union movement into the draft of their system. However, in this Year of the South African Worker, the workers of our country are asserting to make this year a real success, out-witting the tentacles of the National Manpower Commission (NMC) and rising to the majestic heights, to the solid rock of class-brotherhood.

Of no less importance is that this snowballing workers' actions should reach their logical climax, the demands of the Freedom Charter. This can only come through intensified mobilisation of our working class.

THE ANATOMY OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS

- Gladstone Moroka

NAIROBI - A meeting of the South African Black Consciousness movement planned to be held in Nairobi had to be cancelled because of the Kenya government's refusal to grant entry visas.

An official of the Christian Council of Kenya revealed here today that the meeting was to have begun on December 28 and more than 100 participants had been expected from South Africa, Britain and other countries.

- "The Star". January 3, 1980 -

The Black Consciousness Movement in our country has passed under the scrutiny of several microscopes of doubtful repute which made attempts to secure a place for its naive overtures under the sun of our revolution as an ideology; without a proper look into its pitfalls which would jeopardise our struggle for a democratic South Africa. These critics are aware of this.

With that I am particularly referring to i t s struggle

against its weakness as a theory of liberation. The experience of other struggles has clearly highlighted that in the general framework of daily struggle this battle is the most difficult since it is the expression of the internal contradictions in the socio-economic and cultural reality of the particular country. Thus it becomes an inevitable truth that any ideology or theory which is not based on a genuine knowledge and understanding of this fundamental reality runs the risk of being waylaid by the enemy in the long run.

PREMISE

Working from the true premise that the development of a phenomenon in movement in South Africa, whatever its external appearance, depends mainly on its internal characteristics, it is by our own efforts and sacrifices that our political and economic reality can be transformed. But of greater significance is that these efforts and sacrifices should be based on a detailed and true knowledge of our reality. The understanding of this principle will bring home the realisation that however similar our reality might seem to be with other oppressed people, however alike our oppressors, "national liberation and social revolution" remain the result of the particular people's experience, more or less influenced by external factors and still essentially set and formed by that people's reality. It therefore becomes imperative that certainty of successfully carrying out the revolution and attaining liberation lies in the application of the correct solution to the internal contradictions.

The ideological deficiencies of Black Consciousness, which are so profoundly outlined by Toussaint's article - "Fallen Among Liberals" (of AC No. 78, Third Quarter, 1979) and demonstrated still by its lack of appeal to the mass of the oppressed, is basically due to ignorance of the South African historical reality which it claims to transform. Its organisational content of students and intellectuals is the influence of external factors and to a great extent ignores the accumulated experience and methods of movement, the African National Congress, over 68 years of struggle. And, like its American counterpart its advocates show a tendency of falling victims to commercialisation in the form of share-owning 'companies' living in a stage of euphoria.

Careful study of literature dealing with the developments of the Black Consciousness activities in the USA reveals a distinct 'integration-Segregation-integration' movement depending on the prevalent conditions of struggle. The end of World

War II and the UN Declaration of the Human Rights saw an unprecedented impetus being given to the civil rights movement and the late 50s heralded the rise of such leaders as Martin Luther King, Jr., championing the integration cause. Non-violence, demonstrations, sit-ins became the main political tactic for integration. The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), Student Action Committees and other non-violent movements joined hands in the fray.

It was not long that shortcomings of this method of struggle, especially its lack of a genuine theory of liberation, took its toll. The lack of understanding that the efforts and sacrifices in a people's struggle would be based on the detailed knowledge of reality i.e. the internal contradictions within American society, made this Black Consciousness or Black Power Movement vulnerable to capital. It proved too weak for "Buy Black", "Black this, Black that and Black Businessmen". Capital had won the fray and it still has no colour. It has drowned all this noble but naive cause "in the icy water of egotistical calculation".

APEX

The mid 60s saw the apex of the wave of Black Consciousness in the USA and with it emerged supporting literature from the pen of its adherents; Soledad Brothers, Soul on Ice, etc., and Western thinkers who had seen the role of students in America and France (1967-68) as a sign of the new trend of students being the active force, the 'revolutionary class', Herbert Marcuse's writings being prominent among these. Other literary influence on Black Consciousness in South Africa were the writings of Paulo Freire and this trend (Theology of Liberation, Education for Liberation) is prominent in the Western Cape. But all in all what one wants to point out is the emergence of Black Consciousness in South Africa during the 60s was not at all accidental. The trend adopted by the Black bloc of students in the University Christian Movement (UCM) and NUSAS to break away was not by chance; it was in keeping with the trends in other parts of the world.

The latter assertion does not mean that some of the ideological trends do not have their historical basis in the experience of the South African struggle. The realisation of the need to rally together irrespective of language, customs, etc., of Black Consciousness can be traced as far back as the aim and purpose of the formation of the ANC; Seme's statement of

"these aberrations of the Xhosa-Fingo feud, the animosity that exists between the Zulus and the Tongas... we are one people" clearly highlights this fact. Not to mention Lembede's search for an ideology aimed at the psychological liberation of the oppressed from "the crippling complexes of inferiority and dependence imposed... at the hands of the Whites". He believed in the articulation of an ideology to inculcate one's own worth, a p r i d e in their past and a sense of self-reliance. These are the basic tenets of Black Consciousness which have a deep-rooted base in the thorny path of our struggle, but what seem to have taken the primary role in determining its development is the external factor which, of course, found fertile ground in our reality and was able to nurture the element of exclusiveness. The "go it alone" spirit of "Black man you are on your own" illustrates ignorance of our r i c h experience in struggle and lack of knowledge of the detailed knowledge of the basic contradictions of our struggle.

FAILURE

One does not have to look far in order to find the source of the failure of tactics used by Black Consciousness proponents, for example, failure to determine whether to participate, or not, in government created organs, to reach the masses.

When one looks at the diverse prevalent trends of Black Consciousness and tries at the same time to trace their motive force, what comes to the eye is their failure (both abroad and in South Africa) to see the division, the element of exclusiveness as being one of the factors for the thriving of capitalism and imperialism. The bourgeoisie in America thrives on the division between White and Black, between Puerto Rican and Italo-American, between American-Jew and White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (so-called WASPS) etc. A division which, encouraged through concession allocated to one racial group at the expense of another, is meant to keep the masses in a state of permanent inter-racial turmoil so that bickering at each other, they (the masses) fail to see their historical role as the motive force of history. Concessions given to a few in building a buffer become the dangling carrot, and the bourgeoisie mass media plays a prominent role in this aspect of showing how through hard work (toil?) it is possible 'to make-it'. In this connection Pace in South Africa plays the same role that Ebony and Essence do in the USA.

The inherent ignorance of this principle is seen repeated in the South African context by the Black Consciousness Movements' failure to reconcile itself with historical reality - this forms the dilemma it is faced with in the spectrum of revolution, its nemesis. The correct solution of which depends entirely on its development of revolutionary consciousness, and the same development lies in the casual chain of genuine knowledge based on understanding of reality and the development phenomena in motion's dependence on internal characteristics.

This detailed knowledge is acquired through practice and experience between the various categories characterising this reality.

In that sense it becomes a vital and a matter of principle, knowing and defining who your enemy is, and also a clear understanding of your ally. It is then that the next step of drawing and formulating your tactics; which is crucial and decisive, becomes even simpler, leaving you enough room for adjustment and re-adjustment, thereby taking a heavy load off your shoulders. You are now left with a clear map of your path.



"WE, THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA, DECLARE FOR ALL OUR COUNTRY AND THE WORLD TO KNOW: THAT SOUTH AFRICA BELONGS TO ALL WHO LIVE IN IT, BLACK AND WHITE, AND THAT NO GOVERNMENT CAN JUSTLY CLAIM AUTHORITY UNLESS IT IS BASED ON THE WILL OF ALL THE PEOPLE..."

- THE FREEDOM CHARTER -