

CAN THE CONGRESS OF DEMOCRATS WIN MASS SUPPORT?

A Criticism By R. PRESS

THE article by T. Johnson in the September "Liberation" is an attempt to analyse the situation in which the white electorate finds itself under the rule of Nat fascism. Although the analysis is on the whole sound, there are, I feel, a number of factors, important basic factors, which he has neglected.

In all political situations, it is economics which pays the piper and calls the tune, underlying his statement on page 20:

"This creates a conflict within the class: conflict between the less reactionary sections and the most reactionary, which has control of the State."

is the more vital and basic reason for this conflict, the rise of Afrikaner Capital as outlined in New Age by Mr. Dickenson. This surely is the reason for conflict between secondary industry which backs the more liberal U.P. and the farmers who back the Nats. This is the reason why the Nats are imposing their apartheid on Springs, Benoni and Alexandra Township, since they wish to drive labour to the farmers and the rural districts for the benefit of Nat Capitalism, and at the expense of secondary industry largely owned by English-speaking Europeans.

This is also the reason why the U.P. is moving towards the Nat Camp. The Chamber of Mines and their fellow travellers are well aware that their basic economic needs will be served by the State, although perhaps better by the right-wing U.P. than by the Nats.

Here also, I feel, rests the present cause for the vacillating of the U.P., the division within it of those who serve monopoly capitalism and those who serve the petty proprietors.

There is yet another contradiction which Mr. Johnson touches upon but again does not analyse sufficiently.

"Until recently, white South Africans, workers and petty bourgeoisie, have had a stake in the colonial exploitation of the non-white people in the shape of relatively high living standards and advantageous social and political privileges."

And again:

"They reckon, however, without the manifold contradictions and conflicts which fascism engenders and the effect of these on the economic, social and political conditions of this group, and more

especially of that section of it which is discriminated against in favour of the supporters of the regime.”

Here the reference is to the contradiction between capital and labour. In this respect the situation is very similar to the state of politics and economics in Great Britain. The European working class has been brought off, and only economics, a depression, or the decay of Afrikaner Capitalism (which has not yet set in) will bring this section to the side of the African workers and peasants.

In the light of the above, to say “Already, in the process of achieving power, to gain the support of the most backward element, the Nationalist Party has had to divide the group; it has had to drive a wedge into it,” is to put the cart before the horse.

The split is the result of economics and not caused by the Nationalists. It may well be, however, that their methods and propaganda have increased the breach, but they know that it is not to their advantage, and they are trying to close the gap.

In the light of this analysis, I feel we cannot expect those sections of the Europeans who get the sticky end of the fascist bargain to come over to the side of the Non-Europeans, where they would lose those economic privileges which they are fighting to preserve from fascism.

The European monopolists are going—or have already gone—over to the Nats. The petty bourgeoisie proprietors are caught between two stools, loss of privilege and economic status to the Nats, and the prospect of economic competition from the non-white bourgeoisie and a rising militancy and wage demands by the non-white workers. The European worker has not yet been reduced to seeking the hand of his black brother.

I agree, there is the prospect of increased support for C.O.D., there is the possibility of more people sacrificing their economics for the sake of honesty and justice, but let us not expect a mass change of heart.

C.O.D. has a vital role to play in the struggle against the Government, against white domination. Its magnificent workers stand out as the final refutation of the apartheid lie.

All men are brothers, black and white. The struggle is not of black against white, but of justice against tyranny, peace and friendship against war and hate. The Freedom Charter against apartheid.

The Congress of Democrats shall inherit the leadership of European South Africans. Although the majority of anti-Nationalists, anti-fascists, may not now, nor in the near future, see their way clear to stand with us, and may, when the final struggle draws close stand aside in apathy, born of individualism; when freedom is won, when democracy is achieved, we shall inherit the leadership of white South Africans and show them the way mapped out by the Congress movement and the Freedom Charter.

To be worthy of this role, we must now be consistent, staunch and fearless in the face of the blows of fascism. We must undauntedly proclaim our stand and never waver from our aim. Now when the struggle grows fiercer, must we redouble our efforts, widen our sphere of activity, and proclaim our organisation and our aims fearlessly and independently.