

have called Establishment Liberalism from the liberal camp simply because it does not conform to a 'pure' model of liberalism as defined by de Beer.

Botha's reformism is itself not liberal; its authoritarianism, its continuing obsession with ethnicity, and its bureaucratic interference in the labour market, are together sufficient to disprove its liberal credentials. However, given the context of a conservative-reformist bourgeois class - and an Establishment Liberalism ready to take whatever it can get from the 'recalcitrant Nats' - an unhappy marriage between the regime and the right wing of liberalism becomes conceivable.

ON 'LIBERAL' RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

If de Beer's one concern is to define a whole section of the 'reformist' opposition out of the liberal camp, his other is to offer a definition of liberal values which allows a marriage of liberalism and socialism to appear relatively uncomplicated. Concepts like 'freedom', 'equality', 'individual rights' and 'universal franchise', we are told, 'have acquired sufficient autonomy' to have no necessary relationship to capitalism; they can, in consequence, be given a real socialist content. Were this not so, FOSATU's advocacy of universal franchise during the referendum would indicate that it is liberal and thus 'soft on capitalism'. Instead of judging movements on the basis of their pronouncements we should, de Beer concludes, examine their overall programme.

Everything here depends on how one formulates this argument. A socialist is perfectly justified in demanding a political order which respects universal franchise, party competition, civil liberties and so on. Indeed, the uneven record of 'actual socialism' in the twentieth century has led many in the European left to conclude that no democratic socialism is possible without such basic freedoms. De Beer's error is to portray these as 'liberal freedoms' when in fact liberalism has never enjoyed an exclusive claim on them. In the late nineteenth century it was the working class movement which demanded full civil freedoms and universal

franchise, and the bourgeoisie which resisted. The liberal - and therefore capitalist - appropriation and monopolisation of these concepts since roughly the Second World War is perhaps one of the most dramatic developments of the second half of this century. If these concepts are to be recaptured by the left, it can only be on the basis of their disarticulation from liberal discourse. Liberalism is indissolubly linked to capitalism; libertarianism is not. Absorbing liberals into socialist-oriented political alliances ultimately requires not that their liberal but that their libertarian principles be given coherent socialist content. It requires that they should eventually cease to be liberals. It is because he ignores the necessity for this qualitative break that de Beer is able to present liberalism as a political partner which socialists can court without danger ■



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