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SOCIALIST PARTY, U.S.A.

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The Militant  
14 Charles Lane  
New York, NY 10014

Dear Comrades:

I have been following the Militant newspaper reports of the speaking tour of Drake Koka over the past weeks. It is praiseworthy that the Socialist Workers Party has offered us the opportunity to hear a representative of the "Black Consciousness" movement and the Black Allied Workers Union. Koka, and the late Steve Biko, have given Western Marxists a better understanding of the ideological and social nature of their movement in southern Africa.

I, along with several other members of the Debs Caucus of the Socialist Party, USA, attended the speaking engagement of Mr. Koka on November 1 here in Milwaukee. Most of us were a little perplexed at several statements made by Koka. We were also concerned by what Osborne Hart of the SWP did not say during his brief statement at the same meeting.

We recognize that Koka himself is not a Marxist-Leninist or a Socialist per se, but he does espouse a vague anti-racist and anti-imperialist concept of "Black communalism". Koka never quite explained what he meant, but he did state that South Africa was the one nation on the African continent that was still not "liberated". We Marxists of course had to balk at this slander against the oppressed working and poor citizens of the Central African Empire, Uganda, Morocco, Zaire and not to mention Zimbabwe and other neo-colonial regimes.

When questioned about the role the white proletariat plays in the liberation movement, Koka stated "the white proletariat are the beneficiaries of racism... they are the government". This, comrades, is nothing short of a classic statement of class betrayal. We clearly recognize the divide and conquer tactics of the bourgeoisie against all African workers, but to state that the white proletariat is the government is plainly absurd. To accept this formulation we would have to defend South Africa as we do other deformed workers states.

Koka's response to another question caused us further concern.

"What are the political parties involved in the liberation struggle and what do you see as their role?" Koka replied: "We have no political parties to contest elections" because we are not permitted to openly advocate our ideas. "We are building a political movement to carry forward the revolution". We wonder

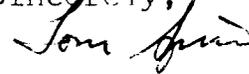
where Lenin and the Bolsheviks would be if they had this narrow conception of the role of a party in Czarist Russia.

Koka ended his talk with a formulation much like the Black ultra-nationalists many Marxists encountered in the New Left of the Sixties. On the question of divestment he said "I've got the right to say 'U.S. foreign investment out.' There can be no debate." It seems to me that divestment is a strategy that needs further debate and to cut off debate is undialectical to say the least.

Ultimately we cannot fault Drake Koka for all his anti-Marxist positions. After all he doesn't claim to be a socialist. Comrade Hart and the SWP, however, should make it a point to critique Koka's address in a serious and comradely way from a revolutionary Marxist perspective. Hart's comments were solely on the need to help finance Mr. Koka's tour. In fact no one, except for individuals in the 75% Left audience even brought up socialism. Additionally, Comrade Hart was introduced as a NAACP activist and no mention was made of his association with the SWP.

Finally, I suggest as Marxists we put forward the perspective of Black Consciousness alone, No; Black and Class Consciousness together, Yes.

Sincerely,



Tom Spiro, member of the  
Debs Caucus of the SPUSA

cc: Milwaukee Committee on Southern Africa  
Milwaukee Chapter of the SWP  
National Office of the SPUSA