

# **Grasp More Firmly the Banner of Marxism-Leninism**

**LEAD-IN STATEMENT TO THE NATIONAL SECRETARIAT,  
CPNZ, TO A RECENT PLENUM OF THE  
NATIONAL COMMITTEE**

**T**HE object of this meeting is to further examine our practice so we can eliminate the negative trends and develop the positive trends. Only in this way can we further develop a revolutionary party able to play a fuller part in the world revolutionary movement. As the report says, "At this stage of the struggle of two lines the particular feature to which we must give attention is the development of party leadership."

The report gives a clear lead in the direction of development and this lead embraces a number of points, all of which can be summed up as the act of grasping more firmly the banner of Marxism-Leninism and carrying it forward; this is the positive Marxist-Leninist line of advance. It involves the ideological foundations of our party, problems of leadership and practical tasks in becoming an effective party of the working class.

How do we go about tackling these matters? We use the dialectical materialist approach. By doing this we discover the laws of development as they really are and not as we might wish or fear. By this method we align ourselves with the positive aspects of that reality, with the advancing, developing and successful aspects. We learn to avoid the mistakes that arise from aligning ourselves with the negative, dying and unsuccessful aspects. We learn to realise that as everything is in constant movement then our examination of reality must be continual; otherwise we become dogmatists trying to operate on yesterday's assessments. By this method we avoid the subjectivity, sectarianism, stereotypism, opportunism, dogmatism and other errors that spring from the idealist approach to problems.

We recognise the fundamental contradiction in the process of developing the party — the struggle between Marxist-Leninist ideology and practice and bourgeois ideology and practice (expressed in the two-line struggle). We recognise the material conditions of the capitalist social system that give rise to this continual struggle.

## **EMERGENCE OF TWO LINES**

The Marxist-Leninist line first appeared with the formation of the party in 1921. This was a qualitative result of the development of the New Zealand working class. But, in an imperialist world where influential sections of the working class can be

materially and ideologically corrupted and deluded, there also emerged the influence of bourgeois ideas and practice inside the party in 1921. Thus there has been a continuous Marxist-Leninist line and a continuous bourgeois line since then. And it will continue long after the New Zealand working class has seized state power, as the experience of our comrades overseas is showing.

The continual struggle between these two lines has proved in practice — and what other way is there of proving anything — what is on the side of the positive aspect of the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. We have accumulated a big treasury of positive experience and theory. But until fairly recently this two-line struggle has had an element of blindness about it. It was not seen fully for what it is. It was regarded as a clash between the “goodies and those “baddies” who accidentally cropped up from time to time. It is important to remember this when we examine our methods of criticism and self-criticism because such blindness, leading to improper methods of criticism, is in itself an aspect of the bourgeois style of work, of the bourgeois line. It stops us examining the realities of life by putting the blame solely on one or two individuals. It leads to disruptive antagonisms between comrades rather than antagonisms against the enemy class.

### MODERN REVISIONISM

Our study of the realities around us and the laws of development also shows us that, whereas social-democracy was once the main obstruction in the broad revolutionary movement because it could delude the working class, it has been increasingly exposed as a non-revolutionary, non-proletarian, purely capitalist party using the capitalist form of parliament to obstruct revolutionary progress. But the same bribing and corrupting material forces of imperialism are still at work, aided by the new imperialism trading as socialism, the social-imperialism of the revisionist “Communist” Party of the Soviet Union. These material factors have developed a new main obstruction — modern revisionism with its dangerous illusions about peaceful parliamentary transition to socialism, with its class collaboration, with its narrow nationalism, conspiracy, opportunism and great nation and great individual chauvinism. With social democracy losing its influence, it is the revisionists who step in to fill the vacuum, and serve the class enemy with their delusion, disruptions and sell-outs. This is the role played clearly by the Socialist Unity Party, more cunningly by the Manson-Bailey group and the self-inflated McArthur sitting in his ivory tower and using his brand of Marxism-Leninism as a dogma to serve his own interests. These revisionists in their many disguises are the fifth column of the class enemy within the broad revolutionary movement. Such revisionism is the end product of the bourgeois line.

We must not confuse mistakes and temporary deviations inside the party with the revisionists. Mistakes can lead to revisionism but that is a qualitative stage afflicting either an individual or a party when the Marxist-Leninist line is overwhelmed. We all make mistakes more rapidly. ~~And remember there is only one way to~~ Anyone claiming to be infallible is no Marxist-Leninist. Mistakes arise when we fail to align ourselves with the positive developing aspect. But if there is constant examination and self-examination of the real world around us in the light of our Marxism-Leninism then we will make fewer mistakes and be able to correct our mistakes more rapidly. And remember there is only one way to show what is correct or mistaken — and that is to test the ideas in practice.

We should not treat any comrade as an enemy for making mistakes. On the other hand, if we ignore mistakes, due to liberal attitudes to friends, the bourgeois line can develop, get a hold and prevail over the Marxist-Leninist line. Such a party develops quantitatively to a qualitative change to revisionism. This is what we mean when we strive to practise Marxism-Leninism and to combat the bourgeois line so we can fight revisionism. This is why we shun liberalism which, arising from petty-bourgeois self-interest, puts personal and group interests first and the interests of the revolutionary collective a poor second. Such liberalism can help produce the departmentalism that blocks the transmission belt of the party and therefore prevents it being a co-ordinated effective fighting force.

### THE TEST OF PRACTICE

Mao Tsetung advises us, in his work called "On Practice", that "If a man wants to succeed in his work, that is, to achieve the anticipated results, he must bring his ideas into correspondence with the laws of the objective external world; if they do not correspond he will fail in his practice."

This is the dialectical materialist approach. If we fail to test our ideas about reality by applying them to reality then we fall into all kinds of idealist errors, we are on the bourgeois line. We can only know the revolutionary apple's taste by the practice of eating it. Only through practice will we gain the ideological clarity that takes us further forward by aligning us more accurately with the positive developing aspects of the revolutionary reality. This is what we mean when we say it is not sufficient to interpret the world but to change it; that once the ideas characteristic of the advanced class grip the masses they become a material force.

Criticism and self-criticism are our methods of examining our practice. They are our method of developing the positive Marxist-Leninist aspect and combatting the negative bourgeois aspect. They are not methods of picking on people with personality attacks. If we regard criticism as analysis, as examination of reality

and practice then there will be greater ease of mind and greater frankness. There will be greater unity and greater effective activity. Proper criticism and self-criticism is part of the Marxist-Leninist line just as surely as personal attack, gossip, retaliation and so on, are part of the bourgeois line.

There is plenty to examine, plenty to criticise and self-criticise — plenty of positive and plenty of negative features running from top to bottom throughout the party. The report deals with these in a critical and self-critical manner. But there are some problems that are not dealt with in depth, some general issues that need specific attention. And that is one of the reasons why this Plenum is being held — not to pin badges of leadership on people but to examine the roadblocks and — most important — to go out and remove them.

Generally speaking, one of the major roadblocks, one of the biggest obstructions in the transmission belt linking leadership with rank-and-file and rank-and-file with leadership in effective functioning democratic centralism is the departmentalism that breaks the party into a collection of groups consisting of a "centre group", a "district group" and a "branch group" (often having smaller groups within branches). This produces an unco-ordinated party. It obstructs united effective action. It leads to formalism and routinism and operation as a narrow sect isolated from the working class.

### THE FIRST PRIORITY

Communists must be active wherever there are people and primarily where there are working people. It is the working class that is the revolutionary class that will smash capitalism. It will do it with allies from other sections of the community. It is important to recognise this in working out priorities. The first priority is the revolutionary working class then its allies. The allies cannot be won to a cause if the main force has not been shown its leading role. This priority attention to the working class becomes doubly important when we consider our small forces available for such work. It emphasises the urgency of developing a working class ideology in all our comrades, of integrating with the working class in practice.

With this priority in mind, how do we view activity in other spheres. We cannot ignore such spheres of work or we will become narrow and deprive the working class of allies. But we must be realistic.

There are people in the friendship organisations and other progressive organisations consisting of a cross-section of the community who can be won as allies of the class and party, some who can be won as activists. Take the China Society. Here is an organisation consisting of people from all sections of the community

whose objective is the removal of misunderstandings between the Chinese people and the New Zealand people and the development of friendly relations between the two peoples. It is not a revolutionary organisation. It is not a section of the Party. But because it aims at discovering and publicising the truth about socialist China its members have more chance of learning the truth about socialism and maybe about capitalism and imperialism. In such an atmosphere activists have opportunities for finding and developing suitable people as activists. But not for making the China Society into a revolutionary working class organisation. That is wrong. It is not an organisation working for the New Zealand revolution. It is not a working class organisation.

But some comrades unilaterally decide that this is to be their main sphere of work. And if other friendship organisations start and this attitude persists then we can expect even more of our small resources to be drawn into such spheres and away from the first priorities where they would be more effective. The same applies to other organisations which tackle aspects of capitalism and involve cross-sections of the community. They cannot be ignored because correct work will develop allies for the working class. But the first priority is the working class developed to a stage where its allies can be of some use.

All this clearly shows the need for acting as a planned organisation under central leadership that uses all our forces in the most effective way. It means combatting the idea of members selecting their own sphere of activity without reference to leadership, or having "departments" select their sphere of activity without reference to leadership. At the same time leadership must take note of individual talents and abilities in selecting spheres of work. There need be no unhappy square pegs in round holes if there is an organic link between members and leadership.

What we need are more activists in the working class. That is the revolutionary class. We are the party of that class. But are we operating as such? There are great problems and struggles confronting that class. How do we help the working class if our activists are exclusively concentrating on other issues?

#### USE OF THE "PEOPLE'S VOICE"

Then again let us look at the use of the "People's Voice." During the past year there has been an overall increase of 15 per cent in donations. This can't be explained away as inflation. It shows a growing appreciation of the role of the party press — expressing the lead of the centre — by the existing readers. But the sales have only risen by less than 3 per cent over the same period and worker correspondence providing vital information about the struggles and problems of NZ as a whole has mainly increased among non-party readers. Do our comrades regard the PV as providing a lead from the centre each week? Is it regarded in a stereotype

formalistic manner as a weekly chore? Is it regarded as an effective weapon for use in developing our agitational propaganda and organisational work? Or is it regarded as something isolated from the branches? (The "CR" which is dealt with in the Report and Summary of the Plenum, is also a vital part of the Party press and leadership).

There are many areas of practice that must be examined if we are to integrate Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the New Zealand revolution, if we are to achieve the anticipated results. An examination will show a growing rank and file rebellion amongst workers, a growing critical mood amongst youth, a growing desire — even if unformulated and hazy — a growing desire for revolutionary change.

We must clear the road blocks that are at present hindering the development of a strong centre able to lead a strong party in an effective and co-ordinated way. With such road-blocks removed, there will be an outward going party, there will be progress towards revolution.

This is why this National Committee meeting has been extended to include comrades representing different areas of work — not to pin badges of office on people — but to produce a more critical examination of the roadblocks, of the negative features so they can be eliminated and the positive features developed. so there can be specific examinations of some problems in depth in order to help gain clarity on the general problems, so the general call of the party leadership can be carried into specific action by the comrades here, so the transmission belt can be cleared and so we can develop as a co-ordinated effective, revolutionary party of the working class.

That is why the report says "we must guard against this plenum becoming a thing in itself, a flash in the pan, but as a step in the direction of linking the leadership with the membership, of bringing new ideas into the leading bodies, of gaining clarity and transferring vital information up and down, from the leadership and back to the leadership."

### **REVOLUTION THE MAIN TREND**

We are in a historic period. The period of world change from class exploitation to socialism, a period when world capitalism is on its death bed and when revolution is the main trend.

The class enemy is acutely aware of this growing revolutionary trend. Its state force and all the agents of imperialism and social imperialism are striving to destroy our revolutionary line and party or to isolate it from the working class and its allies. If we are unable to get a co-ordinated effective organisation with growing influence among the working class during this legal period, then how are we going to do it when the state force brings down

its axe? As world capitalism goes deeper into its general crisis that day is rapidly looming with a trend towards fascism or a third world war, which is part of the general crisis.

We will succeed; we have the will, we have the people, we are basically on the side of the laws of objective development, we have our Marxism-Leninism. If we approach this plenum in the correct manner — and that may require additions or alterations to what we planned to say — then we will emerge from this weekend with a firmer grip on the banner of Marxism-Leninism and will be carrying it forward more effectively in this exciting and historic period.

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## Summary of the National Committee Plenum

(POLITICAL COMMITTEE SUMMARY OF THE RECENT  
PLENUM OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE, CPNZ)

In briefly summing up the results of the Plenum the following points emerge. First is the question of leadership down through the Party at all levels. This entails the continued two line struggle to **rectify style of work**, overcome narrowness, arising from subjectivism in study and outlook, from sectarianism in practice and relations with people, and from stereotypism — to break with the old routine habits and writing and speaking to overcome a bookish presentation and narrowness.

We should at all times keep in mind Mao Tsetung's direction, "Practise Marxism and not revisionism; be open and aboveboard, unite and don't split and don't intrigue and conspire."

The plenum was held in the spirit of Mao's direction and with the object of combining leadership with the Party membership and the Party with the class and for specific guidance down through the Party. This was a step forward in combatting bureaucracy and promoting the mass line and practising democratic-centralism.

The Plenum exposed the small group outlook of departmentalism and independence, as a danger to a revolutionary party.

The Plenum called for the whole Party to grasp more firmly the banner of Marxism-Leninism and so use the scientific dialectical method of Marxism as opposed to the subjective or idealist method in study and in working out solutions to practical problems.

The direction arising out of the Plenum was for greater partici-