

Liberalism Blunts Two-Line Struggle

AS THE Communist Party of New Zealand continues to shed hangovers of social-democracy, as it continues to combat revisionism and to develop its Marxist-Leninist revolutionary line, it makes some people very uncomfortable. Naturally the class enemy is very perturbed to see this steady transformation from social-democracy to revolution. We can understand their discomfort. But there are others who grow increasingly uncomfortable — namely those who still hanker after the old comfortable club atmosphere of a social-democratic type party.

Some of these people are honest enough to say they no longer fit in and want to resign. Some wait for a convenient excuse (like Hungary in 1956) to use for leaving. Some hang on and try to stop the transformation by continuing to push the bourgeois line one way or another.

Sometimes this takes the form of challenging the political line or the Party. Sometimes it takes the form of giving lip service to the revolutionary political line while continuing to practise the bourgeois organisational line and methods of work. But as the ideological struggle continues, as the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist proletarian ideological line develops, so does the bourgeois line become more exposed and more difficult to practise.

There are some who are so filled with selfish individualism that they see themselves or their group as being superior to the party as a whole. Everyone is out of step but them. They demand special rights and privileges for themselves.

They are frustrated bureaucrats who want to foist their minority line on the majority and when they fail scream that the leadership is bureaucratic. And the same bourgeois ideology that gives rise to their frustrated bureaucracy produces an ultra-democratic method of work — gossip, intrigue, factionalising, demanding to know all and decide all.

There comes a stage when all their ideological, political and organisational tactics fail to get them anything but contempt. So, having failed to liquidate the Party's revolutionary development from the inside, they resign with a great face-saving fanfare and try to liquidate the Party from the outside.

They resign with great diatribes of abuse against the Party leadership which they accuse of "defying party democracy" (they mean the leadership won't tolerate minority disruption), of being "un-Marxist and turning inwards instead of getting mass contact with the people" (they mean the leadership won't practise opportunist policies that submerge and liquidate the revolutionary theory

and organisation) and so on and so forth.

All this abuse is a sign of progress. It is a sign that the revolutionary atmosphere is getting too hot for the opportunism and revisionism inside the Party and that it is being weeded out.

There are some who feel that these resignations are harmful because they are reducing the ranks of the Party. But surely a Party freed from such handicaps, freed from such bourgeois fifth column outlooks, must be more effective. In actual fact not only is the Party more effective rid of such encumbrances but it is bigger. For every resignation over the last three years there have been three new members — and each of the new members has been attracted to a transformed party, not the old social-democratic type.

The appearance of the bourgeois line, of opportunism and revisionism inside the Party is not something new. It is a phenomenon that has occurred throughout the history of the Marxist labour movement.

Explaining the material conditions which give rise to opportunism, Lenin (Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International, 1920) said:

“One of the chief causes which retard the revolutionary working class movement in the developed capitalist countries is that owing to the colonial possessions and the super-profits of finance capital etc., capital has succeeded in these countries in singling out a relatively broader and more stable stratum, a small minority, a labour aristocracy. The latter enjoys better terms of employment and is most imbued with the narrow craft spirit and with petty-bourgeois and imperialist prejudices. This is the real social ‘bulwark’ of the Second International, of the reformists and ‘centrists’ and at the present time it is almost the principal social bulwark of the bourgeoisie.”

Stalin (Foundations of Leninism) said:

“In one way or another, all these petty-bourgeois groups penetrate into the Party and introduce into it the spirit of hesitancy and opportunism, the spirit of demoralisation and uncertainty. It is they, principally, that constitute the source of factionalism and disintegration, the source of disorganisation and disruption of the Party from within. To fight imperialism with such ‘allies’ in one’s rear means to expose oneself to the danger of being caught between two fires, from the front and from the rear. Therefore, ruthless struggle against such elements, their expulsion from the Party, is a prerequisite for the successful struggle against imperialism.”

Lenin points out (The tasks of the Third International):

“The bourgeoisie needs lackeys whom a section of the working class could trust and who would paint in fine colours, embellish the bourgeoisie with talk about the possibility of the reformist path, who would throw dust in the eyes of the people by this talk, who would divert the people from revolution by depicting in glowing

colours the charms and possibilities of the reformist path."

Lenin drew a distinction between the opportunists inside the Party and those who resign in order to carry out their opportunism (Controversial Issues):

"The opportunists are leading the Party on to a wrong bourgeois path, the path of a liberal labour policy but they do not renounce the Party itself, they do not liquidate it. Liquidationism is that brand of opportunism which goes to the length of renouncing the Party."

Such people resign in order to carry out their splitting and capitulationist policies through their own publications, through trade unions and even through the bourgeois press.

Lenin described the bourgeois symptoms that precede such liquidationist resignations (One Step Forward, Two Steps Back):

"But no central institution of any party anywhere in the world can prove its ability to direct people who refuse to accept its direction.

"Refusal to accept the direction of the central bodies is tantamount to refusing to remain in the Party, it is tantamount to disrupting the Party; it is a method of destroying, not of convincing. And these efforts to destroy instead of convince show their lack of consistent principles, lack of faith in their own ideas.

"... the undoubted tendency to defend autonomism as against centralism, which is a fundamental characteristic of opportunism in matters of organisation.

"That is just how the anarchists argue; the rights of individuals are unlimited; they may conflict; every individual determines the limits of his rights for himself."

"How can you besiege a man who refuses to work together with you. How can you ill treat, bully and persecute a minority which refuses to be a minority. Being in a minority is necessarily and inevitably accompanied by certain disadvantages. These disadvantages are that you either have to join a body which will outnumber you on certain questions or you stay outside that body and attack it and consequently come under the fire of well-mounted batteries.

"Realising that it was beyond their ability to convince the Party they tried to gain their ends by disorganising the Party and hampering all its work."

Lenin stressed that there can be no toleration or moderate attitude, no "golden mean" towards opportunism (Collapse of the Second International):

"The imperialist epoch cannot tolerate the existence in a single party of the vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat on the one hand and of the semi-petty bourgeois aristocracy of the working class, which enjoys the crumbs of the privileges of the 'Great Power' position of 'their' nation on the other. The old theory that opportunism is a 'legitimate shade' of a single party that avoids 'extremes' has now become a great deception of the workers and a great

hindrance to the labour movement. Open opportunism which immediately becomes repulsive to the working masses is not so dangerous and harmful as this theory of the golden mean, which, with Marxian catchwords justifies opportunist practice and by a series of sophism tries to prove that revolutionary action is premature, etc."

Mao Tsetung (Combat Liberalism) describes how "Liberalism is a manifestation of opportunism and conflicts fundamentally with Marxism."

He said "We stand for active ideological struggle because it is the weapon for ensuring unity within the Party and the revolutionary organisations in the interest of our fight. Every Communist and revolutionary should take up this weapon. But liberalism rejects ideological struggle and stands for unprincipled peace thus giving rise to a decadent philistine attitude and bringing about political degeneration in certain units and individuals in the Party and the revolutionary organisations."

This article by Mao Tsetung is short but well worth reading because it shows how those who defend the bogus rights of the opportunists are using opportunist bourgeois methods of work themselves.

It also cuts across the bad habit of judging situations and people from the point of personality, friendship or group membership rather than on political practice.

Let us conclude with a quote from "Red Flag" (No. 3, 1973):

Anyone who keeps to the stand of an individual or a small clique instead of that of the proletariat will see problems through prejudiced eyes; he will fail to correctly analyse class contradictions and class struggles and thus see the situation in an incorrect light. It is imperative, therefore, that we carry out Chairman Mao's instruction to "read and study seriously and have a good grasp of Marxism", consciously remould our world-outlook and keep firmly to the proletarian stand through constant tempering.

