

McAra's Line is Line of Class Collaboration

Statement by the Political Committee, C.P.N.Z., February 26, 1975

THE Political Committee Statement and extracts from its February 1971 Report published in the December "Communist Review", clearly expose McAra's attempts to distort the line of the CPNZ and to foist an opportunist line on the Party in its place.

The P.C. Report delivered by Comrade Wilcox made it clear that the N.Z. Revolution is a socialist revolution and that N.Z. is part of the imperialist camp.

McAra is pushing his own independent line that the N.Z. revolution is an anti-imperialist revolution and liberation struggle and that N.Z. is part of the world of oppressed colonial peoples. Moreover he is trying to palm it off on the unsuspecting as the line of the CPNZ.

What is his purpose in all this? It is to pave the way for unity of the working class with the bourgeoisie — even the domestic monopolists!

To assert that New Zealand is in the stage of an anti-imperialist liberation struggle means placing national tasks in the forefront. It means subordinating the class struggle against capital to the requirements of national unity against an oppressor. But what may be a correct line in conditions of a number of Third World countries is certainly not correct in New Zealand conditions. On the contrary, it becomes a line of class collaboration, of betrayal of the working class.

Internationally the revolutionary struggle of the Third World peoples is dealing hammer blows at world imperialism and domination by the superpowers. At the present time it is of the utmost importance to develop unity between the working class of the developed capitalist countries and the oppressed peoples of the Third World. By placing New Zealand in the latter grouping, McAra jumbles everything together, confusing the oppressor with the oppressed and therefore hindering the struggle and giving assistance to imperialism.

The line of the CPNZ that N.Z. is in the stage of a socialist revolution means placing in the forefront the necessity of raising the socialist consciousness of the working class and developing its ability to act as the leader of all the toilers and exploited in order to accomplish the socialist revolution. The more the workers are conscious of the necessity of fighting for socialism, the more capable they are of developing a powerful anti-imperialist united front and of providing strong leadership within it.

In New Zealand conditions this is a correct line of combining

national and international tasks which takes account of the specific features of N.Z.'s position as a developed capitalist country and part of the imperialist camp, yet one also subject to domination by the major imperialist powers. McAra's artificial concoction of an anti-imperialist revolution ignores or distorts basic features of New Zealand's development and is thereby anti-Marxist-Leninist, anti-revolutionary.

The question of the development of the N.Z. Revolution is to be determined not by a mechanical transfer to N.Z. of conditions existing in the Third World but by the nature of New Zealand's economic development since its settlement, the resulting class relations, and by the relationship of N.Z. to the main imperialist powers, particularly Britain, the U.S.A. and Japan.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN NEW ZEALAND

It is indisputable that the relations of production in N.Z. are fully capitalist relations and have been so for most of N.Z.'s history apart from an early period when immigrant wage workers had the possibility to become independent producers in a similar colonial-type economy to that of the U.S.A. in the first half of the 19th century.

To say that New Zealand is fully capitalist means specifically that the dominant economic relations are those between capitalist employers and wage workers, and that there are no feudal or semi-feudal production relations such as exist widely in countries of the Third World and still have not disappeared from some parts of capitalist Europe.

The fact that the dominant production relations are those between capitalists and wage workers is readily apparent from official statistics. Over 85 per cent of the labour force of 1.16 million (October 1973) are wage workers, about 400,000 of these being industrial workers. The balance of 15 per cent are classified as working proprietors, executives and administrative and managerial workers, about 5 per cent of whom are listed as employers.

Even though in agriculture working proprietors outnumber wage workers by approximately two to one this does not alter the general picture, as the total farm work force amounts to only 11 per cent of the total work force.

Wage workers 85 per cent, capitalists 5 per cent! A clear enough example of fully capitalist economic relations, even allowing for a fairly large proportion of small-holders in agriculture. Yet in the face of these figures (which can be quite easily verified from Government statistical publications) McAra asserts in one of his documents that "The reality is that N.Z. has not fully developed capitalist relations of production. A study of political economy of N.Z. will prove this — that is by using Marxism-Leninism. Even the World Bank and Muldoon acknowledge N.Z. is not a fully developed capitalist country."

The expression "political economy of N.Z." is itself quite un-

Marxist. Political economy is a single science consisting of both general and particular laws applicable to conditions in a wide variety of countries. By contrast, McAra's expression implies that there is a separate political economy of every country, including New Zealand. If one can speak of a "political economy of New Zealand" (though who founded this peculiar science isn't mentioned) one can as well speak of a political economy of Australia, Brazil, France, or the Cook Islands — or any other country where some economic activity is carried on. Subjectivist views of this kind are bound to lead to subjectivist conclusions. But it is quite consistent with subjectivism to ignore the objective data provided by official statistics and prefer to rely on the opinion of bourgeois authorities.

But what is it that "the World Bank and Muldoon acknowledge"? "That N.Z. is not a fully developed capitalist country." A moment's thought will show that this is not at all the same question as N.Z.'s having fully-developed capitalist relations of production. What McAra has done is to substitute for the question of the dominant production relations in N.Z. the quite different question of all-round economic development or economic might, as though this were the same thing.

It is the abc of Marxism-Leninism that the existence of a capitalist social order is determined precisely by the dominant production relations being those of capitalist and wage worker. The question is not in the least affected by whether the particular capitalism is in its monopoly stage, or whether the country concerned is big or small. The Britain of Marx's time was still capitalist Britain, although in its pre-monopoly stage. N.Z. can be fully capitalist even though a small country and lacking big industry.

McAra's denial of the capitalist nature of N.Z. society is evidently a shabby sophistry aimed at justifying a "two-stage revolution." Either that or he is simply unable to understand the meaning of the concept "relations of production." In either case he ends up in an anti-Marxist-Leninist position.

While New Zealand has a history of dependence on imperialism — particularly British imperialism — it also has certain features which differ from those of Britain's "white minority" colonies, as pointed out in an article in the "People's Voice" (issue 47, 1974):

"New Zealand capitalist society came into being first as a direct colony and then evolved as a dependency of British imperialism.

"The early outnumbering of the Maoris by British and European immigrants led to a different type of development from those of Britain's colonies in Asia and Africa, with a more privileged domestic capitalist class which was given some share in imperialist super-profits in return for services to British imperialism in its wars of colonial suppression and expansion, such as the Boer war, followed by World War 1 etc. As a result a quite substantial "labour aristocracy" grew up in New Zealand, providing the principal social

basis for the Labour Party and the dominance of opportunism in the working class.

"This 'labour aristocracy', relatively large and deeply entrenched, came into being and is sustained only on the basis of super-profits from colonial exploitation."

As a consequence of this type of development, N.Z. capitalism, while having features of a dependency of imperialism, is by no means identical with the countries of the "Third World", that is, those countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America where imperialist robbery has been most intense, where the mass of the population are still poor peasants, where industry is relatively undeveloped and agriculture is still feudal or semi-feudal in character, and where the native bourgeoisie has had little or no share in super profits, and there is consequently only a very small labour aristocracy if indeed one exists at all. In these countries — and they amount to a sizeable number — the revolution is still in its bourgeois-democratic stage and generally takes the form of a national liberation struggle against imperialism aimed at establishing a joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes in the country. Since October 1917, as Mao Tsetung makes clear in his work "On New Democracy", such bourgeois-democratic revolutions are no longer part of a world bourgeois-democratic revolution but are part of the proletarian socialist world revolution. In relation to China, Mao noted, **"The first step or stage in our revolution is definitely not, and cannot be, the establishment of a capitalist society under the dictatorship of the Chinese bourgeoisie, but will result in the establishment of a new-democratic society under the joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes of China headed by the Chinese proletariat. The revolution will then be carried forward to the second stage, in which a socialist society will be established in China."**

Despite the general decline of British imperialism, it is still able to squeeze out super-profits from the remnants of the Empire and from investments in former colonies, some part of this imperialist rake-off coming to the ruling class here. New Zealand capitalism also shares to some extent in the profits of United States imperialism for being a good stooge in Korea, Vietnam etc. The concessions allowed N.Z. by imperialism have assisted the ruling class in N.Z. to maintain a relative degree of prosperity for most of the period since World War II, with full employment being possible for most of the time. As a result of these conditions and of the influence of social-democracy and revisionism, there has been a relatively low level of class struggle and of class consciousness among the mass of the workers. Such conditions are generally not comparable to those in the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the world.

In the same "People's Voice" article of December 11, 1974, already quoted, the nature of New Zealand's economy is further analysed. The article goes into the background of Fletcher's as

typical of a number of enterprises. A reasonably full quotation is given here because of the importance of the subject.

"The local capitalists of Fletchers are actively allied with overseas capitalists in mutual exploitation of the resources and labour of New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, Papua-Niugini and the New Hebrides. This is simultaneously foreign imperialism and local imperialism.

"But it is something else as well. Because of the active part played by state capital, it is a form of state monopoly capitalism.

"There are sufficient of these joint ventures in key sectors of the economy to make state monopoly capitalism a characteristic of the New Zealand economy.

"The New Zealand economy is not simply monopoly capitalism but is state monopoly capitalism. Despite its small size and lack of economic might as compared with the United States, Britain, Germany, France etc. New Zealand is nevertheless a good example of a country where the monopolies are closely interwoven with the state in a number of major enterprises (Tasman, Kapuni, Comalco, Fletchers etc.), and play a dominant role in key state bodies directing and controlling economic life, such as the Reserve Bank, the Wool Board, Meat Board, etc., etc.

"Lenin, it will be remembered, called state monopoly capitalism 'a complete material preparation for socialism, the threshold of socialism, a rung in the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism there are no intermediate rungs.'"

THE RULING CLASS

Within the domestic capitalist class there is a definite monopolist section — Fletchers, Cable-Price, Watties, Kerridge, Plimmer etc., having close connections with major foreign monopoly concerns and comprising the dominant section of the ruling class. This class exercises its powers by living in New Zealand — not abroad. It acts as the agent of foreign monopolies to secure their interests economically and politically.

It is erroneous to consider the ruling class as something outside New Zealand, even though many enterprises are owned or part-owned abroad. The point is that the execution of class economic and state policies rests with internal forces. It is these forces which have to be overthrown in the first instance in any successful revolution. Neglect of this aspect leads to an underestimation of the counter-revolutionary side of the national bourgeoisie and consequent danger of defeat for the revolutionary forces even where the national bourgeoisie — or a section of it — has carried on anti-imperialist struggles in the past, as, for example, in Indonesia. How much more does this apply in New Zealand, where no part of the bourgeoisie has taken an anti-imperialist stand!

Where feudalism had to be brought down, as in Europe in the 19th century or as in China, where it combined with foreign imperialism to stifle bourgeois-democratic development, there a

section of the national bourgeoisie gravitated towards revolution. By contrast the New Zealand bourgeoisie has not had to struggle against feudalism in order to develop as the ruling class but instead has profited by hanging on to the coat-tails of imperialism. In conditions of the decline of imperialism on a world scale and of sharpening internal class struggle arising from the growing economic crisis, the bourgeoisie's main concern will assuredly be to suppress the working class in order to ensure the preservation of capitalism. Not for nothing did Lenin write as far back as 1907: **"The 'radical bourgeois' cannot be courageous in the epoch of highly developed capitalism. In such an epoch the bourgeoisie, in the main, is already counter-revolutionary."** ("The Agrarian Programme of Social Democracy in the First Russian Revolution.")

Despite the fact that much of New Zealand's industry is relatively small-scale, the country is nevertheless **economically** ripe for socialism because of its fully-developed capitalist production relations. What is lacking is the subjective factor — the ideological-political preparation of the working class for revolution. But this is directly bound up with the strength of social-democracy and hence with New Zealand participation in imperialist super-profits.

The reality in New Zealand is that state monopoly capitalism exists, with a monopoly capitalist section playing a compradore role for foreign imperialism and heading a capitalist class no part of which is revolutionary. (The most likely ally of the workers is the petty bourgeoisie; but this is the middle class and not part of the capitalist class proper). On the basis of capitalist production relations there is a relatively large class of wage workers led by a sizeable (for New Zealand) industrial proletariat. These conditions require a struggle for socialism, with the dictatorship of the proletariat as an immediate task, and with special prominence given to the socialising of foreign and domestic monopolies.

This struggle for socialism requires an exposure of the capitalist relations of production in New Zealand, the way the local capitalist class allies itself with foreign imperialism, selling out local resources and labour for a share in the profits and the various types of opportunism that would have the working class collaborate with the local bourgeoisie. If the struggle against imperialism does not expose the local capitalist class and opportunists then that struggle is a sham and humbug that can only strengthen the local capitalist class and therefore its collaboration with imperialism. Such a one-sided struggle can also lead to dangerous illusions about social-democracy. For instance, the current Labour Government regulations limiting foreign ownership of shares and property look like a progressive step if there is a one-sided belief that we are engaged in a liberation struggle. In actual fact the Labour Government is merely regulating the amount of foreign investment on behalf of the local monopolists—providing some ground rules so that the local ruling class can collaborate with the foreign imperialists on a

more orderly basis. Far from showing that there is a liberation struggle going on, the Labour Government's moves show that the local bourgeoisie already have been liberated and are able to lay down some ground rules to protect their position while collaborating with foreign imperialism.

This is really an aspect of the contradiction between imperialists, between rival groups of capitalists who sometimes collude and sometimes scrap. McAra, by labelling it a liberation struggle (a contradiction between an oppressed people and a foreign imperialism) would have us supporting the local imperialists.

So the struggle to build an anti-imperialist united front particularly against US imperialism must embrace the struggle against the local imperialists and their agents otherwise it is leaving the rear open while concentrating on only part of the enemy forces. It is as dangerous as ignoring foreign imperialism while attacking only local capitalism. The contradiction between the N.Z. proletariat and the N.Z. capitalist class cannot be separated from the contradiction between the people and imperialism and must not be confused with the contradiction between rival imperialists. This is what the CPNZ line (of fighting imperialism and revisionism and of developing revolutionary consciousness and organisation) involves.

It also requires the organisation of increased struggle against the domination of foreign monopolies in N.Z. along with the exposure of the compradore role played by the domestic monopoly capitalists. This struggle is an integral part of the building of an anti-imperialist united front, particularly against U.S. imperialism. This line is and has been the line of the CPNZ irrespective of the attempts of McAra and Co. to distort it and thereby render a service to the bourgeoisie.

There is no need to be daunted by the fact that the socialist consciousness of the working class is at a low level. In large measure this situation arises from the objective factors pointed out earlier — a long period of relative prosperity and a large labour aristocracy based on imperialist super profits. In the epoch of the decay of imperialism these conditions will certainly not continue indefinitely. The new conditions which are now developing will undoubtedly make more fruitful the work of raising the socialist consciousness of the working class and hence the preparation of forces capable of achieving the socialist revolution.

How long this process may take cannot be foreseen. The bourgeoisie will undoubtedly throw up all sorts of obstacles and attempt to block it by all possible means. At the present time the bourgeois line of W. McAra is such. By means of a specious division of the socialist revolution into stages McAra seeks to dress up a line of class collaboration and unity with the bourgeoisie as Marxism-Leninism. The exposure and defeat of this is a necessary part of clearing the road forward for the working class in their struggle for socialism.