

Marx and Engels

By the 1840s great class struggles between the workers and the industrial bourgeoisie were erupting all over Europe. In Britain the Chartist movement was the first mass independent political movement of the working class in history. In Lyons, in France, an armed workers' uprising of the weavers took place in 1831 in which the red flag for the first time was used as the

workers' standard.

Into this Europe, torn by growing class struggles between the propertyless urban workers, the proletariat, and the employing classes, the capitalists – particularly the manufacturers – Karl Marx and Frederick Engels grew to maturity in Germany.

While beginning as bourgeois-democratic revolutionaries aiming at overthrowing the feudal regime that still existed in Germany, they quickly placed themselves at the standpoint of the extreme left of society, which comprised at that time workers' communist groups with revolutionary feelings but without a coherent ideology or programme.

This Marx and Engels set out to provide, and did so, beginning with the Communist Manifesto,

'a little book worth whole volumes', as Lenin remarked.

Why didn't Marx and Engels call it the 'Socialist Manifesto'? Because at the time 'socialism' was a utopian middle-class movement which appealed not to the working classes but to the educated classes. It consisted of adherents mainly of the 'Fourierists' and 'Owenites' which had

already declined into sects with various quack remedies.

Alongside these there was, in Engels' words, 'a crude, rough-hewn, purely instinctive sort of communism' as he put it in 1888, which was powerful enough among the working class. Thus,

socialism was a middle-class movement, communism a working-class movement. The one was

'respectable', the other not. Engels writes:

'And as our notion, from the very beginning, was that "the emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself", there could be no doubt as to which of the two names

we must take. Moreover we have ever since, been far from repudiating it.'

In reality, there were a number of other so-called 'socialist' trends at the time. These Marx and

Engels analysed in a chapter of the Manifesto entitled 'Socialist and Communist Literature.'

Today, most are mere curiosities: Feudal socialism, clerical socialism, petty-bourgeois socialism,

German or 'True' socialism. Only one form retains some modern features: 'Conservative', or 'bourgeois socialism', which has a kind of echo in the so-called 'socialism' of the social democratic and Labour parties. These seek to peacefully redress social grievances without causing the bourgeoisie any distress. Of course as people in New Zealand know, property tycoon Bob Jones is a violent reactionary.

But in attacking socialism in the 'Auckland Star's' columns some years back he denounced different Labour politicians for being unable to give him a definition of socialism. It had its amusing side, to see how they sidestepped, twisted and evaded. Among them was Cath Tizard,

our 'socialist' Governor-General.

It is true that the Labour Party once had in its constitution a 'pledge' that members took, to work

restoration of capitalism. This proceeded much faster in China than the Soviet Union for various

reasons. Today neither the Soviet Union nor China is socialist. As soon as revisionism got power

in the USSR and in China, the rightists (the new bourgeoisie) established a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in place of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This had happened in Eastern Europe and under pressure from Khrushchev's revisionist clique,

most other former socialist bloc countries soon followed suit. Today, they no longer even put up

the socialist signboard with which they deceived the people after the revisionist takeover.

Albania, as is now perfectly clear, is also in the same category. It followed a somewhat different

route.

After Mao's death the rightists in China cut off aid to Albania. Hoxha and the PLA which earlier

had hailed Mao as a great Marxist-Leninist began reviling him. Their purpose in this was to seize

the leadership of the world Marxist-Leninist movement and to establish Hoxha as the true successor of Stalin. Because Albania still appeared to have retained socialism a lot of Marxist Leninist parties followed the Hoxha line, including the CPNZ, some of whose leaders organised

an internal putsch against those who did not accept it. The author was one of these latter. He resigned from the Communist Party and took time out to make his own estimation of the whole

situation. Meantime Albania followed the dogmatic line of Hoxha which in due course turned into its opposite, revisionism, as the author of his pamphlet predicted would happen.

That is why we of the WPNZ have a group today distinct from all others. It does not blindly follow any overseas party but judges each situation on its merits and makes up its mind independently.

Because it is not possible without doing violence to actual historical development to absolve Mao from the loss of socialism in China we do not call ourselves, as some overseas groups do, Marxist-Leninist-Maoist. We recognise that Mao made certain errors in relation to the Cultural

Revolution, in particular initially placing the student youth in the leading role, but that he also made great contributions to Marxism-Leninism. For this reason we call ourselves pro-Mao, Marxist-Leninist.

What lessons the restoration of capitalism in former socialist countries holds for the future are now generally clear. 1) We still hold, in line with Marx, that socialism is necessary and inevitable. Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the working class. Monopoly capitalism does not change this. Internal contradictions or conflicts exist within the imperialist system of today which inevitably lead to the socialist revolution.

2) Socialism is a far superior system to capitalism. Until revisionism took over in the socialist countries and restored capitalism, socialism had already proved its superiority from the point of

view of the great majority of the people. 3) The prevention of a revisionist takeover depends on keeping the new bourgeoisie from

becoming strong enough to seize power and restore capitalism. The best guide to this is Mao's

'Theory of Continued Revolution under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.'