

# Comments on Basic Principles

—A comrade from the Red Flag Group, New Zealand

I have studied the above document to the end of “The Basic Tasks of the Marxist-Leninists—Imperialist Countries,” i.e. to the end of par. 204 and send you my comments without delay. I have confined them to the tasks in general and to those in imperialist countries—pars. 158 to 204. There is of course much I would like to discuss in the previous parts of the document and less important issues in the part I have covered. My comments are made in the light of my experience in New Zealand and shortcomings:—

1. The point that *the concept of socialism must be brought to the workers from outside of the class struggle* is not made clearly enough.

References are made in the document to the mass line. If one does no more than look up Mao on this (Vol. 3, page 119) “from the masses to the masses” is discussed. It is stated that the ideas of the masses must be made concentrated and systematic. As Mao states that one must study Marx, Lenin and Stalin, the phrase quoted incorporates the idea that socialism is not necessarily to be found in the ideas of the masses and is necessary to be brought to them. However I think the document should make this more clear. Lenin considered this very important and refers to it many times in *What Is To Be Done?* (pages 52, 66 and 67 in my copy).

Apropos of this the document contains no clear refutation of the idea that the Party should not initiate struggles but should do no more than take part in those that are going on—an idea prevalent in the CPNZ. Pages 81-82 of *What Is To Be Done?*—“‘That struggle is desirable which is possible, and the struggle which is possible is the one that is going on at the given moment.’ This is the trend of unbounded opportunism, which passively adapts itself to spontaneity.”

2. Although par. 179 alludes to the matter I don’t think the document emphasises sufficiently that it is a basic task to bring *class political con-*

*sciousness* to the masses, nor does it give a line on how this is to be done. In this connection I prefer to the quote in par. 179 of *Basic Principles* the following one on page 133 of *What Is To Be Done?* (my copy):— “Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without*, that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of *all* classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between *all* classes.”

3. Alliances are mentioned in par. 192 but Lenin’s essential conditions for them are not: “But an essential condition for such an alliance must be the full opportunity for the Socialists to reveal to the working class that its interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the bourgeoisie.” (Page 30 my copy.)

4. *Exposures* are mentioned in par. 189 but I don’t think it is made sufficiently clear that they must be made in such a way as to show that the evils exposed spring from capitalism and will continue so long as there is capitalism. After all, the exposures in the *New Zealand Truth* which are not made in this way and often expose corruption in high places must in general be acceptable to the ruling class or they would not continue.

5. *Illegal Work*. There is no discussion of the necessity for this. (I can’t lay my hands on the appropriate Lenin at the moment.) Perhaps it was taken for granted by the people drafting the document considering their conditions.

Notwithstanding the above comments I think the document excellent.