

22.6.83

SC

Dear Comrades,

Please find enclosed two resolutions from the Leeds branch.

Resolution No. 1 deals with the CC response to the week end school. We would have preferred to have seen the written report of the emergency CC on this important decision, but as three weeks have now passed and we have still not received any IB's we feel that we must reply on the basis of a verbal report. Resolution No. 2 concerns the Conference itself and its status

Both resolutions were passed by 4 votes to 0, with ~~WW~~ one abstention (this was by a leading member who felt she ought to make her contribution in the more appropriate place.)

In view of the recent delays in replying to our letter and reports, and in view of the importance of the issue, we would like to request a quick initial reply from the SC.

We request that both resolutions be put before the next meeting of the CC and after that sent to the branches.

C.G.

Leeds Branch Secretary.

RESOLUTION No.2

Motion to the Autumn Conference.

The Leeds branch of the RCL propose that the Conference has the status of a Congress on the second afternoon, for the purpose of electing a new CC that will reflect the policies of the organisation as decided by the Conference.

It is our view that the school reflected the enthusiastic commitment of all present to Marxism-Leninism, the RCL and the mass struggle, helped re-establish subjective unity in our ranks, enabled comrades to hear at first hand the different political lines around re-orientation, contribute to and learn from the struggle between these two lines. The school also produced recommendations, over whelminly supported, to help the CC make progress in the period leading up to the Conference and at the same time developed our understanding of the current situation in the International Communist Movement.

We were thus amazed to hear that the CC emergency meeting had rejected all but two of the recommendations. We feel that this response will set the RCL back years if persisted with, has raised the threat of splits or even disintegration and has plunged the organisation into its worst ever crisis.

We list below our reaction to the CC 'Observations' on the school and clear up some points before making our constructive suggestions on how to rescue the RCL from potential oblivion.

1. THE LIBERALISM OF THE SCHOOL. This should be mainly attached to leading supporters of RTL; one who remained silent on the one day he was present; another who admitted that RTL needed rewriting and then in a hazy manner introduced new points into the discussions; thirdly the liberalism of all those London comrades who never even turned up and fourthly, but to a much lesser extent, all those who did not speak in the formal sessions (altho' many were probably hearing the politics of RTL and the Minority Document together for the first time.)
2. THE OPPORTUNISM OF THE SCHOOL. The Right opportunist trend was represented by just two comrades. Their contribution to the discussions was minimal. Both support the Minority Document - but only because of its form, not its content. This does not mean the Minority Document is opportunist, neither does it mean that opportunism ran wild at the school. Any talk of an attempted coup by opportunist forces could only have been made by those who were not present or not listening.
3. THE CONSTITUTIONAL VALIDITY OF THE SCHOOL. It is correct that it had none. However Democratic Centralism means a number of things. It means that the leadership listen to and respect the views of the rank and file, and accept supervision by the rank and file. It means that leadership is based on the principles of criticism and self-criticism and from the masses to the masses. However this CC appears to have forgotten these basic elements and is developing the type of relationship to the members that the CPGB had. This point also applies to the CC decision that the Conference will not be able to elect a new CC. Again this follows the letter, but not the spirit of Democratic Centralism.

Now a few comments on the implications of the CC decisions.

4. RTL AS THE POLICY OF THE RCL UNTIL THE CONFERENCE. This will be difficult to put into practice. Even the firm supporters of RTL had to explain at the school what they thought it really meant; furthermore now that RTL Version 1 is to be replaced by a Version 2 and since the former no longer has majority support any where, what in concrete terms is our line now. (Also please don't forget that RTL version 1 has NEVER been discussed and then passed by any representative assembly of the membership, not even by the Primary Leaders. It has only ever been a majority in the arenas in which the SC and CC move)
5. THE CC RESPONSE TO THE VOTE BY THE SCHOOL TO KEEP FRFI OUT OF NEB. The CC have just not understood the issue. The influence of FRFI is obvious in RTL Version 1. Yet many RCL comrades do not share the same view of the RCG that the CC has. The CC have emphasised one side only of the RCG and do not intend to introduce discussion on this 'until some time in the future when priorities allow'. We have had the RCG influenced RTL forced upon us and it has won little support. We are to have FRFI forced onto the shelves of NEB with little support and we will not be able to discuss the politics of this organisation for quite some time. There is a link running all through this and the most cynical may begin to think it is a devious one.
6. THE LONDON SITUATION. The CC seems to believe that what goes on in the capital is true of the rest of the country. This is not so. If the main contradiction in London is between those who support reorientation (in the general sense) and the Right opportunists that is one thing. But that is not the main contradiction north of Watford.

7. THE WORD 'REORIENTATION'. Its continued use in the current situation will only further complicate the situation. 'Beginning the process of over-coming chauvinism in the RCL, throwing out our bad line on Ireland, developing our anti-imperialist orientation, making a strong stand on opportunism' - all this was achieved at the Second Congress; and they all need to be built on. Yet a call for reorientation 15 months after that Congress is in effect a call to throw out, in a manner more reminiscent of the Gang of Four, everything positive that we had COLLECTIVELY achieved before November 1982.

Finally a question. The SC intends to promote an education campaign around reorientation. Will this be equally split between the two documents i.e. RTL Version 2 when it finally appears and the Minority Document and if so who will be responsible for it.

COMRADES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

Your bureaucratic and undemocratic response to the political criticisms made at the week end school has worsened the crisis in OUR organisation. Yet it is quite ironic that at this present time the RCL is making advances and winning respect in a number of areas. At the school itself many were active in promoting various campaigns they were deeply involved in, proving that the rank and file are far from being dispirited; at the same time all were highly impressed by K's contribution on the international situation and after three poor issues of the paper, the May and June issues of Class Struggle have shown just how strong and valuable it can be.

Individually and collectively the members of the CC have good and bad points about them; at present it is the latter that is dominant and if this remains unchecked will only lead to disaster. For quite some time the reaction of the SC to criticisms has been unworthy of a serious Marxist-Leninist organisation. The response to the week end school could easily be the last straw for some.

The Leeds branch of the RCL therefore calls on the Central Committee to:

- A. Act upon the recommendations of the week end school and in particular set a date for the Conference some time during 1983.
- B. Make a thorough self-criticism of its superficial, prejudiced and fundamentally incorrect view and assessment of the week end school.
- C. Account for the long delay in informing the membership of the decisions of the emergency meeting of 31st. May- since it was vital for the CC to have responded quickly due to its opposition to what had been a majority decision of the membership.

Comrades, your failure to respond positively to the views of the rank and file (the majority of whom you yourselves have recognised as good comrades) will only serve to convince them that a new form of Redfernism, of a collective variety has surfaced to the top of the RCL. And just as Redfern went, so will all others who practise his methods while appearing to promote the theories and practises of Marxism-Leninism- Mao Ze Dong Thought.

LEEDS 22.6.83.