

Internal Bulletin.Introduction.

It has been decided by the CC that much of the material carried in circulars- to secretaries and cell leaders last year should now be carried in an internal bulletin to all members. This is one of a number of decisions to promote better conditions for democracy under centralized guidance by keeping comrades more widely informed.

Some points will refer to items in previous circulars as part of a process of carrying forward debate and clarity on some important themes.

There has been quite a long gap since the last circular. This has been because of priority has been given to getting out a number of important official documents.

UNITY WITH CWM.

New Years Day started with the public announcement by the CC of the RCL and the National Committee of the CWM that the two organizations will unite in 1980. This is a very important victory in the central task of rebuilding the revolutionary Party. It means that we can all be confident that in the 1980's a strong vanguard party of the working class will be established in Britain once again.

After a long period of seeking unity involving fraternal assistance in common struggles and thrashing over important questions, the CWM and RCL have retained a point where no differences of major principle exist which continue to justify the two organizations being separate. Accordingly at a number of levels comrades are already co-operating as fully as possible organizationally in preparation for the unity conference later this year. For example the NC of the CWM has called on its comrades outside London where there is also an RCL branch to form as closely as possible a single local unit with RCL members. In London a number of steps are being taken to integrate comrades over the coming months.

It is important we combine the strengths of comrades in both organizations in the course of Party-building and mass work rather than our weaknesses. Comrades should have a positive attitude of learning from each others' strong points over a period of time and uniting on the basis of seeking truth from facts. The fact that no fundamental differences now exist between the two organizations barring unity, does not mean that there is nothing to discuss. On the contrary unity can be strengthened and should be strengthened on major questions through debate and discussion among comrades. One subject that we will need to discuss more over the coming months will be Ireland, both the nature of the revolutionary struggle there against British imperialism and how we should support it in Britain. There will be discussion of a statement of our basic common position on Ireland at the Unity conference.

Unity, particularly once it has been consolidated in the period leading up to the second congress will certainly be a qualitative step in Party-building. This is not so much in terms of numbers, because in the course of strong work in consolidating themselves ideologically, politically and organizationally, the CWM contracted in size from the large but rather loose organization they were, into a more compact and more politically effective vanguard nucleus. As a result if we look at it numerically the united organization will only be about $\frac{1}{2}$ larger than the present RCL.

However the ideological and political gains of unity are very important. The two organizations have learnt from each other in the course of struggling for unity and the united organization will be stronger than the sum of the parts. In London, where CWM comrades are largely concentrated, the amalgamation of a large number of comrades into one district holds out the promise of the united organization developing its work in a much more balanced way over a range of activities.

Above all, unity will create a situation where there is only one genuine national Marxist-Leninist organization. That does not mean we want to unite with other honest ML groups outside our ranks. We will. But we will be able to say with much more confidence to all these hoping to see the revolutionary party built again that they should rally around the one national ML organization in existence.

We have every reason for pride and confidence in this achievement. At the same time we should be modest about just how much more there is to do in Party building particularly in the course of mass struggle. Inevitably we will fall short of what is objectively needed for some time to come and our weaknesses will only be overcome in the course of practice.

Please refer to the document of 11.12.79 sent to all members for practical details of the steps to unity including a summary on page 3 of the content of the unity conference to be held in the late spring.

RECTIFICATION STAGE

We need to basically wind up the rectification stage in the RCL before the unity conference with the CWM. Although certain questions will need further study over a period of time we should not automatically continue an orientation drawn up for the RCL in a different situation where the united organization will have somewhat different characteristics and require a different emphasis in internal education.

Basically winding up the rectification stage will require a fair measure of unity among comrades about what were the essentials to be achieved and what were secondary questions which should be discussed over a longer period. In order to help comrades form their own opinions and contribute to discussion it may be useful to recall the policy decisions behind the present work.

The 7th CC held in January 1979, which approved the expulsion of the anti-League Faction, approved a plan committing us to strengthen the RCL in three main areas. These were

1. to strengthen democratic-centralism by repudiating splittism and factionalism, grasping the spirit of democratic centralism and summing up our experience of democratic centralism.
2. to strengthen the ideological and political line of the RCLB by repudiating "left" opportunism and continuing to correct right opportunist errors.
3. to strengthen the style of work of the RCLB under the headings of
 integrating theory with practice,
 practising the mass line,
 practising criticism and self-criticism.

It was envisaged that this work should be developed simultaneously over the period leading up to the second congress. This period in turn fell into three stages with somewhat different characteristics, although the stages were interlinked with each other.

The first stage was defined as one concentrating on completely defeating splittism and factionalism and consolidating the RCLB as a fighting Bolshevik organization. This stage was basically successfully completed at the one day national Conference of all members held in March 1979 which denounced the splittism of the anti-League faction.

The second stage was seen as a rectification movement particularly concentrating on criticising the errors associated with the line of the anti-League faction. The formula as adopted at the March PC and later approved by the CC reads:-

"In the second stage we will concentrate on a rectification movement aimed at errors of the centre, but also mobilising the whole organization to sum up experience in the main areas of work using the method of criticism and self-criticism, and thus strengthen the RCL as a whole. In this we should particularly target the anti-League faction and criticise the ultra "left" petty bourgeois idealism most strongly represented and promoted by it. In this phase the first most important text for the whole organization to study will be "On Practice". At the end of the second stage there will be a summing up of the rectification movement".

The third stage was approved in these terms:- "we envisage calling a second Congress of the RCLB as the culmination of a third stage in which definitive amendments of the Manifesto have been prepared and a Political Report is presented summing up the situation internationally and nationally, and the development in the League since the founding congress. This second congress will have to be adaptably related to the prospects of achieving unity with the CWM".

This then is the outline of the plan we committed ourselves to a year ago. In combining the correct essence of it adaptably with the excellent situation of uniting with the CWM we are agreed that the essence of the third stage should be carried out in the period between the unity conference and the second Congress. Democratic debate among comrades at present in the CWM and the RCL will ensure that the programmatic document approved at the second Congress will build on the strengths of both the RCL's Manifesto and the CWM's programme. There is not therefore a problem about integrating the third stage with the process of uniting with the CWM. It is the task of basically winding up the second stage before the unity conference in late spring that needs energetic attention.

It is essential to see this in a practical way in terms of what is necessary for Party-building both immediately and in the longer term. The terms laid down for the rectification stage are broad and could justify a movement going on for yet considerably longer. When we look at the fact that the CPC, a party of 35 million, is still sorting out the confusion caused by the ultra left influence of Lin Biao and the gang of four after 3½ years we can see the problem. Partly because we have not been realistic enough about what an organization of our size and maturity could practically do we have gone into some questions in great detail while comparatively neglecting others, in particularly international politics. A summing up of the politics of the Zimbabwe campaign has especially been long overdue (it is hoped to have a discussion document on this within a month).

Some comrades have made criticisms of the orientation of the rectification stage which have essentially focussed one sentence in the policy line reproduced above. This is the sentence that says:

"In this (movement) we should particularly target the anti-League faction and criticise the ultra "left" petty bourgeois idealism most strongly represented and promoted by it".

About particularly targetting the anti-League faction, one criticism last summer stated that a situation where all the negative features of the RCL over the past two years will be attributed to the faction... is perhaps the greatest danger in the present focus of the rectification stage". This danger has not turned out to be such a danger in practice. While taking the criticism as a warning of a danger to be guarded against, the present leading comrades were not intending to conceal errors on their own part as later documents have shown. On the other hand the comrades making the criticism failed to grasp the political importance of uniting people after a very disruptive split around the central committee by carrying through the repudiation of the splitters and combining this with opening comrades' eyes about the depth of errors of line by means of criticising the line of the splitters. Concentrating on criticising the line of the splitters should not be counterposed to self criticism. On the contrary it is a way of uniting comrades politically and enabling self-criticism to be made in the context of the movement (including self-criticism by the leading comrades). This is using self criticism in a positive and practical way in the course of uniting comrades to go forward rather than making the main emphasis that everyone should make self-criticism. This would have been an idealist and self-cultivating use of self criticism and practically would have been very demoralising and confusing at a time when the splittist slanders of the anti-League faction had not been cleared out of the way.

On this criticism lines of demarcation have probably narrowed somewhat over the months because the PC/SC accepts it should have taken more opportunities to make self-criticism in the course of the overall movement, while a number of self criticisms actually made show that there is not in fact a danger of all the negative features of the RCLB over the last two years being attributed to the faction.

The criticisms of the second part of the key sentence ("we should particularly... criticise the ultra "left" petty bourgeois idealism most strongly represented and promoted " by the faction) probably represent more fundamental differences. There is a fair amount of agreement that idealist errors particularly of a dogmatist kind were a weakness in the RCL and were exploited by the anti-League faction. The line of demarcation comes on whether we should particularly criticise "left"-opportunism.

In August last year the comradesⁱⁿ the unit making the criticism said that the manner of targetting ultra leftism "objectively conceals the main weaknesses and errors in the RCLB which are of a rightist nature". Later in the same criticism they put it in a slightly different form: "The key questions are those of dogmatism on questions of line and theory, and lack of proletarian democracy. Neither of these are 'by definition' ultra-left, and it fact overall in the league have been responsible for a rightist trend. The main danger now is that the rectification stage will further entrench that rightist trend by giving it ideological justification, and at the same time will suppress comrades' militant enthusiasm as leftist!"

It is clear that these comrades and the CC are at cross purposes. This is ironical since the emphasis they^{have} put on proletarian democracy (together with discussions with the CWM on this subject), contributed significantly to our review of democratic-centralism and the recent CC decision to take some steps (such as this bulletin) to adjust the relative emphasis on democracy and centralism. The comrades have not recently clearly repeated their claim that the dogmatist and over-centralist distortions of democratic-centralism were rightist in nature or were responsible for a rightist trend^{being predominant} but they have tried to see the question of strengthening our democratic-centralism as something separate from criticising left-opportunism. The arguments as to why we should not separate strengthening our democratic-centralism from criticising left-opportunism were given in the document "Distortions in Democratic Centralism" paragraphs 78 to 88, which comrades should refer to on this question.

In view of the weight of the material produced so far the comrades referred to are no doubt considering the extent to which they would still claim that the main weaknesses and errors in the RCLB are of a rightist nature. However certainly some honest comrades do consider that the RCL should not particularly criticise left opportunism, in other words that we should not have paid particular attention to raising our vigilance against ultra-left types of thinking in our own ranks.

It is hard to see that this is a serious and all round position and one that grasps the urgent ideological tasks in front of us. While the CC accepts that not all weaknesses in the RCL should be mechanically attributed to ultra-leftism there is no doubt that our vigilance against left-opportunism was low in the past. It is now possible to see that the international Communist movement was heavily influenced by the ultra-left line that prevailed to a large extent in the CPC for many years. Furthermore all comrades know that the RCL (for fundamentally good reasons) tried to absorb as much as possible the strengths of the international Communist movement and in the course of doing this inevitably absorbed weaknesses too. We know that the anti-League faction created considerable disorder with their ultra-left line and style of work; but they couldn't have achieved this without having for a significant period of time the active as well as passive support of many good comrades who could not quickly see through their left-opportunism. In these circumstances it would have been an abnegation of the CC's leadership in January 1979 not to have called for a movement which would raise comrades' vigilance against left opportunism.

The view of those comrades who still oppose particularly criticising 'left' opportunism does not hang together in the face of this. The argument that comrades' militant enthusiasm may be suppressed as "leftist" cannot on reflection be considered to be a principled argument. Certainly we want militant enthusiasm among comrades but ultra-left idealist lines which run counter to the actual situation are very destructive to militant enthusiasm. They end up with comrades exhausted, demoralised and confused, rigidly clutching a number of abstract dogmas which they feel they can't put into practice because of "rightist bourgeois tendencies" in themselves. If we were never to permit ourselves to criticise left opportunism because it might endanger militant enthusiasm how could we ever criticise such a situation? How could we grasp a correct line while guarding against both left and right deviations, if we fear to criticise left opportunism?

This sort of erroneous approach is wrong in practice and indefensible theoretically. It smacks of the ultra-left dogmatist prejudices that "it is safer to be 'left' than right", "it is more revolutionary to be 'left' than to be right" and "What is a little 'left' opportunism among good comrades?" This essentially opportunist approach creates a lop-sided situation where it is impossible for an

for an organization to strike a correct balance in guarding against "left" and right errors, where it has continual difficulties in grasping correct lines and policies which are in conformity with the actual situation and enable it to advance at the maximum possible all round speed.

That said, the CC certainly accepts that criticism of ultra-leftism should be integrated with the actual situation and should seek truth from facts on any particular criticism. It is therefore inevitable that there will be variations in comrades' opinions in the League about just how much this orientation conforms with their own experience and understanding.

The CC considers there is a strong case for a specifically RCL conference for all members to be held a little before the unity conference. At this, various questions of the rectification stage, including this one, could be discussed collectively. If comrades would welcome such a conference please would you report your views upwards.

SHORTS

In line with our revised orientation on mass work, criticising ultra-left dogmatic correctness and rigidity, greater flexibility and some commendable initiatives are being shown in mass work.

Comrades in Manchester attended a meeting of 1,000 on Zimbabwe earlier last year and delivered a message of solidarity on behalf of the RCL. You have seen in CS how comrades in Newcastle dogged the heels of the Vietnamese representative in meetings on Kampuchea. One of our supporters got a good article on Kampuchea published in the local student newspaper, including using photographs originally published in Class Struggle. In Yeovil a comrade got his Union branch to switch their support from Oxfam to the Red Cross and organize a collection in the factory for the Kampuchean people.

Two comrades have shown excellent initiative in organizing a summer camp. Please note the revised date of 2-9th August and send back replies as soon as possible!

NB!
NB!

Nationally we supported a major anti-racist march on 25th November against the proposed new racist laws. Our contingent was drawn together on a broad basis and included comrades from national minority organizations and a well produced leaflet in Bengali and Punjabi as well as English. This corrects the extremely rigid and dogmatic decision the CFB took in 1976 not to support a major anti-racist march called by the IWGB on the grounds that industrial work was our "central" mass work task.

On Kampuchea with limited resources our comrades and those of the CWM have succeeded in bringing together a nucleus of progressive people who sent a delegation to the recent important Stockholm conference. They are now at the stage of preparing the conditions for the establishment of an independent and broad solidarity Committee supporting the Kampuchea struggle.

Two short items from the rally celebrating the 30th anniversary of the PRC: could appropriate comrades in relevant units please send in any outstanding money owed for tickets? Can units also note that the photo-display excellently produced by the lay-out cell is available for any local meetings or exhibitions you may wish to hold?

Negatively we had to conclude after patient enquiries that the comrades in Grimsby can no longer be regarded as members of the League. We understand informally that the leading comrade is demoralised about the possibility of combining a revolutionary stand with every day industrial struggle. Undoubtedly he was also affected by the semi-paralysis of the centre during the time of the anti-League faction which led to him receiving weak leadership and also failed to educate him about developments in overcoming "leftism" in China. However it is encouraging that he does not support the faction's line intentionally and was not directly drawn into the faction's manoeuvres. We hope he will play a positive and progressive role in the movement once again in the future.

More positively you will see in CS two appeals. One was sparked off by an individual comrade's initiative in gathering information on Zimbabwe for CS -

an appeal to help their election fund to support their struggle against British imperialism and help maintain their independence from the Soviet Union.

The other is an appeal particularly directed to all comrades and supporters who are inspired by the importance of the CWM and RCL decision to unite in the cause of rebuilding the revolutionary Communist Party - an appeal for funds to strengthen the press. We are proud to say that as a result of comrades revolutionary attitude to RCL funds we have already been in a position to arrange getting an extremely modern and efficient electronic typesetter which will produce the paper with proportional spacing and straight right hand margins to the columns. This will not only create a greater appearance of serious revolutionary professionalism but will permit a more flexible and livelier lay out. So we are sure that all supporters who contribute to this fund will see tangible results in the near future and proof of our continued advances in Party building, which will in turn enable us to have a deeper influence among the masses.

Certain more detailed questions about the rectification stage and about studying the important developments in China in a positive but non-dogmatic way must wait for the next bulletin as this is already too long.

Chairman.

P.S.

Kampuchea Poster

A militant A4 poster has been produced by RCL and CWM comrades on behalf of the two organizations showing two heroic Kampuchean soldiers (one man and one woman) standing up to Brezhnev and a Vietnamese aggressor soldier who are menacing a starving Kampuchean child. It is hoped branches will get copies they think they can use for propaganda purposes and it is planned that additional copies would be sold for 5p each to raise money for the heroic Kampuchean struggle against hegemonism.

One unit of comrades had made a strong criticism that the distortions of the Vietnamese soldier's face are racist and have asked for it to be withdrawn. The Standing Committee considered this criticism and unanimously agreed the poster should not be withdrawn. We do not think the criticism seeks truth from facts. While we support the importance of being vigilant against racist ideas in an imperialist country, we think the criticism applies the principle dogmatically and in disregard of the circumstances and the overall situation, and does not guard against falling into the opposite error of a sort of vacillating white liberalism. The poster is a stylised one. Two Asians are depicted in a stylized heroic way (the Kampucheans) and one Asian (the Vietnamese soldier) has his face distorted. Even if the face had been deliberately based on photographs of Le Duan it would still have been a distorted Vietnamese face side by side with Brezhnev's distorted European face. When you remember that the Vietnamese regime has been responsible for the deaths of 1 to 2 million people of Chinese and Kampuchean race, the criticism that this poster is racist and should be withdrawn seems abstract and vacillating to us.

We ask comrades to:

1. Use the poster to aid the struggle of the Kampuchean people as proposed.
2. Discuss the criticisms democratically. By democratic debate we hope the question will be seen more all-sidedly and any possible lessons can be born in mind for future posters.

N.B. Please remember the Summer Camp!