

RCL CONFERENCE SUNDAY 20th APRIL IN LONDON.

This conference is an important step in preparing for the Unity Conference, which will effectively establish a single national Marxist Leninist organization in Britain. That unity conference the RCL and CWM have agreed will be on 31st May and 1st June. It will be a major landmark in Party building in Britain.

In order to prepare for it well the RCL is calling a specifically RCL conference for all members on Sunday 20th April. The aim of this is to help achieve fundamental unity of thinking on the outlines of the RCL's history and on the main lessons learned during the rectification stage. This is important for our future revolutionary practice in the actual class struggle and for joining with comrades of the CWM in the united organization. This circular is being distributed to help comrades prepare their thinking in advance for the conference.

CONTENT OF THE CONFERENCE.

A draft summary of the history of the RCL will be circulated to all members a couple of weeks before the conference. We hope this will be fundamentally approved. Comments and criticisms will be taken into account by the CC meeting following the RCL conference and after necessary amendments at the CC the statement will be presented to the Unity Conference from the RCL's side as an internal basic statement of our history. We will then probably not want to debate it in much detail a second time at what will be a unity conference with our comrades from the CWM.

Themes in the basic history will include our progress through twists and turns in building a strong vanguard Communist nucleus which nevertheless must be inseparably linked with the struggle of the masses. There will be reference to the CFB's campaign in 1975 and 1976 against "five major right opportunist errors" and to a subsequent tendency not to show sufficient vigilance against left-opportunist deviations. A related theme will be the twists and turns in building a centralized organization out of the anarchy of the small groups but one which is democratic-centralist and which not only gives leadership to the class struggle but does so based on the democratic discussion of comrades and bringing forward their initiative in the actual struggle. The history will refer to the great long term and short term importance of unity with the comrades of the CWM.

The lessons for our party building work that have come out of the rectification stage will be a significant part of this overall history and of the debate at the April 20th conference.

The CC lead to the conference will call on comrades to support the achievements of the rectification stage and to commit ourselves to translating them more comprehensively into practice. Among the most important to be stressed will be the correction of a left sectarian and rigid attitude to mass work which seriously disrupted the links between party building and mass work, and a left-dogmatist and rigidly disciplined view of democratic centralism which ensured a formal unity but seriously hampered initiative. Politically we will want to stress rejection of the ultra left line associated with the faction, which counterposed the struggle against British imperialism to the three worlds theory, while supporting the correction of an important rightist error on Ireland which was also achieved during the rectification stage in line with our commitment to continue correcting rightist errors.

In the light of our experience gained during the rectification stage as well as considering the past significant ultra-left deviation in the international communist movement that has now become apparent, the Central Committee at its recent meeting reaffirmed yet again its far sightedness a year ago in saying that the Rectification stage should pay particular attention to criticising "left" opportunism of an idealist kind. This has been very important and should be upheld.

Some weaknesses in the rectification stage are also agreed by the CC. The emphasis on particularly criticising ultra-leftism has been correct but at times it has come over in a purely ideological way which has made it difficult for comrades to grasp the practical importance of some of the changes for our leadership of the actual class struggle. Only in the second half of the stage have some of these very important lessons become clearer.

In particular it was a bad error to separate the ideological question from some important political questions. The political line of the Zimbabwe campaign was delayed far too long and comrades should have been actively called on to discuss the important political amendments to the Manifesto approved by the CC in May 1979.

Another lesson is that although "ultra-left idealism" sums up most concisely what needed correcting, the questions should have been made much more immediately relevant and concrete by using more specific terms to illustrate problems, such as dogmatism, sectarianism, rigidity, and impetuosity, which all hampered Party building at times.

The rectification stage carried on from the first stage in which we denounced the splittist faction, but we think it was a mistake to commit ourselves to targeting them throughout the rectification stage even though it was correct at times to draw out important lessons for comrades in the form of particularly exposing the faction's line.

There will therefore be reference to some of these weaknesses in the rectification stage at the conference for the benefit of our future understanding. At the same time it is important for comrades to understand that there is no way we could have done this work as thoroughly as the rectification movement carried out by the Communist Party of China between 1942 and 1944 of erroneous "leftist" lines and styles in the party in the 1930's.

There will be differences of opinion at the Conference on some of the questions along the lines that have been indicated in the circulars and internal bulletins. This is inevitable and healthy. What is important is that where there is debate and struggle it is in the spirit of a struggle for unity on the main fundamental lessons for the way ahead. It is important to stress that this rectification stage should not be judged in terms of how perfect it makes us in an abstract self-cultivating way but in terms of how much it helps us as a practical Party-building organization. Will we be better able to aid the struggle of the workers against the attacks of decadent British capitalism, to aid the struggle of Blacks against racism and all national oppression, to aid the struggle of the oppressed people and the people of the whole world against imperialism but particularly the bullying and war policies of the two superpowers especially the Soviet Union? These are some of the tests of practice against which our work must be judged.

STRUCTURE OF CONFERENCE.

We need to handle the relationship between democracy and centralism well at the conference. The CC resolved that there should be a good lead based on the CC's view on the rectification stage, and stressing the unity of the RCL. On democratic debate the CC resolved that the emphasis should be placed on the opportunity for rank and file comrades to contribute their opinions, experiences and criticisms freely. CC comrades in a minority on particular questions will contribute clearly but will not individualistically over-emphasize differences with the CC position that can be more fully struggled over in the CC. Such comrades will therefore be stressing the points of unity but will be clear-cut about some differences.

These points are being explained to all comrades in advance so they can understand better how they want to contribute to a good collective conference on some very important questions. The SC will put forward a motion on behalf of the CC supporting the general outlines of the historical assessment of the RCL and the main lessons of the rectification stage. Motions and amendments will be permissible from any comrade. Please make them available at least by the beginning of the meeting (preferably before). The conference itself can then decide how much attention it wants to give to particular questions.

Place: precise details will follow later. Starting time probably 10am, Sunday morning. Comrades particularly committed to Kampuchea work will be interested in a meeting called by the Britain Kampuchea Support Campaign for the Saturday before in commemoration of the liberation of Phnom Penh on 17th April 1975. Please send requests for fraternal assistance with accommodation as early as possible.

Summary: An important conference on the history of the RCL with particular attention to the main positive lessons from the rectification stage. We should be optimistic about our achievements while discussing honestly our shortcomings. We should do this to strengthen ourselves as a practical vanguard force uniting in a couple of months time in the all important unity conference with our comrades of the C.W.M. (For SC.)