

THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

26, Cambridge Road,
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9 May 1995

Dear Comrades,

THE INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR OF MARXIST-LENINIST PARTIES AND ORGANISATIONS

BRUSSELS, 1995

In March 1994 our organisation received an invitation to send a representative to an 'International Marxist-Leninist Seminar' to be organised by the Party of Labour of Belgium (Parti du Travail de Belgique) (PTB) in Brussels in May 1995.

It was proposed that a main item on the agenda of the seminar should be 'the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union', and the Marxist-Leninist Research Bureau (composed of representatives of the New Communist Party, the Association of Communist Workers, the Association of Indian Communists and the Communist League) decided in September 1994 that I, as Secretary of the MLRB, should represent the MLRB in this part of the agenda (on which there are no perceptible differences between the four organisations), while representing the CL on other matters.

In February 1995 we received confirmation of the invitation, together with an invitation to prepare an intervention, to be sent in writing to Brussels. We decided to submit a paper dealing with the necessity of struggle against what Enver Hoxha called 'all brands of revisionism'. This was done.

Three days before the seminar was due to commence, and after I had made the necessary travel arrangements, I realised that I had not been informed where the seminar was to be held. I therefore telephoned the PTB and spoke to Maggie Doumen of the party's International Department, who speaks English fluently. After some delay, I was informed that the venue of the seminar was the Flemish University, which lies in the suburbs of Brussels.

I arrived at the university before 9 a.m., but could find no trace of the PTB members who, I had been told, would meet me. The university office knew nothing of any three-day seminar and I was therefore compelled to go back into the city to the Party's office. There, after further delay, I was taken to the address in the city, arriving about 3 p.m. I consequently missed most of the first day of the seminar.

There were some sixty delegations present at the seminar -- compared with 54 last year -- approximately half from what the platform called the 'Third World'. According to Ludo Martens of the PTB, some 75% were supporters of Mao Tse-tung, although I estimated the percentage as higher.

There soon became apparent some features which seemed odd for what purported to be a seminar for revolutionary socialists; for example, the presence on the PTB's own table of handouts of a pamphlet (published by the

Rand Corporation, a 'think-tank' set up in the 1940s by the US military and university scientists) advising on measures to fight anti-imperialist guerillas in Peru; the similar presence of a pamphlet published by the PTB advising revolutionary organisations to communicate by electronic mail; a long intervention by Klaus von Raussendorf, a former intelligence agent of the GDR, a state characterised by the organisers of the seminar as 'counter-revolutionary'; and so on.

On the morning of 3 May, I was informed that the difficulty about my proposed intervention was its length. I said that I would be prepared to shorten it to a maximum of ten minutes, and was told that if I could stay an extra day -- I had intended to return home on 3 May -- this might be possible. However, at lunchtime on 4 May I was notified that it not possible. All that I could do was briefly to make the following points in private.

I said that it seemed clear that there was agreement among all the delegates on 95% of the content of the 'Proposals for Unity', but that some were firmly opposed on principle to certain points -- in particular to the statement in draft Clause 16 that Mao Tse-tung had 'best grasped the danger of revisionism', had made important contributions to the fight against revisionism', had led the transformation of the Chinese national-democratic revolution 'into the the socialist revolution', and (presumably in the 'Cultural Revolution') had 'made the first attempt in history to draw the masses into the fight against degenerative tendencies within the Party'.

I pointed out that Clause 17 of the draft 'Proposals for Unity' stated:

"Different opinions in the International Communist Movement on the merits of Mao Tse-tung will remain for a certain time; they should be treated in an impartial way, searching for the truth on the basis of the facts".

and said that this last clause, to which we had no objection, was inconsistent with the firmly positive assessment of Mao Tse-tung in draft Clause 16.

I concluded by saying that only the withdrawal of the 5% or so of the draft 'Proposals for Unity' with which there was principled disagreement, would enable all delegations to sign the document, while continuing the 'search for truth on the basis of facts'. If, on the other hand, the PTB insisted on, and succeeded in, securing the adoption of a document which contained clauses which some delegations could not on principle sign, and then -- as has been threatened -- excluded from future seminars parties and organisations unwilling to sign these clauses, then IT WOULD BE CLEAR THAT THEIR TALK OF WORKING FOR THE UNIFICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT WAS MERE HYPOCRISY AND THEY WOULD STAND GUILTY BEFORE THE BAR OF HISTORY AS SPLITTERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT.

On the afternoon of 4 May, Ludo Martens, on behalf of the PTB, replied to the discussion and the representations made to the platform. He said that in the final draft the sponsors had made a concession of principle by naming Enver Hoxha on equal terms with Mao as one "who best grasped the nature of revisionism'. He referred to 'people who insisted that all the concessions come from one side' and said the term splitter was an 'unjustified slander'. Nevertheless, he confirmed that parties and organisations which had not signed the final version of 'Proposals fo Unity' within 'a reasonable period' would be regarded as excluded from the international communist movement.

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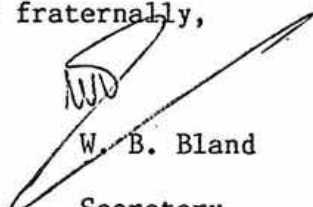
On this -- in our opinion -- divisive note, the seminar came to an end.

I do not what happened to the theme of 'the history of the CPSU'; it was not mentioned during my presence at the seminar.

Our views on the controversial questions discussed at the seminar are eloquently expressed by the statement of the 'Marxist-Leninist Communist Party -- Foundation' of Turkey, a copy of which is enclosed.

Taking the Brussels events in conjunction with the recent ejection of many anti-revisionists in a number of countries from the Stalin Society, it seems clear that fundamentalist Maoists and their sponsors are now engaged on AN INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AIMED AT ISOLATING THE ALL-ROUND ANTI-REVISIONISTS AND -- AS THE TURKISH COMRADES SAY IN THEIR STATEMENT -- DIVERTING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT ON THE PATH TOWARDS THE FORMATION OF WHAT THEY -- AND WE -- REGARD AS A NEW REVISIONIST INTERNATIONAL.

Yours fraternally,



W. B. Bland
Secretary