

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 1974

Mary-Alice
New York

Dear Mary-Alice:

The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction mobilized in force for the series of regional congresses here, ~~xxxxxxxx~~ held last weekend in preparation for the national congress this next weekend. There were 17 congresses scheduled for the weekend; five of them in Paris. Two more, in Grenoble and Tours, were held the preceding weekend, and were attended by Alberto and Dudi respectively. With a total of 15 comrades here, we were able to cover most of the congresses. Two are scheduled for later this week; D. and I will go to them. Of the total of 19, 16 will have been addressed by LTF members.

The Tendency in the IMG provided the bulk of our forces, sending over six comrades, together with 2 Australians and 2 New Zealanders. In addition there were the three Argentines, Steve and Mona and myself. The Germans had hoped to send along a few, but in the end no one showed up from there. Tony R. overslept and didn't make it, which was a disappointment, ~~xxxx~~ too. But it was an impressive delegation.

We caucused on the Friday night at the "deadend" and agreed on a voting formula for the LTF that included: For the general line of Balance Sheet on Argentina and Bolivia; Against the EPD and PR of IEC majority. Since we were allowed only twenty minute reports we felt we couldn't ask delegates to endorse the "general line" of our reports on the PR and EPD.

She was elected a delegate by her cell.

The format in every regional congress was: reports of 20 minutes by each of RIF, CLC and LTF on the PR, EPD and LA questions, and ten or 15 minutes at the end of congress, just before vote, for each delegate to make a general statement. Some congresses stretched over the whole weekend, with several hours of discussion on each topic; the norm, however, was one hour of discussion following each hour of reports. Since most of the comrades of the LTF spoke in a language other than French, they were allowed double time for translation.

In general, I think the comrades felt it was a useful experience. None of the delegates were LTF supporters, of course, but in most cases they seemed to listen to what we had to say. Everywhere the level of participation in the discussion was very low; where I was (Dijon) 19 of the 30 delegates, including one central committee member, never spoke once during the congress -- and this was apparently typical. All the LTF comrades characterized the general level of the discussion as very low; the repetition of a few simple themes (e.g., importance of "the analysis of the period", necessity for the party to initiate armed actions in Latin America, even if its own forces are very minimal modest, etc.); there was little attempt, even by leaders of the majority, to answer our points. The level of the "debate" was a bit of a shock to the Australians and New Zealanders; even some British were disappointed. Alan H. said he thought the level was considerably lower than in the IMG (but then the IC hasn't had a LT tendency to sharpen them up).

One feature of all the congresses where Contre le Courant was represented, was the sharp attacks by the majority against them. The general theme was that CLC employs much the same "method" as the LTF, that it hasn't a "global counter-position," that it plays into the hands of the LTF, by weakening the forces opposed to the LTF.

A few areas are so far out of touch with the discussion that they failed to attend the regional congresses, or were unable to formulate definite positions. For example, Nice (with about 30) failed to attend the Marseilles congress where it was expected; Rheims, where Dudi went (she was scheduled to speak on the PST and Latin America the day previous), decided not to have a congress, but instead to send an "observer" to the national congress; at Rouen, only the delegates from the city itself voted, the other Normandy delegates are to hold a minicongress sometime this week. (I'm not clear why)

In several areas (Tours, Nanterre, Vincennes) the ~~abstain~~ number of members who abstained on the voting is very high. In the last mentioned, it was sufficient to elect 10 delegates to the regional congress (one-fifth of the total) as part of an "abstentionist" caucus. Four of these delegates ~~xxxxxxx~~ were representatives of a group that had motivated its abstention around the "new vanguards" document. They will have a delegate at the national congress.

Apart from the conscious "abstainers" ~~xxxxxx~~ dissent with the majority line has been expressed through Contre le Courant. For example, dissidents I had ~~xxxxxxxx~~ encountered at Dijon and Auxerre (the latter linked with Dijon for the congress), were all in CLC now, I found, and they will have a delegate at the national congress. They agree with some of our ~~xxxx~~ positions, but don't at present see any perspective in joining the LTF, and in any case haven't sufficiently generalized their views. All LTF comrades reported that CLC supporters were friendly to us, however, and are open to discussions of our views.

Peculiarities in the voting? Of course the pattern everywhere was heavily pro-majority. In a few areas, there were abstentions ~~xxxxxx~~ among the majority delegates on the EPD, in others there were abstentions on the Armed Struggle resolution. In general, Besnais' document seems to have convinced doubters that the majority can correct its errors. Our arguments that voting for "amended" texts was like B's vote for a promise at the IEC, seemed to fall on deaf ears. So also did our challenge that the majority include B's text in its line positions, for voting at the world congress. In general the votes were hard along tendency lines. The CLC platform is as the enclosed document indicates. The majority's platform was everywhere the "amended" PR, and EPD, and Armed Struggle documents. They did not vote on the MMF's Argentina and Bolivia documents because, we were told, "amendments" are still forthcoming by the Walloon majority which considers those documents "insufficient."

Something worth noting: many comrades including myself were struck by how the debate faltered particularly around the Latin American question. It was a "silent majority" -- almost no one in the majority caucus among delegates wanted to explicitly defend the Latin American line. The ~~Bomite~~ de Redaction members present usually took it on themselves to present the LA report. At least one "crib sheet" (fiche de travail) was produced by the majority for the regional congresses; Krivine gave me his at Dijon. I loaned it to Dudi, but will forward it if I get it back. Krivine's report on Latin America was interesting, and I've typed up some notes on it, which are enclosed.

on LA.

The voting procedures here have some peculiar features which are new to me, at least. I was told by Krivine before the congresses that the basis of representation ~~was~~ at the regional meetings was one delegate for every five members. However, LTF comrades report that the basis of representation varied from one area to another; Alan Harris found that in his section in Paris, it was one delegate for every two members (Jeannette, ~~xxxxxx~~ who was translating, told him it was because this was a relatively "new" area and they wanted to encourage members to participate). In several areas such as Dijon where I was, it was one delegate for every three members. I was told by a CC member that the reason for the variations was that no regional congress was to have more than 50 delegates, for reasons of security. However, several regions had more than 50 delegates anyway.

Another interesting procedure is to tally the votes of unrepresented minorities from each area, at the national level, and then to award delegatenhips accordingly. For example, if CLC received a couple of votes in several regions, insufficient to elect delegates to regional congresses, those votes might, taken together at the national level, be sufficient to award it ~~xxxx~~ an additional delegate to the national congress. (This was one of the RCT's demands in the Canadian section.)

Delegates to the national congress are elected on the basis of one for every 25 members. "Members" however means "cotisants" or dues-payers. These include both full members (titulaires) and candidates (stagiaires). Only titulaires have the right to vote however, and stagiaires' votes are "indicatif" (consultative). A hypothetical example: 100 cotisants = 4 delegates. But if only 50 of these dues-payers are titulaires, this means that the 50 are electing the four delegates. So ~~xxx~~ each delegate would ~~xxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ represent 12 members. If, however, there were 80 titulaires, each delegate would represent 20 members. Is this an encouragement to recruit candidates (and increase your delegate total), or a discouragement to promote candidates to full members (and diffuse representation in congresses)? ~~It strikes me that this factor will be a strong one to an independent youth organization!~~

In any case, the stagiaires seem to have been left out of the pre-congress discussion. In Dijon I got the record of voting in the cells. For full members it was: majority 52; CLC 10; LTF 0; abstentions 14; one not able to vote and two absent. For the candidates, it was: majority 3; CLC 1; LTF 0; abstentions 9; ~~xxx~~ one not able to vote and four absent. Of interest also is the large number of abstentions among full members. *And yet the ~~xxxxxx~~ stagiaires are included in determining representation at the congress, including world Congress!*

Another interesting point on the voting. In a few areas the majority threw in Germain's In Defense of Leninism in their platform. That is, there did not seem to be a standardized majority platform. And for all their talk of "amending" their position on Latin America, the fact remains that ~~x~~ key points in their declaration of tendency include ~~xx~~ the EPD in unamended form and defense of the "orientation towards armed struggle in Latin America, as well as the resolution on Bolivia adopted at the IEC -- and the "majority tendency" in the Wallon section was constituted on the basis of agreement with that statement. And how will they vote if the IEC majority and the WC delegates reject their "amendments"? No answer.

...4

By the way, the LTF got at least six votes in the Paris area, including two we can't account for.

Comradely,

Dick
Dick

P.S. At their national congress this weekend, we will be allowed half-hour reports on PR, LA and EPD. No world movement report. I hope we get a few more "foreign" LTFers, so we can spread the reports among some new people. Tomorrow I find out time and place.

P.P.S. In Mona's cell, about 12 people, she was elected a delegate (although not apparently on basis of support for LTF as such, but because they thought the LTF position should be defended at regional congress), and the remaining delegate(s) was/were part of a caucus of ~~abstentionists~~ "abstentionists" who are anti-majority but feel that they haven't come to grips with the discussion sufficiently to align themselves with one or another minority tendency. Some are close to CLC, others to the New Vanguard people, some are looking into the LTF. No one voted for the majority in Mona's cell, apparently not even the comrade who presented their positions in a meeting I attended, back in November.

How much of a majority has the "majority?" Following are some break-downs on the voting for the regions where we were able to get information...

~~Of course~~

Tours region (Orleans, Le Mans, Bourges~~(11)~~, Poitiers, Blois, Tours, Anger):

	Titulaires					Stagiaires				
	MMF	LTF	CLC	Abstns	N.V.	MMF	LTF	CLC	Abstns	N.V.
Orleans	6		1	5						
Le Mans	7	0	0	1					1	
Bourges	3	0	0	0						
Poitiers*	+2*	0	5	5	3			2		2
Blois	3								3	
Tours *	17	0	0	3		3			6	
Angers			3***					4***		1
TOTAL	38 ₃	0	9	14	8 (not clear)	3	0	7 (not clear)	12	10 (not clear)

2 cities not represented at regional congress

*Poitiers: 3 "independent" majos - when refused right to be own tendency at national congress, they voted with majority.

** Tours: where is our LTF'er's vote?

***Angers: these were described by our informant as "close to Centre le Courant"

The "not clear's" above are probably result of incomplete information on voting. In every case, of course, they increase the number of members, and thereby the number of delegates for majority (in this case)

Although these figures give us a total of 104 members, of which 72 are full members (titulaires), this area got 5 delegates at national congress, of which 4 are majo, 1 is clc. This may mean that there are a number of members not listed who did not vote

Note, however, that adding up "majority" votes of both titulaires and stagiaires gives majos 44 of the 104. Second largest group is abstentions with 26, followed by "not voting", 12 18, then CLC with 16.

Note also that largest number of stagiaires are listed as abstainers that the largest number of stag's aligned with tendencies are with CLC, and that majority has clear support of only 3 of 32 stag's listed.

Of the 72 full members listed, majority has support of only 41% of whom 3 openly state they have differences with some aspects of majority line.

How typical, or exceptional, is Tours region? We must look into this further....

The only other area where to this point we have a detailed breakdown, is Steve's "rayon" in Paris, grouping sections 3, 10, 4, and 13 (this "department" includes Vincennes campus where he is student).

According to figures read out cell by cell at his regional congress, there are 253 members in this area. Of these 176 are full members (titulaires). Of these 132 are listed as voting for the ~~MMF~~ "majority" tendency (although I listed these as MMF in previous page, remember that these are votes for the "amended" resolutions of the Walloon section majority leadership). Two are listed as voting for the LTF (Steve and a contact he knows); six for the CLC, ~~25~~ 14 are listed as abstaining -- and 25 voted for a "motivated abstention" around support of the document "Les Nouvelles Avant-gardes" authored by the grouping that refused to join CLC, and is generally closer to us than CLC is. In five cells, this latter grouping ~~had~~ had a majority or came within one vote of a majority. CLC had a majority in no cell. Both LTF votes were in one cell. There were 25 cells listed altogether.

notes on Alain Krivine's report on Latin America, at Dijon, Jan. 20
(for the "majority" tendency)

-- a basic problem is the type of organization we have in Latin America; for many years we were fed false information on our forces in LA, their number, influence, roots, etc., by our local "leaders" Note that all our LA documents have been written by non-Latin Americans. Then there is the problem of lack of information in the International on Latin America.

-- As for the guerrilla orientation, let's remember that Moreno is more responsible than anyone for that; he proposed liquidation into OLAS.

-- you can't judge the correctness of a line on the organizational plane. For example, so what if the PST has 3,000 members, the PRT(C) or Red Faction only 1,000 (sic)? The FIR (Blanco) is a disaster just like the PRT(C) in Argentina. And anyway, the Left Opposition was smashed by Stalin; does that prove they were wrong?

-- The "minority" is a faction in Latin America; for example, for all their talk ~~of~~ against "popular frontism" in France, and Chile, Moreno doesn't think Allende govt was popular front, and PRT(U) remains in a popular front formation. How come the PRT(U) is the only legal party remaining in Uruguay today?

-- the international X majority has changed its nature today; we have carried out a political evolution, adjusting our line on Latin America to remove errors; this political evolution was begun by the French majority, by Beauvais's auto-critique and aided by Jebrac's trip to Argentina.

-- but despite this, the profound differences of 1969 have remained and developed further. This indicates that the minority is on a rightist course.

= the main achievements of the 69 resolution are 1) analysis of the period, that is, no possibility of a democratic opening for a long period, which the minority contests (Moreno on Uruguay, Barnes on Chile). It is inevitable that Peronism will strike with repression within, maybe 1-2 months. The PST may well be liquidated within 2-3 months after being illegalized. 2) recognition of the role of the bourgeois army, that our own armed forces are needed if we are to hope to win over significant sections of repressive forces to side of revolution; and 3) the resolution's understanding of the role of national bourgeoisie; its inability to maneuver much vis-a-vis imperialism. The PST is today redefining the role of the national bourgeoisie.

-- The error of the PRT(C) was to axe all its strategies on the armed wing of the party. The perspective of prolonged war was correct; the only error was to say that the war is already engaged.

-- on OLAS, we fell into the error of Moreno.

-- what is fundamentally at stake is two diametrically opposed concepts of the party...

(Re point about minority faction, above: Krivine thinks the hallmark of a faction is that it hides its internal debates from the International. Thus he hands me his crib sheet with the comment, "we're not a faction." Hence also the introductory note on the recent LA "self-criticism" of the Walloon majority.)