

## **Statement from the Australian delegate to the Revolution International Delegates Conference, Prague 2006**

I was somewhat shocked on the second day of the Revolution International Delegates conference, to be told as the Australian delegate, that the section I come from and represent, does not exist. I expect the comrades back home will be even more shocked to learn that they do not exist.

After this statement a resolution was passed 13 to 5 removing all rights and responsibilities from the Australian Revo group – effectively de-sectionalising us and removing us from the international Revo organisation. Which ever way you cut it, this was 13 delegates, all under the discipline of the LFI, removing a section from the organisation in which they had no influence.

The 'discussion', over the first day of the conference, was filled with insults, accusations, and attempts to discredit myself, the Permanent Revolution group of which I am currently a member & the work of the Australian section (only one other of whom is a member of PR), achieved very little organisationally, or politically.

I attended this conference as a delegate, hoping to help unify the increasingly divided Revolution leadership body, and looked forward to hearing positive contributions on how Revo Australia could best progress what I openly stated was a small and struggling organisation. What I received however, was nothing but hostility. I find it a very sad day indeed when the LFI resorts to dragging its faction fighting into Revolution, at the cost of Revolution's independence - something, which while I was a member of the LFI, I thoroughly believed in and worked towards.

And did the LFI attack the independence of Revo at this conference? They certainly did. Even in the delegation of 13 LFI/Revo members compared to the 5 independent Revo members, we saw absolutely no variation in argument, in politics, or most importantly, in vote from the majority.

I expected an attack on myself, my politics and PR, but I am appalled at the method in which the LFI sought to destroy and negate the delegation from Germany, firstly by refusing to allow its full voting rights - ie, allowing them only 3 votes instead of the 5 votes that they should have been allowed by the conference, based on their membership numbers. These comrades produced a section report that ratified the numbers of their membership, but the LFI sought to use the unproved opinion of a LFI member from Germany, one of two, I believe, active in German Revo, who they transported to Prague to discredit the German section. This is atrocious. The LFI is so intent on controlling every aspect of its international action, that the largest group of independent revo members were effectively harassed, and silenced by an unelected member of the LFI.

In protest at the Australian section's expulsion, and the ongoing attacks on a truly independent international Revolution, the non-LFI Czech delegate, and all German delegates walked out of the conference in disgust. These comrades have already

produced their own statement and have begun to clarify how they will go about being part of a genuinely independent youth organisation.

I suspect the response to this statement will be in precisely the same vein of the attacks I received at the conference, and predictably, they are of course based upon the 'leaked' faction emails – a series of private correspondences between LFI faction members in the run-up to that organisation's world Congress – emails that were acquired by nefarious means and used first to expel the Faction from the LFI and now to attempt to discredit my actions as a member of Revo and indeed the whole Australian Revo section (something made even more bizarre by the fact that only one other Australian revo member was even in the LFI at the time!)

I will say this here -

The oft quoted 'minutes' of the Australian faction meeting are wrong. They say that we have one independent member of Revo in Australia. The reality of this matter is that we have two independent members, two PR members, and one ex-member considering rejoining. The minutes were not written by me, they were written by a comrade not involved in Revo work, and they were awaiting correction by me – I had not even read them before they were leaked. This is why they were not a public document, but were in fact, a document sent to an internal faction, to provide faction members of an idea of what our Australian aggregate decided. While this is a petty point to raise, I feel I need to clarify this as throughout the duration of the conference, LFI members have felt it necessary to justify many of their arguments with that one quote.

The other passage of much LFI usage in these emails, is the one also from the Australian faction minutes, stating:

“...pull back from Revo for the moment, except where needed internationally.”

This is true. We, as Workers Power Australia (at the time) did intend to pull back from this work, as we believed that Revolution was capable of operating with less support from us; that they have the leadership and organisational capabilities required to run Revolution without overbearing control from Workers Power comrades. I make no apologies for this.

One central campaign of Revolution has been the Campaign for Women's Reproductive Rights - Revolution has taken a leading role in this united front campaign. In the WP Australia minutes, we state that we will draw back from this campaign in the coming months. Again, this was in the belief that Revolution could hold its own in this campaign, without our control or assistance. Should they require help however, I imagine we would be only too happy to oblige.

Interestingly, that last point was one of the deciding factors in having the Australian section expelled - the argument coming from Luke & Roman seemed to consist of 'WP agreed to pull back from the CWRR work, therefore Revolution doesn't really exist'.

Maybe that's how Revo UK & Austria operate, in a way that 'independence' really means 'attachment to the LFI's campaigns until they pull out'; but it is certainly not the way Revolution Australia has ever operated. Frankly, that looks to me like they were looking for an excuse to expel us.

What I cannot forgive however, is that they have expelled not just me, a PR member, but have expelled the entire Australian section - including the two, possibly three members that have nothing to do with PR. Along with this, they have further attacked the rights of independent members to be able to participate in Revolution without fear of LFI control, harassment or bullying.

I can only hope that the remaining members take a good, long look at how the LFI influences and controls Revolution; sometimes in very subtle ways, but on the 20th of July, the last day of conference, in a very obvious way - I hope you all start to question that more in coming times - whether you be an independent Revo member, a LFI member or otherwise. I believe there is a hope for Revolution internationally, but not if the LFI continues down this path of organisational domination and control.

To that end, I offer my full support and solidarity to the independent members of REVOLUTION & the RIC who walked out of this same conference. Their actions show a courage in conviction that Revo internationally has lacked for a long time, as Revo rests safe in the knowledge that the LFI holds its hand and will save it from failure. To prevent both Revo & the LFI from embarrassment, in order to protect their own name and interests.

While these intentions from the majority of the LFI may be good at heart, the whole idea of the Leninist youth organisation that the LFI set about building back in 1994, is that revolutionary youth must have their own structures, their own organisation, and will most importantly of all, have the ability to learn from their own mistakes and indeed to make new and unique contributions to the class struggle precisely because they are less constricted by historical mis-leaderships. It's unfortunate that the organisation that was once under the watchful tutelage of the LFI, has now come under the domineering control of that same organisation. This can contribute nothing to the future of REVOLUTION, it can only harm Revolution's ability to recruit and to develop critical thinkers; cadre who are capable of not only making the necessary arguments, but of developing and fully understanding the theory and mechanics behind them.

I can understand why LFI cadre are increasingly controlling of Revo; it is the organisation they have helped build & shape, an organisation that is in political solidarity with the LFI - but what these cadre have let slip by is not just the act of independent organising, but the method thereof. The LFI I joined did not appear to have the intention of controlling Revolution & its leading bodies. Yet unfortunately, the notion of presenting the LFI's politics to a forum of politically organised youth, REVOLUTION, and winning these youth over politically, has degenerated. The LFI's intervention into Revolution in 2006, in stark contrast to the 90's, is simply an endless bureaucratic intervention. The slightest hint of independent leadership in Revo has, as we have seen at

this conference and over previous years, culminated in the force of LFI numbers following the resolutions from the LFI's International Secretariat. What was once a political intervention, a forum where LFI cadre were free to argue without fear of discipline from the LFI, with the intention of winning youth, has turned into a bureaucratically controlled mess where the LFIs 'politics' are simply legislated.

The independent youth at this conference presented a whole series of documents for the advancement of Revolution. A range of balance sheets, tasks, perspectives & constitution documents were to be presented; yet instead of using this opportunity to discuss these perspectives and unify Revolution internationally, the LFI cadre instead polarised the arguments, simplifying them into bite sized arguments to be used in polemical attacks against the independent membership of Revolution. 'Don't bother with these arguments, they're rubbish. Follow the LFI – we know what we're talking about' was the call of the day.

Even at conference itself, the LFI cadre, holding a mere 72% of the vote, did not feel comfortable in discussing or working with the documents presented. They only continued their polarised view, to the point of creating an argument that simply never existed – 'Do we want a democratic centralist organisation or not'. These LFI cadre continually, and incorrectly, summarised the independents' documents as arguing for federalist structures; and continued to refuse to respond to the arguments presented, the arguments that proved that these documents were not at all opposed to DC. They made themselves out to be apolitical fools, totally incapable of the political discussion required at this level of Leninist operation – these are the stereotypes against politicised youth that Revolution should be breaking, not enforcing by example.

Furthermore, a tasks document presented by myself, titled 'Period of transition and how to progress as Revolution' has been constantly criticised and written off by a vast majority of the LFI cadre. This is their right; but does this organisation have any chance to grow, to progress, if the simple steps of political discussion are not taken, and documents are simply condemned because they are not written by someone close to the LFI? Or because you might disagree with one or two perspectival points?

Unfortunately in his report of the Conference Luke chooses to slander me rather than address the actual political arguments I was making.

For example his document says:

"Then, incredibly, the uprising against the CPE in France that shook the French government was dismissed as 'an anticlimax', presumably meaning the struggle was doomed from the start, had no potential nor go any further in this period with a complete lack of understanding how Marxists fight against such obstacles to take the struggle further."

What my perspectives actually say and what I emphasised in verbal debate at the Conference is:

“In 2005/06 we saw the French students and working class take on a struggle, and win – but at what level? As impressive the actions that were taken, this was a defensive struggle, and while displaying some of the most militant strike and street action we’ve seen in a number of years, it was quelled by the simple overturning of the CPE – but this is now being implemented piece by piece. From these actions and ones like them we can see that our class is recovering internationally but still lacks leadership and direction.”

Certainly a different opinion from the one extolled by the LFI but far from the pessimistic and passive position that Luke tries to falsely characterise it as.

Surely, it would be the duty of any elected conference delegate to work with such documents and find ways to improve them, to streamline them, to create a higher synthesis from the arguments on the table that would benefit the organisation. The document may not have been perfect, but the greater part of this document, the tasks, have simply not been addressed. They present forward moving methods of uniting Revolution so that we could build a stronger, healthier organisation. Methods were devised to cover all areas of operation of Revolution – commissions to manage international interventions, a revamping of the website and associated tools to make contact work more effective, a commission to oversee international publications, and of course, an international treasury, just to name a few.

Rather than opposing any sort of democratic centralist methods in building Revo, I end my tasks document by saying:

“It is out of this set of tasks that we can see Revolution progress from a DC International Youth Organisation on paper, to a real functioning organ of youth, ready & prepared to take on all manner of tasks.”

None of my suggestions were discussed, nor adopted, and Revolution, a supposedly independent Revolutionary Youth International, remains without any of these structures – including the treasury, what I would consider to be a fundamental aspect of an organisationally independent organisation. This error was further compounded when Luke, the International Youth Secretary of the LFI and Revolution International Delegates Conference delegate from the UK submitted his report on the conference.

It is a shame they prioritised writing a report of the conference at the Conference itself (as stated in Luke’s document), instead of using the time they had left together as an elected conference to discuss, debate, develop & adopt the conference documents that were on the table for discussion that final day. Maybe they did this safe in the knowledge that every last delegate in the room, as LFI members, had already read and approved all of these documents and amendments beforehand. But independent Revo members and thinking members of the LFI around the world should ask the question of why their elected delegates spent more time at the Conference attacking me and the Australian section and writing documents slandering us, rather than dealing with the very real business of adopting a set of tasks and discussing and electing an international leadership.

In conclusion, I wish the independents of Revolution the greatest of luck and support for their future in revolutionary politics. They have forged a path for all critical thinkers who remain in Revolution, the LFI, or who are simply interested observers. These are the people who are genuinely interested, and committed to developing Revolution as an independent youth organisation. It is a shame that the comrades and the organisation – the LFI - who built Revolution from the ground up for over a decade, have now departed from the very ideals and politics the organisation they developed enshrines.

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