

Headquarters
5/4/69
2.30 a.m.!!

Dear Comrade Rings

This is to acknowledge receipt of your proposals under the heading "What must be done?"

The points you raise deserve to be fully discussed and will be. I wish you had raised them much earlier. At any rate, better late than never, and I very much welcome your initiative.

Let me, in passing, mention a few facts on these issues. Firstly, in entering Zimbabwe, as you will remember, we were taking advantage of the fact that ZAPU was sending in its men anyway, ^{as we had} they knew the terrain, although there were no maps and no proper reconnaissance of the route. This was not practicable at the time and no one does not know how impatient our men were. They entered enemy territory well knowing we had very little information in fact no information on the deployment of enemy forces. The decision was taken not only by the PC or HQ but by the Army commands and

commissars after lengthy deliberations,

Secondly, we had no radio communication or any other mode of communication except couriers. There were no radio transmitters. I think however, that not enough effort was put into finding transmitters. It is noteworthy, however, that various groups of Zaporozhians had entered the country before without radio communication. Luck.

~~Secondly~~ Thirdly,

~~Thirdly~~, given the absence of contact with the fighting units, no information of where the fighting was taking place, where our detachment was and how it could be reached, sending in another group would have been another leap in the dark. The enemy radio message you mention did not reach us. We might have been sending the next group into a fatal trap. The lesson we should have learnt from the LCD battles is: THERE MUST Be communication with a unit going into action. Without such communication how do you decide where to send reinforcements - to

What point, by what route, and how do you determine the strength of the reinforcements? A better answer would have been to strike somewhere else, & to have planned for this beforehand. The effect would not be to relieve The Wauke Detachment necessarily, but to effect some disposal of the enemy forces.

Thirdly, it must be remembered that The LCD was not an invasion army. It was a fusilla detachment expected to avoid battle except when this was impracticable. It had orders not to surrender, but it had no orders to seek out the enemy and engage it in battle. The idea that re-inforcements should have been sent in presupposes conditions of positional warfare where the new group's mission would be to look for the enemy, instead of avoiding battle. An operation either to cover the retreat of a unit or draw the enemy away from, or divert the enemy from a unit that has broken engagement would need an efficient communications network. We had no communications at all.

Fourthly, a Zapr unit of almost platoon strength had crossed in the near East & fighting in that area broke out when the LCD was already in Zimbabwe. This served a diversionary purpose favourable to the LCD. But the advantage or effect was very limited. The tactics were however, correct. What was wrong was inadequate preparation & reconnaissance of the proposed route.

Fifthly, in relation to The Eastern Front I think the answers lie one straight forward and any member of the M.H.Q. at the time can give a full explanation. Basically, the detachment took too long to disperse, contrary to orders, or at any rate to expectations!

Finally, the proposals you ^{are} making - 1 to scrap the HQ & PC & replace them with something else will be considered in conjunction with other related proposals. The investigation of the "failure" - & the extent of "failure" - of the PC & HQ should of course precede the scrapping. The investigation might show there has been NO failure! Thanks again Comrade D. A. Manda, O.R.