Workers' Weekly

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Coventry International Seminar – A Landmark in the Party's Life

EVER since plans for a two-day International Seminar on the topic: *Retreat of Revolution and the Tasks of the Communist and Workers' Movement*, were initiated in mid-November last year, the Party made the preparations for the success of the Seminar, which it hosted, the cutting edge of its work.

The whole Party was aware that the theme of the Seminar was a key topic to ensuring the correct orientation not only of its work but for clearing the path for the advance of the practical movement. It was looking forward with anticipation to the presentation of the theme paper by Hardial Bains, the national leader of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist).

The sense of optimism that had characterised the mobilisation for the event and the spirit of pulling together in the practical preparations, of blowing away lingering cobwebs, found their fulfilment as participants in the seminar gathered on January 2 in Coventry. They included members of RCPB(ML), as well as interested people from other groups and parties, including the Indian Workers Association (G.B.), with their President and Secretary, who had participated in the International Seminar Preparatory Committee. They were joined by their fraternal comrades from the Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist), from the United States Marxist-Leninist Organisation, from the Workers Party, USA, from the Communist Ghadar Party of India, and, as observers, representatives in Britain of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Turkey (TDKP) and from the Ethiopian

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15th Anniversary Celebrations to Take Party Work Forward

Celebrations are to be held to mark the 15th anniversary of our Party, RCPB(ML), which falls on March 16! This was the project decided on at the end of the International Seminar. A rally is to be held on Saturday, March 19, 2pm, at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square in London. Other events, such as a concert, are also being organised as part of this work.

Activists of the Party, conscious that the Seminar had marked a milestone in the Party's work, got together at its conclusion to affirm its success and to chart the next step of this work. "Where do we go from here?" was the question the activists posed to themselves. The Seminar had dealt with the issues of developing modern definitions, of applying Marxism-Leninism in the conditions of the retreat of revolution. How could this work be taken forward, in what form can these questions be taken to wider circles, how could the success of the Seminar be built on?

The answer came in the proposal to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Party's founding. This was a concrete project to give a further impetus to the forward march of the Party. A motion was enthusiastically proposed and unanimously passed that: **"This gathering of RCPB(ML) calls for events to be organised on the occasion of the**

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People's Revolutionary Democratic Front. That the seminar had attracted the interest of people from all walks of life was confirmed as people turned up to register from different parts of Britain. They ranged from people involved in straightforwardly communist work to those active in the factories or in the health or education sectors, as well as those active on the anti-racist front or among students. The large seminar hall began to teem with the participants as they exchanged greetings and joined in conversation. Over 150 people and their families attended this day's proceedings and evening social.

Standing at the dais over which hung the impressive banner declaring the theme of the proceedings, the chairperson called the seminar to order, and opened the meeting by enthusiastically welcoming everyone, and giving a welcome to the visiting international delegations. She then, at around 1.30pm, called upon Hardial Bains to give his remarks addressed to the theme of the seminar, and the proceedings were under way. Comrade Bains spoke at length on the subject, his remarks being followed by an extensive discussion in which he elaborated a number of points in detail in response to questions from the floor. Important issues began to come to the fore. Should the retreat of revolution be construed to mean the end of revolution? Can it be understood to mean the end of revolutionary activity? This was far from being the import of the speech. Instead, what was most significant about Comrade Bains' remarks, their cutting edge, was the revolutionary programme and plan, the definite suggestion as to what must be done at this time. It was clear from the remarks that the line of demarcation has been drawn extremely sharply between those who consider this period a period of retreat of revolution and preparation and those who consider it one of revolution. At the same time, there are not a few who demand that all the necessary preparations for the coming offensive when the ebb of the revolution turns to flow must be abandoned. What Comrade Bains had to say stood firmly against this position.

There were two further formal sessions of questions to the speaker, punctuated by refreshment breaks, in which not only did earnest and lively informal debate carry on, but Hardial Bains himself was further engaged in discussion by the participants. Questions ranged from the kind of system in the People's Republic of China to the prognosis of capitalism and the future of society, from the national question in Scotland to the question of peace in Ireland. The eagerness to push forward the discussion, to exchange experiences, to bring about that sharpness and clarity indispensable for planning the advance of the movement, ensured that discussion extended well beyond the scheduled time of 5.00 pm in the printed programme. Nevertheless, the evening's New Year's Social got under way at around 8.00 pm, at which a cultural programme of songs, music and dance was presented, and this too was a success.

What were some of the themes to emerge? Overall, such questions as *What Kind of Society? What Kind of Party? What Must be Done?* assumed great importance. Within these, other issues presented themselves, such as:

- The present times constitute a special period;
- The present period must be provided with modern definitions;
- The need for a content for the doctrine of communism in present conditions;
- The need for the

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A Landmark in the Party's Life

elaboration of revolutionary theory;

- What is the significance of representative democracy?
- The nature of political power;
- The need for struggle against liberal bourgeois ideology;
- Opposing the efforts to cast doubt on Marxism-Leninism;
- What are the basic contradictions of this period?
- Does the fundamental contradiction between capitalism and socialism still exist?
- The working class must be at the head of modern-day developments;
- What kind of democratic renewal of society is needed?
- The role of the development of the mode of production;
- Should communist parties comes to power?
- The phrase of "third-world socialism";
- Is war inevitable?
- Communist parties must rise to the occasion;
- The need for revolutionary stands.

Some of these themes were further developed on the second day when Hardial Bains addressed in detail the questions *What Kind of Society?* and *What Kind of Party?*.

Prior to this, interventions were given by the Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist) and the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

The intervention given by RCPB(ML) was felt by many to be a weak spot in the seminar's proceedings. This was not because of any lack of revolutionary capability of the Party or that it does not have achievements on which to build, but rather that the intervention, and the response of the Party to the questions that followed, in the main failed to hit the mark. In the assessment of many, they did not honestly reflect the stage of the Party's work or do justice to the Party's positions. At the same time, the Party's intervention boldly declared that we are our own model, and we are not going to rely on foreign models. In this respect, the Party's whole work for the Seminar provides a glorious basis on which to move forward, and there is a deep conviction that the shortcoming will not be repeated.

The editor of the Punjabi/English newspaper *Eh Din - These Days*, the Communist Ghadar Party of India, the US Marxist-Leninist Organisation and the Workers Party, USA, also made interventions during the course of the second day.

In his concluding remarks, Comrade Hardial Bains paid tribute to the work of RCPB(ML) in organising the Seminar and, in particular, to the Coventry comrades, and to the optimism without which it is impossible to build a new society, and called on everyone to join in the singing of the Internationale.

There is no doubt that the International Seminar was an outstanding success. It was not a seminar where phrases were uttered for the purpose of illuminating someone's understanding, it was not just an intellectual debate. Rather it was a gathering of communist activists who were working out their plans for this period of retreat. While the need for modern definitions and a tactical approach to all questions was discussed, any doubt about fundamentals - about the historic mission of the proletariat, about the fundamental contradiction between capitalism and socialism - was firmly rejected. Many participants remarked how different the presentation by Comrade Bains was from any dogmatic rendering. "People were convinced because of the content and not by beseeching them through phrases, through calls for loyalty," one said. In short, the seminar represented the drive for progress, for the creation of a truly human society, where everything is put on the agenda, everything is planned, and nothing is left to chance. The participants left the seminar determined to plan well the next stage of this forward march.

15th anniversary celebrations

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15th anniversary, and a Preparatory Committee be set up to carry out the work in a similar spirit to the International Seminar in Coventry." Immediately volunteers put down their names for the Preparatory Committee to Organise the 15th Anniversary Celebrations.

The Preparatory Committee will meet on Sunday to begin its work of planning the release of the material of the International Seminar and of making the celebrations of the Party's anniversary a big success. *Workers' Weekly* will carry a report on this meeting in its next issue.

The Central Committee of RCPB(ML) has met and firmly endorsed the decision to organise the celebrations, and called for maximum mobilisation in carrying forward this work.

Enthusiastic Discussion on 15th Anniversary Celebrations

The enthusiasm for the project of organising the Party's 15th anniversary celebrations is such that last Tuesday evening, the day following the conclusion of the International Seminar, some comrades of the Central Committee, together with other comrades, met in London to discuss some of its practical and political implications.

As well as discussing the line of march of the Party's work, those present discussed some of the initial steps which need to be taken in preparation for the celebrations. The meeting was very useful in developing the unity of those present around the Party's chosen programme.

Join us to Celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the Founding of RCPB(ML)

Socialism is the Future!

Come and hear our Party's views on what is to be done

Saturday March 19, 1994
2.00 pm
CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, LONDON WC1
(nearest tube: Holborn)

Main Speech by Representative of the Central Committee of RCPB(ML)

followed by messages from fraternal parties and organisations

Social & Cultural Programme 6.30 pm

Other Events to Celebrate the Party's 15th Anniversary are Being Organised

For further details contact:
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