Workers' Weekly

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Quarterly Review *Discussion* Launched in Britain

MARX House on Clerkenwell Green in London was the venue for a reception to launch *Discussion*, the Quarterly Review of Contemporary Marxist-Leninist Thought, on Sunday, April 17.

More than 50 invited guests packed into this historic building for the launch, hosted by the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). The reception took the form of a speech by Chris Coleman, representative of the Central Committee of RCPB(ML), on the topic **Is There a Need for a Quarterly Review on Discussion in Britain?**, followed by the main speech by Hardial Bains, leader of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), under the title, **Modern Definitions for Laying the Foundations for a Mass Communist Party**. Refreshments and wine to toast the new review had been laid on following the launch. A plaque on the library wall commemorating the life of Lenin stood behind the speakers, while a banner proclaiming the launch was hung at the back of the hall.

Soon after 11:30 am., the chair introduced Chris Coleman to speak on behalf of the CC of RCPB(ML). Chris Coleman began by saying how happy the Party was to be hosting the launch in Britain, and how apt it was to hold the reception where the First International had met, and where Lenin had edited *Iskra*. Amidst much applause, he produced a copy of the splendid-looking review, remarking how the quality of the contents more than matched its appearance.

The Quarterly Review, he explained, has set out to elaborate Marxist-Leninist thought for this period of world history, the collapse of the bi-polar division of the world, the retreat of revolution and the all-out offensive against communism. It does not presuppose that Marxist-Leninist thought for this period already exists, but on the contrary considers it necessary to develop such thought from the study of life, from the subjective and objective conditions. There is an acute need for such thought in this period, he explained, including in Britain where many social forces feel themselves disorientated. Those who are looking at how Marxism-Leninism can be used as a guide to action, to bring about a change in society, are looking eagerly for a way forward and, he said, this publication will serve

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The Key Element at the Reception

When the atmosphere is cordial, revolutionary and enthusiastic, as was the case with the reception on Sunday, April 17, to launch the quarterly review *Discussion*, it is often difficult to pinpoint what is the key thing. However, this was no problem at the reception, as the key thing dominating the reception was the consciousness to organise. This was clearly exemplified by the fact that many people stayed to discuss how to go further.

The occasion was marked by discussion on the two-point programme elaborated by the Central Committee of RCPB(ML) and by the necessity to carry it out while remaining at the forefront of the resistance of the working class,

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On the Two-Point Programme

AS was announced at the Party's 15th anniversary rally on March 19, RCPB(ML) is organising a National Consultative Conference on the weekend of June 25-26.

The Party has set for itself a two-point programme for the immediate period as an integral part of the preparation for this Conference. The first point is the strengthening of the place of the quarterly review of Marxist-Leninist thought *Discussion* in the communist and workers' movement and expanding the space it will cover. The second point is to carry out theoretical work in order to elaborate the draft document released at the March 19 rally.

A definite programme was initiated at the International Seminar in Coventry at the beginning of the year which is still unfolding. At that seminar, themes on the question of the retreat of revolution and the tasks of the communist and workers' movement were presented, themes on the fundamental burning questions of the day. Building on these and elaborating on them in the conditions of Britain, developing its analysis of the national and international situation, the Central Committee of RCPB(ML) presented its draft document entitled *There Is a Way Out of the Crisis* for discussion at its anniversary rally. With this document the Party began its work in a concrete way of establishing its general line. A month later, at the April 17 launch of *Discussion*, it has put forward the two-point programme.

Part of the work which comes under the first point is to hold discussions, give lectures and organise study programmes in order to popularise *Discussion*. Along with this goes the work to make *Discussion* available to the broadest sections of the people. Finally comes the work of writing for the quarterly review. Taking this entire work together, it is true to say that even though this work must begin immediately and be carried out vigorously, it is actually long-term work. In other words, what the Party has decided is to lay the foundations for this long-term work.

The second point in the context of the immediate work is to elaborate the draft document and mobilise people to participate in the Consultative Conference. The elaboration of the draft document and the mobilisation of people require going to all the advanced elements of the class, all those who are active in various broad fields. These advanced elements are to be won over to discuss the draft document and to make proposals to enrich it. In short, they are to be involved in laying down the line for the period.

It is necessary to appreciate the particularities of the two-point programme. The cutting edge of the first point is to obtain readership for the quarterly review and to organise people through discussions, lectures, study groups or other forms to take up contemporary Marxist-Leninist thought. It can be said that the first point amounts to recruiting people for the Party.

The second point, on the other hand, relates to involving advanced elements in the elaboration of the draft document. The cutting edge of this work is not recruitment but actually seeking the opinions of those who are involved in different aspects of the resistance struggle of the class and the intermediate strata to capitalist exploitation and the offensive of capital. This requires working out tactics in order to involve all these elements from the class and other strata in discussing the draft document. The main aim is to listen to the opinions of as many of these people as possible and even to invite some of them, as appropriate, to come and address the Consultative Conference.

Once the two points are examined together in their detail, it becomes clear that the cutting edge of the first point is recruitment and of the second point is to make and deepen contacts and links. In the course of this entire work, the Party will be explaining and elaborating its positions and calling upon the people to join when implementing point one, while listening to the posi-

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Quarterly Review *Discussion* Launched in Britain

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that prime need. This new period, the speaker went on to explain, has opened a space where those who are genuinely concerned to bring about such change in society are judging political ideas on the basis of how they are going to serve this forward movement of society. Therefore, he concluded, there is very definitely a great need for such a quarterly review in Britain, and welcomed its publication wholeheartedly.

CONTENTS

The speaker then went on to elaborate what are the contents of the first edition of *Discussion*. It contains three main items. The first is the Thematic Report of the International Seminar held in Coventry on January 2 and 3 of this year. The second is the document from the Communist Ghadar Party of India entitled **What Kind of Party?** presented at the Consultative Conference of the Party at the end of last year, and deals with the democratic renewal of India and the question of uniting the Indian communists. The third item is the draft document of the Central Committee of RCPB(ML) which was presented at its 15th anniversary rally on March 19, under the title **There Is a Way Out of the Crisis**.

TWO-POINT PROGRAMME

The speaker then spoke in some detail on this last item, appraising it as an important beginning to the work of establishing the general line of the Party for this period. He reviewed the recent history of RCPB(ML) which had led to the release of **There Is a Way Out of the Crisis** as a draft document, now the subject of a three-month period of discussion leading to the National Consultative Conference of the Party to be held on June 25-26. He went on to make the important announcement that the Central Committee is setting a two-point programme for the next immediate period, the first point of which is a practical programme to take the quarterly review as widely as possible and to organise discussions, meetings and study groups on its contents. The second point of the programme is to elaborate the draft document of RCPB(ML), towards which the Central Committee is preparing papers to assist the discussion at the Consultative Conference, but in which all present and other concerned organisations and individuals are invited to assist. He called on everyone to make this programme a success.

PARTY'S DRAFT DOCUMENT

In outlining some of the points of **There Is a Way Out of the Crisis**, Chris Coleman said that it puts forward the necessity of putting the well-being of the people at the centre of things. "The class struggle at the present time in this country," he pointed out, "centres around the question of the obligation of society to its members, a struggle between those who wish to take society back to medievalism, who want to withdraw even those provisions which the capitalist system has already made, to maintain a capitalist base but with a medieval superstructure, and who want to block the progress of society – between those forces and those who put the well-being of the people at the centre, who want a modern society, a society which is fit to be called a human society, in which all the members of the society are provided with the highest level of education and culture that society can provide, carry the struggle against medievalism to its logical conclusion, a society of life and liberty for all, a new society." He continued by saying that "the working class has to lead in this struggle on the basis of modern definitions", and that the changes in this direction would result in deep-going reforms which will open the path for a new society, a socialist society. There are specific themes in the draft document, he went on to say, which need deepening and elaborating, for example, in pointing more precisely the way out of the crisis, the features of democratic renewal, the practical programme needed to bring about socialist society.

DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

The speaker then drew attention to the fact that this first issue of *Discussion* is subtitled "Modern Definitions" and not "New Definitions", and said that for our Party, this conception involves never going against the principles of Marxism-Leninism. In particular, the recent experience of the Party has shown the necessity of organising always on the basis of the principles of democratic centralism.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Chris Coleman called on everyone to rise to the challenge of the times, and to make a success of the very important tasks RCPB(ML) has set for this immediate period. "The publication we are launching today," he ended, "is a very key factor in the work of the present period."

MILITANT CALL

The chair then introduced Hardial Bains, who delivered an important speech (Comrade Bains' speech will be reported next week), following which a lively question-and-answer session took place. Participants very much appreciated the speeches and question and answer period, and engaged in informal discussion for a long period. The reception concluded around 5:30 pm. with a militant call by a representative of RCPB(ML) to turn the two-point programme into life.

From Korea: Forty-Five Years Later

by Hardial Bains

AS reported in Workers' Weekly *Vol.21, No.8, of March 26, 1994, a delegation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), led by its national leader Hardial Bains, visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from February 12 to 22, at the invitation of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. We think that our readers will be very interested to read the article written by Hardial Bains on the visit, and below we reprint the first extract. The article first appeared in* Today/Tomorrow *Daily Fax Release.*

As the plane, having flown over innumerable ranges of mountains interspersed by narrow valleys, landed in Pyongyang, capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), I was overcome by a feeling, a kind of impatience, to reach the airport building at once. However, the plane took its time taxiing, leaving first-arrivals like me wondering whether this or that building was the terminal. When the terminal, a sturdy, relatively modern building finally appeared, I felt a surge of excitement. From the plane to the bus to the line of waiting Party officials and then to the car was only a distance of a couple of hundred metres or less, but it seemed so long. It felt as if seconds had turned into minutes and minutes into hours. The warm welcome, the picture-taking and the problem of dealing with the snow without winter boots, all added to the expectations of what this important visit which took our delegation from Ottawa, to Toronto, to Tokyo, Beijing and finally Pyongyang, travelling for over forty-eight hours, would bring.

This visit to the DPRK at the head of the delegation of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), was not only of political significance but personal as well. Having become politically active during the 1948-49 period, at which time support for the Korean people was one of the main elements of political life, visiting the DPRK in 1994, some 45 years later, was indeed a great pleasure and a high responsibility. Reaction in the US had been shocked by the victory of the Soviet Union over fascism in Europe and many countries in Europe and in Asia, from Korea to India, including Indo-China, China, Indonesia and Iran, were going through revolutionary upheavals after the Second World War. A new world was in the making. In order to stop the creation of the new world, the US had come up with its own version of the Hitlerite crusade against communism. Known as the Truman Doctrine, it used the "containment of communism" as a pretext for interference, *coups d'etat* and aggression all over the world. The Korean War from 1950 to 1953 was waged by the US with the aim of turning Korea into its neo-colony under the pretext of stopping the spread of communism.

American official circles have tried everything to convince world public opinion that its actions against the people of Korea were for purposes of stopping North Korean aggression against South Korea. A civil war of the Korean people for the unification of their motherland was used by the US to attack the Korean people and keep the Korean nation divided and the people of South Korea enslaved. Over forty years later, under the pretext of stopping the spread of nuclear weapons, the US is putting pressure on the DPRK yet again, raising tensions on the Korean peninsula to the extreme. The US figures that the present is the most opportune time to enslave the entire Korean people and unify the nation as a US neo-colony. As was the case in 1950, so too today, the US is seeking to bring down the government of the DPRK and end socialism and communism altogether, either through direct aggression or by manipulating the Security Council of the United Nations.

Arriving in Pyongyang brought the entire history of the struggle of the people of Korea for unification and against US aggression to mind in a concentrated way.

For a person whose political education began with, amongst other things, activities in support of the people of Korea and against the US intervention there, it is not hard to imagine how emotional the trip to the DPRK some forty-five years later could be. The plane arrived in the afternoon, about an hour before the sun set, and the drive from the airport on the broad roads, mostly boulevards lined with trees on either side, interspersed by evergreens patiently waiting for the spring with the explicit aim of enhancing the beauty of the city, was a memorable one. Ten minutes or so after the car left the airport, a modern city appeared before our eyes, a miraculous change from 1953 when the city of Pyongyang was left in ashes with hardly a building standing intact.

People have vivid memories of the photographs showing death and destruction caused by the merciless US bombing. On Pyongyang alone, they dropped a total of 428,748 bombs - one per person. The US had boasted at that time that North Korea would not be able to recover even after one hundred years. Nonetheless, within ten years, the people of North Korea had rebuilt their country, and today, before our eyes, there was Pyongyang, majestically standing as a testimony to human effort and creativity. Today, modern buildings, apartment blocks, hotels, cul-

tural and sports institutions, historical monuments and trade and commercial establishments stand in all their grandeur in all directions, beautifying the landscape. Pyongyang is a city erected by the people themselves, kept immaculately clean.

About half an hour later, we arrived at the guest house equipped with all the modern amenities and more. Before the day ended, we attended a dinner reception hosted by the Central Committee of the Workers Party of Korea (WPK). It had become absolutely clear that our delegation had embarked on an important visit to a modern nation very different from the one which existed in 1953, when the plans of the US to take over all of Korea were defeated. It can be said that arriving in Pyongyang was a great eye-opener for us. The reality of Pyongyang carries such a vivid message that, surely, once confronted it could shake the psyche of even the most ignorant and serve as an antidote for any kind of complacency or cynicism. Lying in bed that night, thinking about the whole historical experience of the past fifty years or so, I wondered what kind of world we live in, where there are still so many human beings who shudder even at the thought of being asked to look into the telescope, afraid that what they may see may bring the wrath of the ruling circles over their heads!

It can be said that retrospection is one of the key ingredients for the enhancement of human consciousness. Problems left from the past can only be looked at from the conditions of the present, on the basis of modern definitions, sought without preconceived notions and without narrowing them down. Problems cannot be solved by ignoring the present, on the basis of bringing them from the past notions so as to block the path to the future. Our visit to the DPRK, though a short one, brought further into focus the world as it exists today, a world in which the capitalist countries dominate while the socialist countries and socialist perspective are not finished. But, most importantly, it brought into focus the kind of relations which exist, not only between peoples in a country but also between countries themselves on the world scale. From the demand that society should have no responsibility towards its members, as exists in Canada, and pessimism as concerns its economic future, to a lot of excitement and feverish economic activity evident in Beijing, to the orderly development which has taken place in the DPRK on a very large-scale, in which providing facilities to the people - housing, medical services, educational and cultural facilities, etc. - takes first place in spite of the blockade of the "western world," a reality emerges from which a path to progress must be opened. A sense of disequilibrium also becomes pronounced due to the clash between the demand of the Americans and others to create a new equilibrium to the detriment of the path of freedom and progress, and the demand for an equilibrium on the basis that the equality of all countries must be recognized, that opening the path to progress must be the highest aspiration of all.

The following morning, sitting at a round dining table on which places were set with chopsticks and knives and forks depending on the capabilities and inclinations of the guests, the sky on the south side was a faint blue pink, while on the east side the colour red was steadily overwhelming the pitch dark which was fleeing to the west. At seven sharp, the dawn broke in Pyongyang as the temperature hit minus six. Our delegation was getting ready to meet with a delegation of the CC of the WPK at 9:00 am. It was a unique and impressive ride through Pyongyang to the seat of the International Department of the CC of the WPK where the meeting took place. The talks lasted much longer than planned, mainly because it was the first visit of our delegation and there was a lot to discuss.

In spite of the exchanges and the impressive sight of the plants, trees and shrubs beginning to bud in the month of February, the modernity and immensity of Pyongyang kept dominating my thoughts. Boulevards, roads and streets, buildings, subways and the river and its branches and tributaries, all laid out on a grand scale. I have never visited a city such as this which is laid out on such a grand scale and is so modern in every respect. This thought preoccupied my mind throughout the next ten days and has remained with me since then. During one of our visits to a museum we saw a photograph of Pyongyang in 1953, completely burnt to the ground by the US. What a contrast between the photograph taken in 1953 and the real-life picture before us in 1994. This is a legitimate source of pride for the Korean people. How was such a transformation brought about?

TO BE CONTINUED

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The key element at the reception

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that is, remaining in the van of society. This consciousness to organise is an indispensable weapon to strengthen the Party and consolidate its links with the masses.

The draft document released by RCPB(ML) on March 19 on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the founding of the Party, and its hosting of the International Seminar in Coventry on January 23, were important events which invigorated the Party's life. This was the case not just because the people were so enlightened, but mainly because these events have opened a path. There is great confidence amongst Party activists about both the general line and the practical work set by the Party.

Under the present circumstances, a communist party in the advanced capitalist countries will have to have its theoretical and ideological considerations worked out as well as its clear practical work. The two-point programme provides the Party with not only practical work but also ideological considerations, while the draft document released on March 19 provides it with not only a way forward on a long-term basis but also theoretical considerations. This entire work taken together puts our Party in a position to play its role in preparing the subjective conditions for revolution.

All communist parties, whether in the advanced capitalist countries or elsewhere will have not only to avoid dogma but also to oppose it. Communist parties cannot have dogma as a guide to action. The guide to action can only be theoretical considerations, while action is kept on course in the practical sense through ideological considerations. There is long-term experience with those parties which pretend to have their pure dogma while their practice is completely detached from it. The programme set by RCPB(ML) resolutely avoids this error, a destructive course filled with dangers for the communist and workers' movement.

The lively atmosphere at the reception was uplifted by the elaboration of immediate problems of both a theoretical and a practical character. The cutting edge of these elaborations was the practical work and not some statements made for the purpose of illumination. The problem of constant pressure not to have a prepared agenda but just vague feelings can be very largely combated by actually elaborating the work to be carried out. This was the case at the reception, and the positive result reflected this. This is also why what is to be done in the immediate sense, the elaboration of the two-point programme, characterised the speech delivered by the representative of the Central Committee on this occasion.

Consciousness to organise is one of the ingredients which made the reception a memorable foundation for the work now in hand and to follow. It could well be said that the reception on April 17 was organised with the precise aim of guaranteeing the forward march of the Party.

Looked at in this way, the reception was indeed a great success. And the consciousness to organise was without doubt its key element.

On the Two-point Programme

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tions of others when carrying out point two. As this distinction between the two points becomes clear, the necessity to develop the work of the two points in terms of their specific character will also become apparent.

Once the first period of implementing the two points finishes with the Consultative Conference, it will become all the more important to carry this work further. For instance, while the study groups will be the highest form of work during this immediate period to strengthen the quarterly review, the immediate need following the Consultative Conference will be to encourage the best elements from these study groups to constitute basic organisations of the Party and to develop the quantity and quality of that work which is being taken up at this time. Seeking opinions on the draft document, on the other hand, will necessarily lead to forming alliances of various kinds, in order to strengthen the resistance of the class and that of the middle strata.

The two-point programme put forward by the Central Committee is the practical expression of the Party's preoccupations at this time. It will not only strengthen the Party in the immediate sense, but it will also lay the foundations for its strengthening on an ongoing basis.

Workers' Weekly hails this important and exciting development in the Party's work. It applauds the fact that the Party, far from succumbing to the pressure of liquidationism, has charted a course which ensures preparation and combat-readiness during this period of retreat of revolution. In our view, this work around the two-point programme reflects the immediate necessity of these times, when the momentum of the activists is already developing.

We call on the whole Party to take up this work whole-heartedly and make it a success, which will significantly contribute to the strengthening of the Party and its links with the masses.

Party in Portugal Holds Congress Rally

On March 6 the Communists for Democracy and Progress (formerly Communist Party Reconstructed) of Portugal held a Public Rally in Oporto to announce the decisions of the First Congress of CDP (the 7th of the Party) which was held on February 18-20.

A delegation from RCPB(ML) participated in the Rally, along with delegations from the Communist Party of Denmark (Marxist-Leninist), the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) and the Union of the Galician People. Among the other guests was national deputy Mario Tome, Secretary of the Popular Democratic Union (UDP). Messages were received from a number of other parties and organisations. The Rally, which was held before a packed audience of several hundreds, was notable for its lively and militant character, with cultural performances of high quality and popular style. The main speech was given by Luis Fazenda, President of the National Directorate of CDP. In his address he explained, among other things, that the main discussions of the Congress had been on the question of socialism, the analysis of the world situation and of the European Union, and the strategy, tactics and tasks for the Portuguese communists.

During the visit to Portugal a warm and friendly exchange took place between the delegation of RCPB(ML) and CDP on matters of common concern. We reprint below the message of RCPB(ML) to the Rally on Oporto.

RCPB(ML)'s message to rally in Oporto

Dear Comrades,

On behalf of all the militants of RCPB(ML) I should like to bring the warmest fraternal greetings to the leadership of CDP and to all the participants in the Rally. We consider it a great privilege to be here among you.

We find ourselves today in a very difficult and turbulent world situation, a new period in world history characterised by retreat of revolution and with the forces of reaction dominant and attempting to turn back the clock on every front. In this complex situation, our Marxist-Leninist parties face the challenge of each developing in our own countries the line, tactics and programme in our own conditions in order to organise the working class to make the necessary preparations so that when the conditions change it can lead the working people to resolve the crisis in their favour on the path to socialism. It is thus with great interest that we learn of the conclusions of your Congress.

We have followed with great sympathy the work of your Party over the 20 years since, in the best traditions of the Portuguese communists, your comrades played such a heroic role in the Revolution, as well as your great efforts over this whole period to strengthen the links with the working masses and to give direction to their struggles. We are sure that this Congress will mark an important advance in this work.

We express on this occasion our firm conviction that the relations between our two parties, our exchange of experience and co-operation, will continue to strengthen on the firm basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

Once again we express our joy at being among you on this great occasion and wish you all success in carrying out the important tasks set by the Congress.

DISCUSSION

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NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE

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June 25 and 26, 1994

Opening Session: June 25, 9:00 a.m.

Closing Session: June 26, 5:00 p.m.

The Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) is organising a **National Consultative Conference** on June 25-26, 1994, in order to discuss the draft document released for discussion at the rally on March 19, 1994, celebrating the 15th anniversary of its founding.

The aim of this conference is to involve all the forces which are concerned about the present state of affairs in Britain and the world in elaborating the draft document **There Is a Way Out of the Crisis** and to begin planned work to build a practical programme on this basis.

All activists in various struggles, other Communist Parties, their leadership and rank-and-file and broad masses of the people are warmly invited to attend the conference where discussion will take place on a topic-by-topic basis in which individuals will contribute their comments by turn. A number of papers prepared by the Central Committee of RCPB(ML) will be presented in order to facilitate the discussion.

Anyone who would like to intervene on the basis of a prepared paper must contact RCPB(ML) at least two weeks before the National Consultative Conference takes place.

Hardial Bains, national leader of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), has been invited to open this conference and participate in the discussion. Various other Communist Parties and organisations from across the five continents have also been invited to attend, along with progressive and democratic personalities.

The National Consultative Conference is the most important forum which has been organised by RCPB(ML) in order to promote discussion on the questions of vital interest for the working class and people of Britain and internationally. Everyone is welcome. A registration fee of £25 (students and unwaged, £10) is required to meet the conference expenses. Sandwiches and refreshments will be provided during the proceedings.

The conference proceedings will also be made available in print and video form.

For further details contact RCPB(ML), 170 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 2LA. Tel: 071-627 0599