

Successful Seminar: "There Is A Way Out of the Crisis"

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A successful seminar was organised by the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) in London on Saturday, March 14, on the theme, "There Is A Way Out of the Crisis!" The seminar was held to mark the 30th anniversary of the founding of RCPB(ML) and the 15th anniversary of the launch of its general line for this period. It was a fitting and very timely way of marking the anniversaries, bringing together Party members and supporters, as well as old and new friends of the Party, demonstrating where the work of the Party has advanced to at this time and pointing the way forward.

The seminar addressed the general line of RCPB(ML) in a number of papers dealing with the thesis of "There Is A Way Out of the Crisis", the application of this line in the workers' movement, the elaboration of its analysis of Britain's role in the world, and the professionalisation of the Party that is required in fighting to apply the line effectively. A delegation of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) participated in the seminar, presenting an important message and intervening in the discussions.

The hall was decorated with Party banners, the interventions of the participants were lively and concrete, and the day concluded with a short but effective cultural programme of video, music, poetry and songs.

The paper given by National Spokesperson of RCPB(ML), Chris Coleman, concentrated on the general line of the Party as contained in the document "There Is A Way Out of the Crisis", the launch of which fifteen years ago the seminar was marking. It looked at the essence of the thesis put forward, in the light of the present situation, in order to facilitate discussion on the tasks which confront the Party and the working class and people at the present time and discuss the way forward.

Comrade Chris Coleman pointed out that it was also the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Party, so that even though the concentration of the seminar was on the period from 1994, this was being done with due regard for and paying tribute to all the work and sacrifices which were made by Party comrades right from 1979. It is those sacrifices, those stands, which gave the Party its fighting quality, its red spine and revolutionary spirit, and which have inspired the Party's work ever since.

The document "There Is A Way Out of the Crisis" was launched on March 19, 1994. That was shortly after the very important international seminar which was held in Coventry in January 1994, in which Comrade Hardial Bains put forward his view, and that of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) of which he was National Leader, on the character of this period which began with the collapse of the bi-polar division of the world,

and the tasks of the communist and workers' movement in this new period. This analysis guided the general line which was formulated by our Party.

The document sets out by first rejecting the policies which were being put forward by the government of the time, the government of John Major, which said that the only way forward was to subordinate everything to the success of "business" and the cutting of public expenditure. The document from the outset rejected that argument and said that there is a way out of the crisis, and that way is by putting the wellbeing of the people at the centre of everything. It puts forward that one of the greatest achievements over the centuries in the struggle against medievalism has been the recognition of the responsibility of the state for the social or public wellbeing. And the struggle at the current time was between those who wanted to bring back medievalism and put everything in the service of their own interests, and those on the other hand who wanted to carry the struggle against medievalism through to its logical conclusion with guarantees for the life and liberty of all. This is the nub of the argument, that this was the struggle at the time and it continues to be the struggle for this whole period. The document puts forward that the working class is the only revolutionary force which can rally all the other revolutionary forces and close the door on medievalism. It puts forward that the working class, as it was right back to the time of the Chartists in this country, is at the centre of the forward march of society.

It characterises the period which began around 1990 as the retreat of revolution. The epoch is still that of imperialism and proletarian socialist revolution, but now is a period within that of the retreat of revolution as opposed to its flow, with reaction on the offensive and attempting to turn back the clock. Even issues that had been resolved with the victory over fascism in the Second World War were being un-resolved. All norms which had been accepted internationally, the UN Charter, the Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions on warfare, which had been recognised and established in international law with the victory over fascism, were being removed.

It points out that this was a period of the re-division of the world, with the great danger of a new world war. But at the same time, the factors for revolution were growing, all the contradictions were sharpening between the imperialists and the oppressed people, between labour and capital, particularly on the question of the right to govern and the guarantees of social wellbeing. The working class which had taken centre stage in the October Revolution had also taken centre stage in the victory over fascism in the Second World War, also emerging again with its role in history. The contradiction between capitalism and socialism was sharpening, and conditions were ripe for a new society. The analysis brought out very graphically the barbarity of the capitalist system, beginning as it did with the driving of the peasants off the land, with the most appalling tortures for those who were found wandering the countryside in search of a livelihood, the kidnapping and the murder of children in the newly developing factories, the transport of millions in the terrible slave trade, the plunder of whole continents such as the Indian sub-continent. The utter barbarity of capitalism has not changed with its development into monopoly capitalism, where the primary characteristic is devastation, danger of renewed fascism, of another war, with whole continents such as Africa reduced to disease and despair. Such was the genesis of capitalism and to this very day this outmoded system retains its inhuman character.

It is still being argued that the success of business will trickle down, will bring success and wellbeing to everybody. The document points out very clearly that it is the nature of capitalist production that success for the bourgeoisie means ruin for the working class and people.

There are no two ways about this. Very pertinently, one sees in the document that it raises the question of the purpose of the government's increasing its borrowing. Is it to tide the people over in difficult circumstances? Or is it to line their own pockets. That is a question which has come up very graphically in the last period. The document puts forward without equivocation that private ownership of the means of production and virtually absolute rule by the executive is the basis of the entire crisis, economic and political. It makes the point that there are no rights which are guaranteed simply by virtue of people's being human.

The nub of the document's argument is that there is class war between those who want to take society back to medievalism and those who want to take society forward to a new system fit for human beings. The Party has a great role to lead and organise this battle, with the immediate aim of blocking the government from unloading the crisis onto the shoulders of the people and in the long-term to usher in a socialist society.

The analysis points out that the majority of people want change, that they are not reconciled to the profits going to a small privileged minority, and want to have a say in the direction of the economy and the political life of the country.

It puts forward the elements of a programme, where social spending will be increased and will guarantee the highest level of facilities for all, not just for the privileged. In the political sphere it calls for democratic renewal of the political processes, including bringing in mechanisms so that working people can select their peers to stand to represent them, that the full rights of citizenship should be granted to all residents of the country, that the languages and the cultures of the national minorities should be encouraged and allowed to flourish. It calls for modern sovereign states of England, Scotland and Wales, with a free and equal union between them if so desired, that Britain should withdraw from the EU and NATO and stop its intervention abroad.

The documents compares the time to the death of James I in 1625, when it says the people made a historic decision which led to Civil War, to the execution of Charles I and to big changes in the political system. The people in this country face now another historic decision, equally historic, and also on the basis of opposing the right of the government to levy taxes with the people having no say, of the people's right to have control over the decisions which affect their lives and for a modern system. It calls finally for serious thought to be given to a mass communist party uniting all democratic forces, progressive people and communists, a communist party based on modern definitions and the requirements of these times. It calls for work to organise class-conscious workers into the Party and for the Party to join with all those fighting for a modern constitution, for democratic renewal of the political processes, for a modern British state and for empowerment of the people, and to work for socialism in modern colours.

"There Is A Way Out of the Crisis" was adopted as the general line of the Party at the Third Congress in March of 1999. It marked a new stage in the Party's work in this period of retreat of revolution, with a very clear agenda, acknowledging our joint work with our close fraternal Parties, while at the same time standing on our own feet. As is well known, in January 1995, after two consultative conferences, the Party's Draft Programme for the Working Class was put forward which codifies the elements which are already there in "There Is A Way Out of the Crisis". Then in February 1996, the main task was put forward to strengthen and build the Party's paper, *Workers' Weekly*, and the slogan put forward to *Improve the Content, Extend the Readership*.

At the time of the general election of 1997 when Tony Blair and New Labour were first brought to power, the slogan was put forward to *Stop Paying the Rich, Increase Investments in Social Programmes*. This slogan encapsulates a fighting pro-social programme for the working class, embodying its independent demands with the starting point that the rights of all people by virtue of being human must be given a guarantee. Our Party formulated it, but as was said at the time, it is for the working class to elaborate this programme as its own, and the Party's work is to organise to make this possible. In this respect, the work which the Party has embarked on to lay the foundations of a mass communist party is crucial.

While the government and the media claim that no one can really understand the present crisis, and that the working people should simply have faith to let the ruling elite do what they will, looking again at the Party's general line, "There Is A Way Out of the Crisis", and considering it in the light of current developments, it is clear that there is a force which has a clear path. RCPB(ML) and the working class of which it is the general staff can go forward with confidence in this path. "There Is A Way Out of the Crisis" confirms what is the way forward for the working class and people. To re-affirm this line and programme of the Party, and to deepen and broaden the discussion on their elaboration and implementation is the task of the moment.

In this respect, the seminar can be considered as the beginning of a fresh period of work, sticking to the Party's line of march, with fresh impetus, fresh appreciation of the line and programme, fresh determination to further build and strengthen RCPB(ML) and to bring to fruition the work of organising and making conscious the working class in this period.

The seminar recognised that the work ahead is step-wise work, of crucial importance in carrying forward the consolidation of the Party which has been ongoing, and which is necessary to prepare for the changing in the tide of the revolutionary movement. It is a question of how to be effective within the situation, of the fight to apply the line, on the basis of which significant advances have been made, and which is the compass which has enabled the Party to keep its bearings.

There Is A Way Out of the Crisis!