

The Draft Programme for the Working Class

OVER the weekend of November 26-27, RCPB(ML) successfully held its National Consultative Conference, "On the Draft Programme for the Working Class". The two-day Conference was marked by the seriousness and militancy of its discussions, and the fullest participation of those attending in the deliberations. Fifty people attended the Conference, including delegations from the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) and the Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist).

This was the second National Consultative Conference RCPB(ML) has held this year. In June, the first, held to discuss the Party's general line as released in the Draft Document, *There Is a Way Out of the Crisis*, had recommended that the Central Committee begin work immediately in formulating a draft programme for the working class. The November Conference was held to discuss the summation of this work.

The Central Committee, two days before the Conference, distributed to the members and activists of the Party a 16-page document of Notes for Discussion. In it, the draft of the Draft Programme was preceded by corroborative material, detailing the factors and the thinking which had been taken into account in formulating the draft. These materials were to form the basis of discussion at the Conference.

In delivering the introductory remarks, Chris Coleman, on behalf of the

Central Committee of RCPB(ML), outlined the unfolding of the Party's plan from the beginning of the year, which followed from the International Seminar on "The Retreat of Revolution and the Tasks of the Communist and Workers' Movement" in Coventry, through the release of the Party's draft general line and its programme to disseminate and elaborate this, to the work to formulate the Draft Programme. He stressed the need for an independent programme for the class if the working class is to play its historical role and lead the entire society out of the crisis and open up the path for progress.

After a short period

for further study of the Notes for Discussion, the proceedings were given over to the interventions of the participants in the Conference giving their views on the items in the Notes under discussion. The agenda had been to cover the Corroborative Material on the first day, and move on to the concentrated clauses of the Draft Programme itself on the second, but such was the richness of discussion that the first day's agenda spilled over onto the second. The themes under discussion were centred around the bedrock of theory on which the programme must be based and the theoretical and ideological considerations, as well as the ne-

cessity to wage ideological struggle, which it must take into account. Discussion also took place on various aspects of the objective situation, both national and in terms of British foreign policy, as they relate to the Draft Programme.

The discussion on the Draft Programme itself was carried out under five main headings, relating to what the working class demands in the spheres of Rights, of the Economy, of Politics, of Sovereignty and the State, and of Foreign Policy. Here, the discussion both dealt with the content of the demands and the most effective way in which these calls may be formulated.

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With the agreement of the whole Conference, it was proposed that, while the discussion had been quite thorough, so as not to effectively guillotine contributions the participants wished to make, written submissions with further views could be made to the Central Committee in the week following the Conference.

After discussing the Immediate Programme and the Strategic Programme, the Conference moved on to the Programme of Action necessary to take the Draft Programme out widely among the working class and other sections of the people, together with the associated forms of organisation and methods of struggle which will be needed to involve workers and others in further developing the Draft Programme. Here the unity of the Conference and the depth of sentiment on the importance of this work

shone out with increasing intensity. One participant pointed out that the Party's two-point programme is still going on and could contribute to the plan of action. However, he asked, is there a need for another form as well, appropriate to what will become the principal task of the Party? How can this work change the situation, how can it most effectively take on the bourgeoisie? Another participant, echoing the same sentiment, pointed out that the Draft Programme is the programme of the class, touching on the key questions affecting the lives of people in Britain today. The Notes for Discussion had borne the proviso: not to be circulated outside of the Conference. Now he was burning to circulate the Draft Programme, and proposed that the Central Committee, on the basis of the discussions, produce a new draft for circulation! Another affirmed that the

Draft Programme has to permeate all areas of the Party's work, while yet another spoke of the excitement of now having such a Draft Programme.

In introducing a resolution to the Conference, a comrade said that such a resolution must sum up these sentiments of the importance of having the Draft Programme and of the burning desire to take it out to the working class and people. He added that a battle will have to be waged around the question that the working class *should* have its own independent programme, against all those who try to deny this. With this, he read out the resolution to the Conference, to which, it seemed, all the discussion had been inexorably leading: **This National Consultative Conference recommends to the Central Committee that it publishes the Draft Programme with its accompanying Corroborative**

Material after redrafting taking into account the deliberations of this Conference. It recommends that RCPB(ML) immediately organises a national programme to take the Draft Programme out to the working class and other sections, and that Draft Programme Groups be set up for this purpose. The resolution was unanimously carried, to enthusiastic acclaim.

In his concluding remarks to the Conference, Comrade Chris Coleman highlighted again the spirit of seriousness of the Conference and the big advance that it represented, thanking, on behalf of the Central Committee, all the comrades for their contributions to the success of the Conference. In emphasising once again that the Conference represented the culmination of eleven months of work, he pointed out that it puts the Party in a very strong position to move forward, and that, with the Party's general line in its draft form in the document *There Is a Way Out of the Crisis* and with the Draft Programme for the Working Class, the Party will go as rapidly as possible to the position where a Congress can be held to ratify the line and the programme. He gave particular thanks to the delegations of CPC(ML) and CPI(ML) for their important participation in the Conference.

Workers' Weekly

Newspaper of the
Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

December 3, 1994 Volume 21, Number 29

Subscription rates (Inland & Europe):

45p per issue, £1.80 for 4 issues, £11.70 for 26 issues, £23.40 for 52 issues

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Write c/o 170 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 2LA

The working class needs its own Programme

"This Conference recommends to the Central Committee of RCPB(ML) that it begin work immediately on formulating a Draft Programme for the working class, and to present a summation of this work at the next National Consultative Conference to be held in November. After discussion, the Resolution was carried unanimously."

This was the conclusion of the National Consultative Conference in June. On November 26-27, the time had arrived for this summation to be presented. It gave rise to two days of most serious discussions on the presentation in document form of this summation. And not only serious discussion but also deliberations and interventions aimed at making the

draft as lucid and revolutionary as possible and reflecting what are the key questions that the British working class needs to deal with in the present circumstances and on a modern basis.

The spirit of optimism prevailed. How is it at this time in Britain when pessimism is being promoted, when reaction, although it has no solutions, is able to ar-

rogantly impose its way of thinking, when revolution is in retreat, that such a conference with optimistic outlook prevailed? Is it enough to say that our Party is on the march, and so on and so forth? This would be a narrow view. The success of the conference, in my opinion, raises two fundamental issues: 1) that the very question of a programme for the working class is a very serious problem objectively needing solutions; 2) that the working class is showing a greater interest in breaking away from the situation where it does not formulate its own programme, but relies on others. The conference showed that RCPB(ML) is playing a vanguard role in taking up these issues. These factors, taken all together, can be said to be the real source of the optimism at the conference.

The National Consultative Conference last weekend discussed the summation of the work on the Draft Programme for the Working Class. But as far as the Party is concerned this is the beginning, because the Party is going to take it to the working class and broad masses and raise discussion amongst them. This is a major programme because for the working class to get anywhere it must organise around its own programme and its own political line. To make headway along this path would open a space for further advance. This realisation became the dominant consciousness, especially

towards the end of the Consultative Conference when the interventions of more and more delegates, instead of concentrating on considerations and points of the immediate programme, began to express their thinking on the *significance* of the Draft Programme for the Working Class. So when it came to the resolution, which emphasised this consciousness, everybody rose as one to give prolonged applause.

This major responsibility which the Party has set itself will be carried out. But like other important central programmes throughout 1994, from the International Seminar in Coventry on the Retreat of Revolution and the Tasks of the Communist and Workers' Movement, to the Party's 15th anniversary rally in March, where the draft general line was given, the National Consultative Conference in June to consolidate the work, right through to the National Consultative Conference, "On the Draft Programme for the Working Class", last weekend, those victories would not have been achieved without hard work and persistent struggle. Now, the Party will be tested once more. The heightened revolutionary consciousness of the Party, its sympathisers and friends, will be the main subjective factor behind moving the work on the Draft Programme forward.

*Contribution on the National Consultative Conference by
Roy Marshall*

The Draft Programme for the Working Class

► He pointed out that, though there is now a big obligation on all the comrades to carry this large programme of work, the spirit and the unity shown in the Conference gives the Party confidence that it can meet these obligations which history puts on the shoulders of the communists. Chris Coleman then raised that November 27 is the anniversary of the death of John Buckle. He said that the very best tribute the Party could pay was to dedicate the Conference and the decisions that it had made to his memory. He concluded by announcing that the Central Committee is proposing that the Party hold a national meeting on January 7 to launch the Draft Programme, and

said that he was sure that the members, activists and supporters would go from this Conference with the determination to carry out the very important programme of action that it has set.

Emotion was running high as the participants, fists in the air, sang together the Internationale, concluding with the rousing shouting of slogans. Everyone's impulse as the echoes died away was to shake each other by the hand, exchanging congratulations on the success of the Conference, and expressing a desire to go into action, to work hard in moving forward in the direction pointed out by this National Consultative Conference of RCPB(ML).

A Budget to take more out of the economy than is put in

Kenneth Clarke's second Budget continued the path of last year's of cutting back investments and expenditures in areas of need for the people, increasing taxes on working people, whilst at the same time increasing the handouts in various forms to business. It was a Budget to take more out of the economy than is put in. Such a policy is bound to lead the economy into deeper crisis and cause still further dislocation.

Even before the Budget, Kenneth Clarke spoke of how last year he had taken £15 billion out of the economy without affecting the government's priorities. This year he continued the same policy with cutbacks of £7 billion in 1995-6 and £28 billion in total over the next three years. Amongst other measures, pay increases in the public sector will be held below inflation and the social security budget will be cut, whilst increased handouts to big business will take place through measures such as the private finance initiative, tax relief for Venture Capital Trusts, and cuts in national insurance contributions for those businesses which take on workers earning less than £205 per week. Measures announced last year, such as increasing VAT on fuel to 17.5%, will also take place in the coming year. Public spending as a proportion of national output will fall by 4% over the next four years.

Introducing the Budget, the Chancellor spoke of continuing improvement in the economy and the need

to cut back the public sector debt in order to bring about a balanced budget before the turn of the century. This means that whilst cutbacks in all areas affecting people's vital needs will continue, payments to the national and international creditors will continue apace. Although he spoke of the continuing recovery and predicted further growth over the coming year, this growth is all taking place in the context of the present phase of jobless growth of capitalism in which the economy grows, sometimes even rapidly, but this is divorced from the conditions of life of working people which continue to worsen. Where people are moving into work it is in the form of low paid or part-time work and standards of living continue to decline. The policy of taking more out of the economy than is put in will only serve to worsen the situation.

A healthy economy can only be run on the basis of putting more in than is taken out, investing in the

IN SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA

THE World Meeting of Solidarity with Cuba opened in Havana on November 21 and continued till November 25, closing with a speech from Fidel Castro, President of the Republic of Cuba and General Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba.

The Cuban people share a history of some 502 years of struggle in which they have provided themselves with a nation, a national territory and culture. To this day, part of their territory in the eastern most province of Guantanamo is occupied by the US which maintains a military base there. With their revolution in 1959, they began their national task of nation-building for the first time as an independent people.

US imperialism has as its declared aim to smash the Cuban revolution and bring the people into total submission. One of its methods is an all-round blockade in order to starve the people into submission. In the name of democracy and human rights, the US is trying to subvert the most humane and the most democratic system which the Cuban people have ever seen and established themselves. The US wants to deprive the Cuban people of all they have, their nation and their task of nation-building. What the US would give in return is exploitation, immiseration and humiliation.

To be in solidarity with Cuba can mean many things. It could indicate a purely humanitarian stand which is a positive thing. Material support for Cuba on this basis must be increased as one of the acts of solidarity. It could indicate a political gesture, demanding that the people of Cuba must be free to determine their own affairs without any foreign interference and that the US blockade must be lifted. This too is a positive thing. It could be an ideological manifestation as well, expressed in the demand that Cuba has the right to establish a socialist system and to give support for the same abroad. Whatever may be the motive, one thing is very clear: Cuba needs support and this must be given.

The World Solidarity Meeting held in Havana last week was a magnificent expression of the broad support which exists for Cuba. This support must be further broadened. As our Party fights for the right to bring about social transformations at home, so it supports the same in other countries also. Cuba is one of the countries where colossal changes have taken place all to the dislike of the US imperialists and world reaction. These changes deserve to be defended.

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Declaration of the World Meeting of Solidarity with Cuba

Meeting in the City of Havana, from 21-25 November 1994, we 3079 participants representing 109 countries of 5 continents and 5 regional and international organisations, who take part in the World Meeting of Solidarity with Cuba, declare that defending Cuba's sovereign right to work for a destiny in accordance with its needs and historic process, without interference, means defending the right to choose from a plurality of roads in the face of political and economic dogmas that are being imposed worldwide.

In our work sessions and in direct contact with the people, we have once again confirmed that, at the same time that Cuba is denied the possibility to trade freely with the rest of the world and all its efforts to rebuild its economy are being hindered, the Cuban reality is systematically falsely represented and distorted in an unprecedented

propaganda campaign. We have verified with our own eyes the cruel effects of the blockade on the lives of the Cuban people. That is why we insist that the United States Government heed the demands of vast sectors of world public opinion and the General Assembly of the United Nations to put an end to that unjustifiable measure that has lasted for more than thirty years now. We have also been able to confirm the Cuban people's morale and will to resist as well as their determination to preserve their social achievements. We return to our countries even more convinced of the need to continue working for the Cuban cause.

In the coming days, Cuba, blockaded and slandered, will not be present in the Summit convoked in Miami by the United States Government. The hosts fear Cuba's gallant voice that speaks out in favour of the forsaken, the dispossessed, the outcasts, the helpless. But Cuba is not

alone; proof of that is this meeting attended by only a fraction of that great mass of humanity in all parts of the world which supports this worthy country.

Our World Solidarity event took place as Cuba and all of Latin America prepare to commemorate the centennial of José Martí's death in battle. Martí was always aware of the importance of Cuba's independence struggle, both for the fate of what he called "Our America" and for achieving "world balance."

These days, Martí's prophesy looms in all its significance and magnitude. "Whoever rises with Cuba today will be rising for all times."

The Blockade against Cuba must cease!

Cuba's inalienable right to build its own future must be respected!

General Agreements of the First World Meeting of Solidarity with Cuba

1. To declare 1995 International Year of José Martí and for the Struggle Against the Blockade.
2. To celebrate a José Martí and Support for Cuba Day on May 19, 1995, the Centennial of his death in combat. This day will be celebrated with different types of actions implemented by the solidarity movements in each country.
3. To continue and improve the national and regional meetings of solidarity with Cuba with the participation of all the forces and groups that work in favour of friendship.
4. To protest against the exclusion of Cuba from the US government-organised Hemispheric Summit to be held in Miami.
5. To continue and increase donations and economic aid campaigns as an expression of solidarity with Cuba.
6. To work for the growth of the solidarity movement, extending it to every possible sector of each society and promoting exchanges, visits to Cuba, tourism and investments in that country's economy.
7. To declare October 10, the day on which the Cuban people's revolutionary struggle began, World Day of Solidarity with Cuba.

Politically motivated criminal damage to John Buckle Books

ON the evening of Monday, November 28, the day following RCPB(ML)'s successful National Consultative Conference, "On the Draft Programme for the Working Class", the Party's bookshop, John Buckle Books, was attacked. The staff of the bookshop the following day issued a leaflet under the above title. Extracts from the leaflet follow:

"On the night of Monday, November 28, politically motivated hooligans attacked John Buckle Books. The culprits, using violent force, broke the toughened glass of the shop door.

"The attack took place within 24 hours of a successful two-day public con-

ference on the important question of the need for the working class to have its own programme to fight for its rights and to lead society out of the crisis. John Buckle Books had been working for and publicising this conference. [...]

"John Buckle Books is a landmark in the community on Wandsworth Road. As well as selling enlightening literature, including publications taking up the cause of the working class, it also serves as an outlet for low cost second-hand books [...].

"It is this service to the

local community as well as the working people as a whole which has upset the organisers of the attack. This criminal action has angered us and all our friends [...]."

The leaflet ended by affirming that efforts would be made to bring the culprits to justice.

A Budget to take more out of the economy than is put in

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welfare of all members of society to ensure that their needs for health care and education are met, investing to meet the needs of the old and the young, ensuring that the right of all to a livelihood is met, investing to ensure that the means of production are advanced, looking after the future as well as the present. As people's conditions of life advance and the economy advances, so the investments yield further advance in the future. Taking more out than is put in is a policy of worsening the conditions of life of the people through cutbacks and increased taxation whilst making handouts to business, developing the military-industrial side of the economy and so forth. Such a policy quite simply does

not work, leads to further crisis and ultimately worsens the burden facing working people.

The present day conditions show the working class that it cannot leave these questions to anyone else. It is the only class

which can lead society out of crisis and must put forward its own programme to achieve this. One of the essential elements of such a programme is that the working class must fight for such an economy which will allow society to deal

with the present day problems, escape from crisis and allow the continually expanding material and cultural needs of the population to be met. Such an economy is run on the basis that more is put in than taken out.

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