

**for
peace, jobs
and sovereignty**

Dump the Harper Tories!

*Build the fightback for
a People's Alternative!*



**Documents of the 36th Convention, Communist Party of Canada
February 2010**

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Opening Keynote

The opening address to the 36th Convention was delivered by CPC leader Miguel Figueroa on behalf of the Central Executive Committee

Dear Delegates, Guests, and observers,
Dear Comrades,

To our delegates who have come from the West Coast, the East Coast, and from all points in-between, to the many observers in attendance, and to our special invited guests – his Excellency Duc Hung Nguyen, Ambassador to Canada from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Jorge Soberon, the Consul-General of Cuba in Toronto, and to our other special guests this weekend – welcome all to the 36th Convention of the Communist Party of Canada! We also take this opportunity to extend our appreciation to the 43 sister Communist and Workers’ parties and revolutionary organizations around the world which have sent solidarity greetings to our Convention.

It is most fitting that we are holding our Convention in this Hall because several thousand members of the United Steelworkers’ local 6500 in Sudbury (along with a smaller sister local at Voisey’s Bay in Labrador) are engaged in a bitter and protracted strike struggle against the Brazilian monopoly Vale S.A. – a courageous and pivotal battle in the struggle against the corporate drive to extract ever-more concessions from workers across this country. This strike has now taken a new turn, following Vale’s announcement two days ago that it has not only re-started the smelter in Sudbury, but that it intends to increase production in an attempt to break the strike and crush the union. We express our wholehearted solidarity with these workers and call on all our members and friends, and on all militant and class-conscious people to build support for this crucial struggle!

We have come through almost four months of productive discussion and debate which will culminate in our deliberations this weekend. This is a crucial Convention for

our Party, not only in terms of strengthening our own ranks and expanding our size and influence, but also – and even more important – because of the critical situation confronting the working class as a whole, both here in Canada and around the world, resulting from the deepening systemic crisis of capitalism, and the grave challenges facing humanity due to imperialist aggression and war, and the accelerating degradation of the global environment. We aim to come away from this convention with a clear analysis and a fighting line of march in order to rally our class and its allies to confront these dangers and take our country in a qualitatively new, progressive and emancipatory direction.

The struggle to turn back the capitalist offensive in Canada, and to defeat its principle political force – the Harper Conservatives – will of necessity be at the centre of our attention over the next three days. We approach this question not in a narrow or parochial way, but rather in the context of the general crisis of capitalism and with the perspective of building a united and powerful counter-offensive, one strong and determined enough to ‘storm the gates’ of ruling class power in this country and open the way to the only fundamental alternative to this rotting, exploitative system – the way to socialism.



CPC leader Miguel Figueroa addresses delegates

I want to briefly refer to a few key developments of note since we began our pre-Convention discussions in early October.

All humanity has been moved by the great calamity which befell the people of Haiti resulting from the devastating earthquake of January 12. It has been estimated that almost 250,000 will ultimately have

perished in the quake, and millions more left injured, hungry and homeless, especially in and around its capital, Port-au-Prince. Millions around the world have dug deep to contribute to relief efforts. And yet, one cannot help but be struck by the irony and hypocrisy of those ruling circles who are now rushing to deliver “humanitarian relief” to the stricken Haitian population. The fact that so many people died in the quake is directly connected to the extreme conditions of poverty in which the vast majority have been forced to survive – conditions which for centuries these same ‘great powers’ imposed, using the Haitian people as a huge pool of cheap labour-power. Worse yet, the U.S., Canada and other imperialist powers are shipping inordinately vast quantities of military personnel and equipment to Haiti in order to preserve ‘stability and security’ at the expense of the real emergency assistance which the Haitian people so desperately require. How different is this ‘aid’, compared to the genuinely selfless medical and social assistance that Cuba and its people have been rendering to Haiti – aid which began long before the quake itself.

We of course support the massive international relief effort, but say clearly and unequivocally: “The Haitian people need bandages, not bullets and barbed wire; food, not firepower; and genuine reconstruction and national sovereignty, not foreign occupation and puppet regimes.”

What is particularly menacing about the military build-up in Haiti is its potential connection to other developments in the Latin American/Caribbean region – the coup d’état in Honduras, the re-deployment of the U.S. 4th Fleet to “patrol” Latin American and Caribbean waters, and the recent U.S.-Colombia pact to allow U.S. military use of seven Colombian bases ostensibly to fight the drug trade and the FARC-led insurgency. These are disturbing signs of U.S. imperialism’s ‘counter-offensive’ against the growing progressive and anti-imperialist movements and governments in Latin America – moves which could lead to regional conflict and war. That is why we must step up our active solidarity with the peoples of Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and other left and anti-imperialist forces in Latin America, and do everything possible to prevent imperialist aggression in our hemisphere.

Meanwhile, the imperialist occupation and war in Afghanistan has entered its 9th year. The recent announcement of the Obama Administration to make a Bush-style ‘surge’ in Afghanistan by adding another 30,000 troops – 37,000 more NATO troops in total – means that this dirty and immoral conflict will continue indefinitely, unless the Afghan people and the peace forces internationally can compel an end to it. The London conference on Afghanistan last week showed that many of these NATO governments are already feeling the heat, and are desperately searching for an

exit strategy by re-defining ‘victory’. The Harper government was particularly hawkish at the London talks, and is secretly manoeuvring to extend the Canadian military mission beyond 2011, over the objections of a large and growing majority of Canadians who oppose this war. For this reason, it is absolutely vital that our Party and the broader peace movement across Canada increase our anti-war agitation, linking it to the necessity to drive the ruling Tories from office.

The possibilities to do precisely that – to defeat the Harper Conservatives – are growing daily, as the Tories continue to nose-dive in the polls and now trail the federal Liberals, especially in most of the large urban centres. Of course, six months ago the situation was rather different; the Tories were leading by a 15% margin over their nearest rivals, and seemed poised to win an absolute majority in Parliament.

Why was there this albeit temporary spike in Tory support? Did this reflect a lurch to the right by the Canadian people, by the working class especially? Not at all! In fact, the Tories’ gains were primarily a reflection of the failure of the ‘opposition’ parties inside Parliament – especially the Ignatieff Liberals and the New Democratic Party – to come out swinging against the right-wing, neoliberal, pro-war and pro-integrationist line of Harper and co. and, more importantly, their failure to offer any meaningful alternative to his government’s course.

Indeed, since masterminding a backroom seizure of the Liberal Party leadership from the hapless Stéphane Dion a little over a year ago, Michael Ignatieff has appeared to be on permanent furlough, prompting even bourgeois commentators to ponder if he would ever ‘come out of hiding’. Under his stewardship, the federal Liberals have retreated not only in visibility but also on key policy issues, including the Afghan war, climate change, and measures to address the impact of the economic crisis.

But no one should really be surprised by the feebleness of the Liberal ‘opposition’. They are, after all, also a party of Big Business, and they understand their role rather well, waiting patiently and politely in the shadows for their next curtain call. One is reminded of that old saying: “What can you expect from a pig but a grunt”!

The role of Jack Layton and the social democratic NDP has in many respects been even more glaringly shameful. They have almost completely muted their opposition to Canada’s imperialist role in Afghanistan, and Layton himself has been quoted repeating that nauseating pro-war mantra: “We support our troops” on more than one occasion. They have essentially dropped their opposition to the NAFTA deal and the Security & Prosperity Partnership negotiations, and with it, the corporate drive to continentalism and the complete gutting of what

remains of Canadian sovereignty. The NDP leadership barely murmured a word in protest when Harper and the Conservatives launched their vitriolic, chauvinist attack on the people of Québec in order to stave off the Liberal-NDP “coalition” in the fall of 2007.

Perhaps worst of all was Layton’s pathetic appeal – in the midst of the worst economic crisis of the last half-century – for working people to make ‘heroic’ sacrifices to save the Canadian economy; in other words, to meekly surrender to corporate demands for wage & benefit concessions. And then, to add insult to injury, the NDP caucus back-pedalled over the issue of Employment Insurance (EI) reform, and actually voted to prop up the Harper government in order to avoid an election which they thought might have resulted in an NDP setback.

And yet despite this anaemic performance by the opposition parties *inside* Parliament, the minority Harper government is once again on the ropes. Why?

- because people are increasingly fed up with the ghastly war of occupation in Afghanistan, with the thoroughly corrupt and discredited puppet Karsai regime, and especially with the revelations of Canadian complicity in torture and other war crimes;
- because people are incensed by the outrageous role Canada played at the Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change – a role for which Canada earned the “Fossil” award for having done the most to delay and otherwise disrupt negotiations for an agreement on a global reduction in carbon emissions. The pitiful announcement earlier this week by federal Environment Minister Jim Prentice of new Canadian targets for emission reduction by 2020 – actually, they are not reductions at all, but will mean a 2.5% increase in emissions over the levels of 1990 – only serve to confirm that this Harper government is firmly in the pockets of Big Oil;
- because working people were outraged by Harper’s anti-democratic shutdown of Parliament in order to evade further scrutiny his government’s complicity in war crimes and subsequent attempts to cover-up those tracks, an arrogant action made all the worse by his condescending comments about ‘Canadians not really caring’ if Parliament was in session or not; and most significant of all,

- because this government has failed miserably to deal with the continuing impact of the economic crisis on the lives of working people across this country – the mounting lay-offs and shutdowns, the erosion of public services, the spreading poverty and misery, especially among the most vulnerable – low-wage and under-employed workers, women, youth and students, seniors whose pensions are under attack, new immigrant communities, and not least, Aboriginal peoples whose national rights continue to be trampled and whose socio-economic conditions continue to deteriorate.

I want to say a few more words about the economic crisis because of its centrality to our strategic orientation at this time, and because our estimation of the crisis has come up a number of times during our pre-convention discussions.

Is the crisis over? Has the recovery already begun? Well, that is now accepted as ‘a given’ on nightly news shows and the business sections of the mainstream press.



There is indeed some fact, but also much fiction in these bourgeois claims. Yes, there has been a minor ‘recovery’ of sorts, although GDP figures remain relatively flat, especially in the advanced capitalist countries like Canada. So where is this evidence of ‘recovery’? It is to be found primarily in the rebounding of asset-values – in other words, the stock prices – of many of the largest publicly-traded monopolies.

Certainly, much of the ‘destruction’ (if you will) of excess capacity has been carried through – factories have been closed down, relatively uncompetitive companies goggled up and corporate restructuring is underway on

a massive scale, mostly at the expense of workers and our communities. And much of this so-called ‘recovery’ has been underwritten through the massive injection of public/government funds.

The big dilemma for monopoly capital and their countless economic think-tanks however is that aggregate demand has not recovered. Unemployment remains high, wages and incomes remain depressed, and consumer debt loads are still unsustainable for most working people. This explains why finance capital and its governments continue to insist on maintaining extremely low – in many cases, zero – interest rates in the hope of cajoling people to sink deeper and deeper into debt in order to artificially stimulate consumption. While this approach may work for a short time, it is a sure-fire recipe for inflating yet another staggering credit bubble and another round of financial/social haemorrhaging and crisis.

The recent World Economic Forum in Davos was interesting to follow in this regard. The *crème de la crème* of the bourgeois elite that gathered there could not reach any consensus on even mild fiscal reform to control the unfettered activities of the financial sector, but what they were unanimous about was the need,

from their bourgeois perspective of course, for governments to sharply curb spending to pay for the trillions upon trillions of public *largesse* used to bail-out the corporations and banks, rather than through revenue or tax increases, especially on capital.

This is setting the stage for more major battles – many of which are already underway in Europe – to resist drastic cutbacks in public services and the downsizing/privatization of the public sector. This is what was behind the spending ‘freeze’ announced by Obama in his “State of the Union” address, and Harper’s cabinet shuffle here, placing Stockwell Day as the new Chairman of the Treasury Board, in anticipation of a major new onslaught on the public sector in the new federal budget expected to be brought down as soon as Parliament resumes early next month.

The other ‘shoe’ is about to drop – Round Two it might be called, in the capitalist drive to pay for the crisis at the expense of the working class and the people. It will be ugly, it will be painful, and it will require the labour movement to marshal all of its reserves of unity and determination and build, together with its allies in the people’s movements, a militant fightback campaign on all fronts – economic, political and ideological – and in every city, town and community across this country.

In this regard, I want to return momentarily to my earlier comments about the federal opposition parties. The intention was not to launch partisan attacks, but rather to point out one obvious and salient fact – that it is sheer illusion to believe that this vicious capitalist offensive – and its likely to become even more vicious in the coming period – can be resisted and turned back solely or even primarily *inside* Parliament. By the way, that would even be the case if there were a strong Communist presence in the House of Commons, although that would make for a qualitatively different circumstance. The real battleground will be *outside* parliament – in the workplaces and in the streets and that extra-parliamentary fightback must be led by labour.

Indeed, our call to brother Ken Georgetti and the CLC leadership to convene a broad People’s Summit, bringing together all of labour (affiliates and non-affiliates alike) and all of the genuine people’s movements, organizations, and coalitions to articulate a comprehensive alternative to the crisis and map out a coordinated fightback strategy – that call is more urgent today than perhaps it was when we first issued it more than 14 months ago. We need to find the ways and means of raising this appeal at every level, in every local, every labour council, every workplace, and in every mass organization we can, so that the leadership will be compelled to act and act quickly.

There have been some recent developments within the



The All Workers Militant Front (PAME) has played a leading role in mobilizing Greek workers to resist government cutbacks and austerity measures

ranks of the labour movement which are quite encouraging in this respect – the development of a *front commun* among the three main labour centrals in Québec; and the militant tone set at the B.C. Federation of Labour Convention and not least, the change in the top leadership of the Ontario Federation of Labour, and the decision of the CAW to come back into the OFL.

Of course, we should not be mechanistic about this process; momentum for a broad coordinated fightback can and must be built in every struggle, and on every picketline. Big struggles are already under way, such as the battle in Sudbury against Vale Inco. And more are on the horizon – at Canada Post, in the big public sector negotiations with the Charest government in Québec and the Campbell government in B.C., etc. These crucial struggles must be won, not only because of what is at stake for these workers, but also because every victory achieved through militant struggle will raise the class consciousness and the level of confidence of our class *in general*, and embolden even the timid to take resolute action.

We need to have serious discussion about how we can help to build this fightback here this weekend, and when we return to our respective provinces, in our labour committees and local Party Clubs. We should pay special attention to building up the Action Caucuses within labour wherever we can, as well as directly involving our Clubs and members in strike support actions.

Comrades,
Time is running short and we need to get down to the hard work ahead of us this weekend, so I will just touch on a few brief points concerning the tasks of our Party at this crucial juncture – what we have correctly termed “the decisive question”.

The outgoing Central Executive has presented a draft Plan of Party Work for our collective consideration, and we must examine this closely to see if it is practical and realizable, and where we may need to add or strengthen our goals and objectives over the coming period.

At the risk of over-distilling its content, I want to draw your attention to the Plan’s main thrust and summarize the main priorities it advances to build our ranks and enhance our revolutionary thrust and effectiveness:

- ◆ we must strive to increase the visibility of our Party, its press, and the Young Communist League using every opportunity and resource available to us;

- ◆ we must deepen our theoretical and ideological work within the Party; and
- ◆ we must tighten up and improve internal party organization at every level – from the Centre to each and every local Party Club – along Leninist lines.

I want to make just two main points with respect to party-building. First, we need to grasp the changed situation in which we operate today, especially in terms of how our Party is perceived by left-moving workers and other activists. The fact is that interest in our Party, its program, policies and activities is clearly on the upswing in most parts of the country. People are taking a closer look at us and like what they see, notwithstanding our frailties and limitations. And they are joining in larger numbers, especially where we are visible and active. This is not



Davenport candidate Miguel Figueroa and local members canvass in the Dufferin neighbourhood of Toronto before the October 14, 2008 election

yet a mass phenomenon, but it is a clearly discernible one, and that is why we need to maximize our visibility and take the Party out into new areas and communities wherever we can.

Can we meet this challenge? Yes comrades, we believe we can, and the steps we’ve outlined will take us a long way in this direction. The central Party can and must propel our party-building efforts forward, but the ultimate success of our collective efforts will depend on work ‘on the ground’, at the local level. This speaks directly to the vital role of the Club – the primary unit of our Party. This is where new members ‘cut their teeth’ as Communists, learn and develop into seasoned revolutionary cadres for our Party. This is why the political

health and vibrancy of our Party Clubs, and their capacity to respond quickly to developments and to initiate actions is the determining factor in party-building.

The second and final point I wish to make refers to the centrality of our theoretical and ideological work. Of course, we have a clearly delineated theoretical perspective and world-view – Marxism-Leninism – which is reflected in our Party program, our strategy & tactics, and our daily work as Communists. We all remember Lenin’s famous dictum: “without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement”. But the theoretical basis of our Party – and that of the Communist movement internationally – can never be neglected or taken for granted, for without its constant development and application to ever-changing conditions, our theoretical basis, and with it our movement itself, would wither and perish.

As important as this question always is, it could rightly be argued that it is even more critical today, for it is undeniable that as the class struggle intensifies, so too does the ideological struggle – the ‘battle of ideas’ – sharpen. It is hardly coincidental that it is precisely now, when the crisis of capitalism is deepening, that we witness an increased ideological offensive from our class adversary in the form of a revival of anti-communism, ‘philosophical’ attacks on the concept of socialism, and crude attempts to falsify or re-write the history of our movement in Canada and around the world.

And this ideological offensive is not restricted to theoretical discourse; it has practical implications at all levels of political life – from the erection of monuments to the “victims of totalitarian communism” in Ottawa (with the direct involvement of Jason Keeney and the Prime Minister’s office), to the attempted banning of the YCL and now the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia in the Czech Republic, to the Zionist death threats against comrade Mohammad Barakeh, Chair of Hadash and leader of the Communist Party of Israel, to the murders of Communist militants in India and Colombia, etc. etc.

Therefore, the deepening of our own theoretical and ideological grounding and our active engagement in the ideological struggle against the enemies of socialism and those who strive to ‘revise’, reform’ or otherwise denude Marxism-Leninism of its revolutionary content, is especially vital at this time.

In this context, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and welcome the co-authors of the outstanding book *Socialism Betrayed*, Roger Keeran and Thomas Kenny, to our Convention. We have invited cde. Roger to address our convention during tomorrow’s session along the theme “the counterrevolutionary overthrow of socialism, and its lessons and relevance for today”. I’m sure you will not want to miss this presentation.

Thank you for your attention.



Main Political Resolution

The following is the primary political document adopted by the 36th Central Convention. It is based on a draft version prepared by the previous (outgoing) Central Committee and circulated to all Party organizations and members four months prior to the Convention. Numerous amendments were submitted and debated, most of which were adopted by the delegates and included in the final resolution.

Unprecedented developments are shaking global capitalism to its very core, less than two decades after its so-called ‘final victory’ over socialism. It is mired in the deepest world-wide economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Meanwhile, structural aspects of its systemic decline continue unabated – especially militarism and war, and an intensifying environment crisis, both of which threaten the very survival of humanity.

The root cause of the crisis lies in the private ownership of the means of production and its contradiction with the increasingly social character of production. The maturing of this contradiction is rendering the capitalist system ever more volatile and destructive, with dire and sometimes unpredictable consequences. In the hope of reversing the falling rate of profit, ruling circles are stepping up a vicious offensive against our class in order to ‘save’ capitalism while transferring the cost of the current crisis onto the backs of working people. Democratic and social rights are under increased assault, and ultra-right, narrow nationalist and neo-fascist groups are proliferating in many countries.

At the same time, the deepening crisis is having a radicalizing effect on sections of the working class whose economic and social conditions are sharply deteriorating and are increasingly driven to fight back. Anti-capitalist sentiments and advocacy of socialism as the systemic alternative to decadent capitalism are growing to varying degrees. *These are dynamic times indeed, full of dangers and challenges and also with the potential of resurgent socialism.*

This assessment provides the point of departure for discussions leading up to the 36th Convention of our Party, which must aim to lay out our tasks as Communists to help foster class unity and struggle in the face of this deepening crisis. Our orientation should focus on mobilizing and winning today’s immediate (largely defensive) struggles, but always with the perspective of building conditions for our class to mount a counter-

offensive against the political and ideological edifice of capitalist relations and its state in Canada, winning state power and building socialism.

The Deepening Crisis in Canada and Internationally

When the mortgage-centred ‘credit bubble’ hit the U.S. domestic economy in 2007, signs of a much more comprehensive and devastating economic crisis were already becoming apparent. At its December 2007 meeting, our Central Committee noted that:

“The sub-prime mortgage crisis was the first shoe to drop, but it is likely not the last... The consumer ‘credit crunch’ is only one part of the teetering economy, to which must be added the staggering deficit and debt load of the U.S. federal government – the largest in history – driven primarily by massive military spending and whopping tax cuts to corporations and the wealthy... [I]t now seems clear that a crisis and recession on some scale is virtually unavoidable. A major downturn in the U.S. economy would certainly have international ramifications, not only because it is the single largest market in the world, but also because US dollars are widely held in foreign currency accounts in other countries... This in turn would further destabilize other domestic economies and international trade relations, developments which could spark heightened political conflict and war, as has happened in the past. Certainly the Canadian economy, with its lopsided trade dependence on the U.S. market and extremely high levels of foreign – mainly U.S.-based – corporate ownership, would be heavily impacted by any generalized crisis...”

By the fall of 2008, the looming crisis had finally matured, as stock values plummeted, corporate and bank failures mounted and unemployment spread across national

boundaries. Our Party said at the time that the widening crisis had both cyclical and structural components, and that while neoliberal policies – free trade, deregulation, privatization, anti-labour employment policies, etc. – had intensified the reach and severity of the global crisis, it was not simply a failure of neoliberalism per se, but rather an inevitable outcome of the *systemic crisis of capitalism* itself. We further noted that although sharp differences were developing within bourgeois circles about how to deal with the crisis,

“What unites the ruling class is the desire to overcome the crisis at the expense of the working class – both directly through lowering the cost (price) of labour... and indirectly, through the use of public revenues (the bulk of which come from the pockets of working people) to insulate investors from losses and to prop up sagging profits. The differences between the two camps revolve around tactics, not any shift in *fundamental* policy... which [is] essentially directed at propping up capitalism. From the perspective of the working class, neither prescription is acceptable. With respect to so-called ‘stimulation’ financed by public revenues and/or deficits, the issue is not stimulation *as such*, but rather what types of stimulation, and whose [class] interests they serve.” (from the main resolution of the Central Committee, January 2009)

The leading capitalist states had little choice but to intervene massively to maintain credit and the monetary system and to stave off economy-wide collapse. However, the type of intervention used in Canada and even more so in the US transferred billions of public funds into the hands of private financial corporations and did not fundamentally solve the crisis. Neither did it cap the bloated salaries of financial executives and it did almost nothing to protect working people from exorbitant bank fees, credit card and loan rates and policies, and marketing deceptions of corporate finance. Contrary to government and corporate media, the financial system and capitalism as a whole is still vulnerable to financial crises and depression.

The infusion of public funds by capitalist states around the world (bankrolled in large measure by mounting government debt) has been truly staggering. In Canada, the January 27, 2009 federal budget brought down by the Harper Conservative government (and which passed through Parliament with Liberal Party support) included a widely-touted \$30 billion ‘stimulus package’ directed primarily at infrastructure-related projects. But this spending was dwarfed by the more than \$200 billion made available to the financial sector to buy shaky mortgages and other ‘toxic assets’ from the banks.

In the U.S., the world’s largest economy, the cumulative ‘rescue’ allocations to the financial sector have been

exponentially higher – in the trillion of dollars. This is roughly equivalent to 90 per cent of the value of U.S. production last year. Yet despite such astronomical injections of public funds to keep the ‘captains of commerce’ afloat, liquidity (i.e., the willingness of banks and other financial institutions to extend new lines of credit to businesses and consumers) continues to be sluggish at best. The so-called ‘nationalizations’ of some financial houses in various countries are not efforts to restrict the power of capital or shift the balance of forces from monopoly interests to the people. On the contrary, these actions are intended to shore up capitalism using state funds until such time as they can be handed back to the private sector.

While the global crisis is still in its early stages and is unfolding unevenly, certain general features can now be identified, and conclusions drawn.

First, that everywhere the crisis is attended by *growing impoverishment of workers and the masses of the people*, job losses and rising unemployment (particularly among full-time workers), economic insecurity and the degradation of public services and social conditions, especially for Aboriginal peoples, women, youth, seniors, and the most vulnerable. The dismal employment situation has been worsened by the unscrupulous actions of financially healthy corporations which take advantage of the economic crisis to carry out radical restructuring (including job-shedding), often with the assistance of government funds.

Second, that the corporate/government drive to impose the costs of the crisis on the backs of working people has given rise to *an intense bourgeois ideological offensive directed at the working class* to split its ranks between public/private sector workers, unionized and unorganized workers, and so on, and to scapegoat the unemployed, new immigrants, racialized communities, and women workers. A crucial part of this ideological campaign is the resurgence of virulent anti-communism, especially in Europe where efforts are being made to restrict the activities of Communist parties and like-minded organizations by falsely and hypocritically equating socialism with fascism.

Another aspect of this ideological offensive aims to mollify working people with misleading and sometimes falsified reports that economic recovery is now in ‘full swing’, even though such optimistic claims are belied by the facts. In Canada, for instance, unemployment now stands at 1.6 million workers (based on official statistics), and most economists predict that it will continue to rise. Foreclosures and bankruptcies (both business and personal) are on the increase, as is the percentage of working people slipping below the ‘poverty line’. Both domestic consumption and exports (as well as the composite ‘gross domestic product’ [GDP]) continue to

languish, and new housing starts have ground to a virtual halt. Internationally, world trade is off sharply while most capitalist governments are mired in unsustainable debt. Why then all the banner headlines declaring that a 'robust recovery' has begun? Ostensibly, because of the recent 'bounce-back' of stock prices on the Dow, TSX and other Canadian and foreign exchanges. Similar reports of false recovery were commonplace during the last Great Depression – most notably in 1938, only to be followed by four more years of high unemployment. Some bourgeois apologists try to legitimize such wishful (and dishonest) reportage on the grounds that 'good economic news' helps to stimulate consumer and investor confidence. But it also serves a more sinister purpose, namely to delude working people into believing that the worst is over, and that they simply need to 'bunker down' and ride out the storm, rather than to organize and fight to defend their class interests.

Third, that *the crisis is aggravating contradictions among the leading imperialist states and blocs*, as each scrambles to defend its own industrial/financial interests at the expense of foreign competitors. Protectionist measures (such as the "Buy America" conditions attached to U.S. government-financed infrastructure projects) are further crippling international trade flows that have already fallen sharply due to shrinking demand and tight credit conditions. Notwithstanding the rhetorical defence of 'free trade' and 'open markets' spun at G-20, World Bank and other regional and global summits, the evidence unmistakably points to increasing economic nationalism and retrenchment. Over time, this will in turn lead to rising inter-imperialist tensions and rivalries – the historical precursor to imperialist aggression and war.

Fourth, that the current crisis has more fully exposed *the relative decline of U.S. economic might compared to other competing centres*. While the U.S. still remains the most powerful imperialist power, the weakening of its economic base is undeniable, as reflected in: (1) its massive governmental deficits, which now reach almost 50% of total government receipts, and its accumulated national debt amounting to some \$12 trillion (by 2009); (2) its increasing dependence on foreign financing to service its debt (mostly in the form of U.S. government bonds and securities), and the net inflow of foreign direct investment to maintain its domestic production of goods and services; and (3) the steady decline of the U.S. dollar, which has lost almost two-thirds of its value relative to other leading currencies since 1971. This decline applies not only in relation to Japan and the EU, but also and even more significantly with respect to the PRC (China) and to a lesser extent, India and Brazil.

China's economic advance over the past two decades has been particularly striking. Its 'open-door' policy, based on vastly-increasing levels of foreign investment

and privatizations, have significantly improved income levels, domestic consumption and the expansion of its industrial base and infrastructure. But these gains have been accompanied by growing disparities, unemployment and social tensions. Nevertheless, the continued strength of European and Japanese imperialism, the growth of China and other 'emerging powers' underline the fact that U.S. imperialism is on the wane. The brief period of the so-called "unipolar" world, which seemed to have arisen following the dismantlement of the former Soviet Union and other socialist states in the early 1990s, has clearly given way.

And **Fifth**, that *the labour and people's fightback against the consequences of the crisis has been slow to take flight and remains largely uneven and sporadic*, even though important advances have been made in a number of leading capitalist countries. This is due to a number of factors:

- (1) the impact of fear and insecurity among broad sections of the working class, weakening – if only temporarily – their capacity to unite and fight;
- (2) the imposition of state measures to restrict, and sometimes directly repress, organized dissent;
- (3) the disorienting effects of the bourgeois ideological offensive (referred to above); and finally
- (4) the historic support for capital of social-democratic and reformist ideology most blatantly expressed by outright betrayal of right opportunist leadership and the failure of trade union leadership embracing these ideological trends to initiate, and sometimes even to obstruct, the development of a united and coordinated fight back movement.

This combination of failure and obstruction has evoked among trade union activists and social democratic workers sharp criticism and dissatisfaction that has penetrated in some cases to leadership levels and prompted a searching for "third way" alternatives which, although inadequate to meet the crisis, do provide fertile ground for the development of left alternatives and unity.

Clearly, the current recession/depression will be deep and protracted, with ruinous effects on the living standards and social conditions of working people. It also takes a toll on their physical and emotional health in Canada and internationally, as documented recently in a study done by the Canadian Medical Association. The crisis brings into sharp focus capitalism's stagnation and historical limitation, and the urgent need for its revolutionary replacement by socialism and ultimately communism. It follows therefore that ***the economic crisis – together with the struggle against imperialist war and in defence of labour and democratic rights – needs to be the central and overriding focus for all of the labour and left forces in our country, and especially for the Communist Party, for the foreseeable future.***

On Related International Issues

The global crisis is having a significant effect on international relations in general. In some respects, the economic turmoil has forced the U.S. and other imperialist powers to refocus their attention – at least momentarily – on their domestic problems. For instance, imperialist efforts to complete the imposition of its neoliberal “global architecture” of domination and plunder, utilizing such international institutions as the IMF, World Bank and the WTO, has been forced onto the ‘back burner’, at least for now. That said, it would be naïve to assume that the strategic ambitions of the various centres of imperialism – which both collude and collide with one another – have been abandoned or fundamentally altered.

Imperialism’s efforts to stymie talks at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the post-Kyoto Protocol negotiations deserve special attention. Imperialist countries have generated billions in profits from industrial production creating historic levels of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the last two decades. GHG emissions are actually accelerating. But in what might be described as “carbon neocolonialism”, imperialism is trying to force the burden of addressing climate change onto the working people and Third World countries, restricting development while refusing to fund sustainable and renewable energy technology. These efforts reflect a marked shift in the public policy debate on climate change. Capital has generally replaced its tactic of denying human-caused global warming with efforts to co-opt or hijack climate solutions.

For example, the European Union’s Emission Trading System has revealed the cap and trade approach to be a ‘polluter profits’, not ‘polluter pays’ solution. Similar approaches are being advanced in North America, with the Chicago Climate Exchange, Obama’s model, and the Western Climate Initiative. Business is making profits selling offsets or Clean Development Mechanisms like planting trees, which are also ineffective. As the recent Delhi Declaration of the Workers and Communist parties said, “Capitalism’s proposal for restructuring in the name of climate change has little relation to the protection of the environment. Corporate inspired ‘green development’ and [the] ‘green economy’ are sought to be used to impose new state monopoly regulations which support profit maximisation and impose new hardships on the people.”

Canada is the second-highest per capita producer of Green House Gasses (GHG) in the world. The major contributions come not from the people but rather from business, especially the Alberta Tar Sands, while the

military is also a major GHG producer. Canada will also suffer severe consequences from rising temperatures including destruction of boreal forests and agriculture, coastal flooding, devastating impacts on water resources and fisheries, as well as transport and health; events internationally could be catastrophic. Hardest hit will be aboriginal, working class, poor and racialized communities.

Despite this rapidly deteriorating situation, successive governments have blocked even modest reforms. Liberal governments have supported intensity-based emission targets, while the policies of the Harper Conservatives have been unabashedly drafted by their corporate patrons in the resource industry, which resulted in the retrograde role that Canada played in negotiations leading up to the Copenhagen Meeting in December 2009.



PM Harper helps scuttle climate negotiations in Copenhagen at the behest of his masters in Big Oil

The urgent need to stop and reverse global warming calls for a bold emergency response. In fact, the effects that the Kyoto Protocol was supposed to prevent have already begun. Emission reduction targets must be significantly increased if the accelerating rate of global warming is to be arrested and reversed. It is time to “pay the climate bill” – the debt or reparations owed to the oppressed peoples, nations and countries of the world, a view supported by the UN Framework on Climate change – and make deep cuts to GHG emissions in imperialist countries. Mitigation efforts including climate change agreements must be strong, legally binding, comprehensive, and audacious, and be based on international solidarity, peace and respect for sovereignty, self-determination and democracy, as well as employment and social progress. There is no other

alternative, The nightmarish so-called “Plan B” responses that some military researchers as well as NASA and the British Royal Society are investigating in case other efforts fail – geo-engineering technologies like simulating a volcanic eruption, or use of nuclear bombs as stop-gap measures – must be categorically rejected.

Today, environmental activism is more urgent than ever. But as our Program states:

“Environmental reforms alone cannot stop the general trend of environmental degradation... Capital has never fully accepted infringements on its private ownership and ‘right’ to exploit. Neither the transnational corporations, nor capitalists as a whole are capable of solving the environmental crisis. Only socialism can put the environment ahead of profit. Only with socialism will humanity begin scientifically to address the far-reaching social and environmental effects of our impact on nature, and do away with capitalism’s unplanned, anarchic destruction of the natural environment.”

Imperialist wars and occupations continue to mar the international landscape, often linked to the drive by major imperialist powers to seize control of oil reserves. While the U.S./British-led intervention in Iraq is finally scaling down, most of these occupation forces remain in place and could once again be pressed into active combat. Just as significant, some 200,000 corporate mercenaries remain in Iraq as a privatized army of occupation for U.S. imperialism. Meanwhile, the war and occupation in Afghanistan is being substantially ramped up with the addition of some 40,000 more ISAF (mostly U.S.) troops in order to prop up the corrupt Karzai regime. Canada continues to bloody its hands in that despicable, ‘unwinnable’ war. The Harper Conservative government, with the encouragement of Washington, London and the NATO brass, is quietly manoeuvring to extend the combat mission beyond the July 2011 deadline set by the Harper government. For its part, the Communist Party continues to call for the immediate repatriation of all Canadian troops – a demand shared by the majority of the Canadian people.

The Zionist State of Israel continues its decades-long criminal and illegal occupation of Palestinian lands, with the financial, military and political support of Washington. Israel’s ruthless attack on Gaza (Dec.-Jan. 2008/09) exacted a heavy toll in human suffering with almost 1,400 Palestinians – mostly civilians – slaughtered and thousands more injured or left homeless. Israel’s murder, torture and imprisonment of Palestinians, and its utter contempt for international law – as shown in Gaza, the 2006 invasion of Lebanon, and in countless other occasions during the years of occupation – leave no doubt that it is consciously pursuing a policy of ethnic cleansing, and constitutes nothing less than a *crime against humanity*.

Ottawa’s Middle East policy has tilted even more sharply in favour of Israel under the right-wing Harper government. Pro-Zionist groups, including the Canadian Jewish Congress, B’nai Brith and others, have stepped



One of countless demonstrations across Canada to protest immoral and cowardly attack on Gaza, Dec. 2008-Jan. 2009

up their anti-democratic campaign to silence all criticism of Israel on Canadian campuses and in public discourse in general, on the specious grounds that anti-Zionism – and indeed any criticism of Israeli policies – is equivalent to anti-Semitism. Our Party repudiates that false claim and calls for stepped up solidarity with the long-suffering Palestinian people and the implementation of all relevant U.N. resolutions, including Israel’s complete withdrawal from all lands it has illegally occupied since the 1967 war, the dismantling of the Apartheid wall and removal of all Israeli settlements, the formation of a viable and genuinely independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, the guaranteed right of Palestinians to return to their homelands, the certifiable de-nuclearization of Israel, and mutual security guarantees for all states in the region. Until such basic justice is achieved for the Palestinian people, our Party will continue to support the international campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel.

We also express our solidarity with the progressive, secular and democratic forces of Iran who are struggling against the Ahmadinejad government and the repressive theocratic regime as a whole. At the same time, we emphasize that the conflict within that country must be

settled by the Iranian people themselves. We vehemently oppose any move by U.S. imperialism or its allies to use the conflict and their ongoing “demonisation” of Muslims and Islam as a pretext to interfere, or worse, launch military aggression against Iran. As the Central Executive stated in July 2009, some progressives in Canada and elsewhere

“have wrongly concluded that because the regime has been targeted by U.S. imperialism and its regional gendarme, the Zionist state of Israel... [the anti-imperialist movement] should remain silent, or worse, even support the reactionary regime. This simplistic arithmetic, based on the flawed notion that ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend’, is fundamentally flawed. The Ahmadinejad regime is not at all a progressive or ‘pro-worker’ government... It is a vicious, reactionary regime which has repeatedly attacked workers’ organizations, women, students and secular forces, including imprisonment, torture and murder against its opponents, over the past thirty years of its rule.”

Imperialism’s genocidal policies across the African continent continue to foster wars, occupations, aggressions, and coups, as well as mass impoverishment, gendered violence, disease, malnutrition and famine. With only about 12 per cent of the world’s population, Africa has over 60 per cent of AIDs cases, and epidemic levels of deaths from tuberculosis and malaria – a situation exacerbated by avaricious actions of pharmaceutical corporations. The UN estimates that, coming on top of the food and oil crises, the economic crisis will cause a surge in unemployment, the creation of 27 million African poor in 2009, and the loss of 20 per cent of the per capita income of the 390 million people living in extreme poverty in the sub-Saharan African countries. Viewed in this context, the recent establishment of US African Command (AFRICOM) is clearly part of US imperialism’s efforts to destabilize governments, directly engage in inter-imperialist rivalry, and create an archipelago of bases for more military interventions. The rejection by virtually all African countries to host AFRICOM’s headquarters is an expression of the resistance of the African nations and peoples, as is their protest at the Barcelona and Copenhagen climate negotiations. The Communist Party calls for the immediate removal of all non-African forces, including those of France, Britain, Belgium, Canada, the US, as well as NATO and Israeli troops, from Africa.

In North Africa Morocco’s domination of Western Sahara continues, while imperialism’s direct intervention in Sudan, including Canada, has exacerbated regional conflict. Canada is also participating in the US/NATO “anti-piracy” mission around the horn of Africa, and Canadian resource capital is in collusion with numerous imperialist intrigues throughout the continent. Our party stands in solidarity with the resistance of the

Zimbabwean people against imperialism and for sovereignty and calls for Canada to end its economic sanctions, while also condemning the suppression of labour, civil and democratic rights in that country. Also in southern Africa, since our last convention the African National Congress has shifted away from the neo-liberal project of the Thabo Mbeki leadership. In the most recent election, the ANC, now led by Jacob Zuma, won an overwhelming victory. Our Party sends internationalist salutations to the people of South Africa, the ANC and the South African Communist Party on the twentieth anniversary of the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. We also view as positive the recent summit of the South between African and Latin American countries in Venezuela.

In Latin America, the left and anti-imperialist forces continue to register important advances, including the formation of progressive governments in a number of countries – Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Uruguay, among others, and in forging a number of important regional initiatives, not least the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) and Telesur. The most developed of these transformative processes is of course the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela led by President Hugo Chávez Frias. We convey our revolutionary solidarity with all these anti-imperialist movements and governments, as we do with Socialist Cuba – *the first free territory of the Americas* – which continues to play the pivotal political and inspirational role in supporting and helping to guide this dynamic wave of change sweeping across the southern half of our hemisphere.

Unfortunately, U.S. imperialist policy toward Cuba remains essentially unchanged. Although the current Administration in Washington has eased some restrictions imposed by the previous Bush administration, President Obama has stated unequivocally that the 50-year-old blockade against Cuba will not be lifted. In addition, Vice-President Joe Biden recently said that “The US will maintain the embargo as a tool to apply pressure on Cuba.” We send a militant salute to the Cuban Revolution and express our unwavering solidarity with its government, its Communist Party, the imprisoned Cuban Five and the Cuban people as a whole for their many achievements and internationalist contributions, especially in the face of unrelenting pressures, harassment and blockade from U.S. imperialism over the past half-century.

We denounce the recent coup d’état in Honduras and call for the immediate re-instatement of democratically-elected President Manuel Zelaya, along with a complete investigation and punishment of all conspirators involved in this criminal act. We are certain that such an investigation will confirm the covert involvement of U.S. imperialism – at least at some high level within its state apparatus. It will also likely show the Honduran coup to

have been part of a wider sinister strategy to weaken and ultimately reverse the popular transformative process currently under way across Latin America, the most dangerous component of which is the ongoing construction of a network of U.S. military bases centred in Colombia and directed principally against its progressive neighbours – Venezuela and Ecuador – and against socialist Cuba. The return in 2008 of the U.S. Navy’s Fourth Fleet to the waters of the Caribbean and Latin America is another clear signal of U.S. imperialism’s intentions to reassert political and economic domination of this region.



Re-deploying the U.S. 4th Fleet in Latin America & Caribbean – lining up for a new wave of imperialist aggression

We also express our militant solidarity with the struggling people of Colombia who face increasing repression at the hands of the fascist Uribe regime and the oligarchic and imperialist interests it represents. These stepped-up attacks are directed primarily at the armed insurgency led by the FARC-EP, but are also aimed at the Colombian Communist Party, militant trade unions, peasant organizations and activists, and other democratic forces, many of whom are being executed or imprisoned as “FARC *politic*as”. We call once again for the cancellation of the Canada-Colombia Free Trade pact and for the removal of the FARC-EP and all insurgent forces from Canada’s notorious “terrorist entity” list.

Another significant event in the recent period was the change in the U.S. administration with the election of Barack Obama and Democratic majorities in both Houses of Congress. This stunning rebuke to the ultra-right forces, and the election of an Afro-American as President were landmark achievements in a society still plagued by class and racial oppression. Some of the pronouncements of the new Administration, especially with respect to foreign policy, marked a welcome departure from the Bush White House. Nevertheless, it is important to not harbour any illusions about the Democratic Party, which remains a capitalist party in the most powerful imperialist state on earth, still committed

to neoliberal dogma and policy, and in which corporate interests continue to prevail in its hierarchy and around all crucial issues. This reality was confirmed during the recent debate around healthcare reform, when leading Democrats added their voices to the Republican/corporate onslaught against a rather limited and tepid reform package. The decisive task for the U.S. working class continues to be breaking the stranglehold of the two-party system through the establishment of a genuine labour/people’s mass party.

Finally, we address our attention to the peace, anti-imperialist and Communist movements at the international level. During the bleak days of the Reagan administration in the early 1980s – which many came to refer as ‘Cold War II’ because it marked the end of the short period of “*détente*” in favour of U.S. imperialism’s renewed drive to achieve overwhelming military superiority over the former Soviet Union – our Party advanced the slogan “Peace is everyone’s business”. It was quickly taken up by the broad peace movement across the country because it spoke to the fact that (1) the arms race and the danger of world war directly affects and threatens everyone; and (2) that therefore the peace movement should be as broad and inclusive as possible. And yet, while international conditions and the world balance of class forces have changed significantly (for the worse) since then, imperialism’s drive to aggression and war has hardly abated; in fact, local and regional wars have proliferated, as the U.S. and its imperialist allies, including Canada, move to consolidate and extend their global hegemony. The human cost of war and militarization continues to accelerate – both for those it directly victimizes and for those forced to pay for its preparation out of scarce resources diverted from socially-productive use.

For all of these reasons, the development and growth of the world peace movement must be a top priority for the Communists everywhere. Every possible force, from every stratum of society that stands opposed to aggression and war should be welcome in this broad movement. That is why our Party continues to support the Canadian Peace Alliance (CPA) and local peace coalitions across the country. At the same time, we recognize the decisive importance of building up the most advanced anti-imperialist section of that movement, represented internationally by the World Peace Council (WPC). That is why the reestablishment of the Canadian Peace Congress (CPCon), an affiliate of the WPC, is a significant achievement. While it is still a fledgling organization, new branches are beginning to take shape. The Congress is the main organizational vehicle for uniting anti-imperialist peace activists in Canada, and it is building a larger profile within the broader peace and progressive movements. As this process continues, the Congress is emerging as an increasingly important conduit for strengthening both

the international peace movement and the CPA and other broad peace coalitions in Canada, capable of providing political and tactical clarity. Our party must give priority to the active support for the CPCon's development and growth.

The Second Trilateral Peace Conference of the World Peace Council, which the Canadian Peace Congress hosted in Toronto in October 2009, provided an important opportunity for the peace movement to analyze the dynamics of imperialism in the Americas and propose coordinated anti-imperialist action. The Trilateral Conference included WPC affiliates from Canada, Mexico and the United States, as well as representatives from the Cuban and Brazilian peace movements.

Among the most important conclusions was the observation that US imperialism has recently become challenged in two key ways: the decline of US political and economic power, relative to other centres; and the rise of anti-imperialist movements in Latin America, several of which have scored important election victories. In response to these challenges, the US has quickly and dramatically increased its military presence in Latin America – through, for example, the re-establishment of the Fourth Fleet and the moves to bolster its military base network in Latin America by establishing seven new bases in Colombia. These imperialist moves are being conducted by the United States with the active political, economic and military support of Canada and Mexico. Together, these three states form a trilateral imperialist alliance in North America. To confront this dangerous development there must be an accompanying alliance of the peace forces in Canada, Mexico and the US. The Trilateral Peace Conference agreed to work toward building such a trilateral peace alliance in North America.

We salute all of the progressive, working class, anti-imperialist and national liberation movements around the world, including those in government as well as those struggling to win power. We reaffirm our view, stated at the 35th Convention that:

“Now more than ever, the expansion and consolidation of a broadly-based democratic and anti-imperialist front on a global scale is urgently needed, one that is capable of bringing together all the democratic and progressive forces to challenge the economic and political agenda of transnational finance capital and its imperialist states, and to win social and economic alternatives.”

But of all the various progressive movements and currents which exist internationally, none is more important to us than the Communist movement itself. We say this not simply because we are Communists, but

rather because history has shown time and again that it is the Communist parties, sharing a world view based on Marxism-Leninism and working class internationalism, and bringing together the most advanced, disciplined and committed fighters of our class in each country, which have been the bedrock and driving force of the broader movements fighting for peace, against imperialism and for socialism. Our Party remains wholeheartedly committed to the strengthening of the Communist movement internationally, and more specifically to the annual International Meeting of Communist & Workers' Parties (IMCWP).

Over the past dozen years, the IMCWP has grown both in terms of participating parties and with respect to its capacity to initiate and strengthen coordination and joint action. At the same time, we must note a growing differentiation among the parties on certain fundamental questions. While respecting the right of each member party to articulate its political analysis and line of march, and while



working to foster unity-in-action despite a diversity of views, we reiterate our conviction that the essence and strength of our Communist movement derives from its fidelity to Marxism-Leninism, both in theory and practice, including our collective responsibility to respond to, and struggle against, all manifestations of opportunism (both right and 'left'), revisionism and reformism within our ranks.

Looking at the development of the global working class movement in recent years, and the profound crisis gripping the imperialist system, we are more confident than ever that socialism is the next historical step for humanity. Canada will not be an exception to this process. The 36th Convention of the Communist Party of Canada will help to build the revolutionary forces in this country, as part of the worldwide struggle for a future free from exploitation, oppression, war, hunger, and environmental catastrophe.

The Political Crisis in Canada and the People's Fightback

The current economic crisis in Canada needs to be situated in the context of the country's overall distorted pattern of economic development – in the long-standing erosion of manufacturing and secondary industry and reliance on the export of raw materials. This process has accelerated dramatically, costing hundreds of thousands of jobs. The pattern of uneven development of the economy, and reliance on resource extraction, are objective factors behind the decades-long drive towards continentalism, and help to explain the Harper Tory agenda to accelerate this process, towards so-called “deep integration” which will fatally undermine any meaningful Canadian sovereignty.

Since our 35th Central Convention in early 2007, the Canadian domestic situation has been characterized by a deepening of capitalism's interconnected economic, political, social and environmental crises. This has gone beyond cyclical recessions or political upheavals; it has become a profound crisis threatening the future of Canada. But for the revolutionary forces, such a crisis also offers the opportunity to win working class support for fundamental change in society. The Communist Party of Canada calls for a truly dramatic shift away from the failed policies of monopoly capitalism, and for the creation of a People's Coalition which can begin to take the country in such a new direction.

The economic crisis must also be seen in connection to the deepening political crisis in our country, which has resulted in a string of short-lived minority governments – each tilting farther and farther to the Right – and growing disillusionment among the electorate reflected in ever-lower voter turnouts. For the past three years, despite lacking a majority in Parliament, and with the electoral support of just over one-third of voters, the Harper Conservatives have repeatedly ignored laws, court rulings, Parliamentary resolutions, and public opinion to impose their reactionary agenda. This deeply unpopular government has extended Canada's role in the dirty imperialist occupation of Afghanistan, encouraged the corporate assault on workers' pensions and collective agreements, and refused to sign the historic United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Harper Tories are capable of escalating the crisis of confederation, provoking the sovereigntist movement in Québec and forcing a confrontation that would divide Canada and workers along national lines, and spark new attempts by U.S. imperialism to dominate the remaining parts of Canada. Harper and his government deny any responsibility to tackle the global crisis posed by climate change. In short, at a crucial time of economic decline and environmental

degradation, Canada is governed by one of the most right-wing parties in the capitalist world, a party lacking any legitimacy to carry out its far-reaching plans to destroy the social gains achieved by past generations of working class and people's movements.

In response to this profound crisis, the working class and its allies must develop new strategies to build a powerful resistance movement leading to a People's Coalition at both the extra-parliamentary and electoral levels. The Communist Party will continue to give its full backing to all such efforts, and to call for the goal of a socialist transformation of Canada as the fundamental solution to the economic and political crisis facing the country.

As comrade Figueroa said in his opening remarks to our 35th Central Convention, “defeating the Harper Conservatives has come to be the most central and pressing task for our Party, our class and for the Canadian people as a whole. ... The Tories under Prime Minister Stephen Harper have now become the preferred party of most sections of Canadian and international finance capital, not just the resource companies and military contractors, but also the banks and other monopolies.”

We stressed at the time that working people should have no illusions that the Liberal Party, the petty-bourgeois nationalist BQ, or the NDP under Jack Layton, stand for a fundamentally distinct political alternative, one which breaks completely with the neoliberal, pro-war and pro-integrationist policies of the Harper Conservatives.

Hoping to take advantage of weaknesses among the opposition parties, especially the Liberals, PM Harper cynically went to the polls in September 2008, ditching his own legislation on fixed-term election dates. The snap election was calculated to grab a majority before the economic crisis burst with full force. In the end, Harper's opportunist gambit fell short. The stock market ‘meltdown’, which erupted less than two weeks before Election Day, severely undermined Harper's credibility over his claims that “the fundamentals of the Canadian economy are sound”. That, together with the Tories' anti-social and pro-war policies were sufficient to deny the Conservatives a majority.

In our post-election commentary, we predicted continued political volatility:

“Despite their claims, the [minority] Tories have no mandate to impose their right-wing agenda on the country.... The Conservatives will most likely attempt to ‘bulldoze’ legislation through the House as if they indeed had a working majority, as they did during the previous session. ... The political terrain is now quite murky as the country enters into a deep and likely protracted economic crisis and recession. The post-election battle lines will most likely centre

around the struggle to block the attempts of finance capital and its big business parties – in the first instance, the Conservatives – from foisting the burden of the crisis onto the backs of the working class and working people. The challenge now for the labour and democratic movements will be to move the struggle back into the streets, workplaces and communities across Canada.” [CEC Statement, October 15, 2008]

A few weeks later, federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty (a key figure in the far-right government of former Tory Premier Mike Harris in Ontario) introduced his “economic update”, rejecting calls for any genuine economic stimulus. The immediate result was a Parliamentary crisis in late November 2008, in which the so-called “coalition” of the Liberals and the NDP, backed by the *Bloc Québécois*, vowed to bring down the government on a confidence motion.

Confronted with the spectre of defeat, the Tories regrouped and launched a massive propaganda campaign, casting themselves as ‘victims’ of a conspiracy by the Liberal/NDP coalition, together with a chauvinist tirade against the “separatist” BQ and the national rights and aspirations of the people of Québec. Harper moved to suspend Parliament, a move with grave long-term implications for democracy in Canada.

The Communist Party considered the Liberal-NDP confidence motion as the only immediate practical alternative to continued Tory rule, an alternative which would have opened prospects for the labour and people’s extra-parliamentary struggle to win certain concessions and set the stage to shift the political balance in Parliament in a future election.

But we also pointed out that the Liberal/NDP coalition likely would have had a short life-span, given the rivalry between the two parties, and the sharp cleavages within the Liberal Party itself. The dominant section of the Liberal leadership, represented by Michael Ignatieff, John Manley and others, were hostile to the Coalition concept, preferring instead to manoeuvre to regain the support of Big Business and pose once again as the ‘government-in-waiting’. Dion’s forced departure as Liberal leader, replaced by Ignatieff, signalled the death knell of the Coalition long before the 2009 budget was brought down.

That budget prioritized support for the banks and other lenders, and tax hand-outs to business, while ignoring the urgent needs of workers and the unemployed. Among the budget’s worst features was the lack of action on Employment Insurance (EI), which the Tories stubbornly refused to improve. The EI changes subsequently announced by the Tories in September 2009 (Bill C-50) were a temporary fix which would

extend a few weeks of coverage to barely 10% of the officially unemployed, and do absolutely nothing to reform the broken system that already excludes coverage for over half those currently out of work. When millions of workers are being victimized by the impact of a devastating crisis brought on by the speculative greed of finance capitalists, and when billions upon billions of public funds are ladled out to banks and corporations to rescue their sliding profit margins, this feeble stop-gap measure is a monumental insult to both working and unemployed Canadians.

Taken together, the 2009 federal budget and the spreading implementation of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) scheme constitutes yet another massive transfer of wealth from working people to finance capital in this country. But as the full weight of the recession/depression comes to bear on the Canadian people, the failure of Tory policies will come ever more sharply into focus and will engender increasing resistance and united mass struggle. No amount of bobbing and weaving by the Harper government or their accomplices on the “Opposition” benches will be able to avoid or subdue a rising tide of people’s anger for long.

The Organized Working Class: Key Element of the Fightback

The current crisis is being used by monopoly to consolidate its positions, weaken its competitors and escalate its attack on labour. The attack on the working class and their institutions, particularly on labour unions, is nothing new; hostility to organized labour is an intrinsic part of capitalism, reflecting the antagonistic relation between exploiters and exploited. This assault not only strives to weaken labour so that more surplus value can be expropriated by capital; it is also motivated out of the fear of losing control and the knowledge that the working class has the potential to unite all the diverse forces of society – workers, farmers, Aboriginal peoples, women, youth, seniors, oppressed minorities, and even elements of the petty bourgeoisie – into political movements that have the potential to overthrow them. That is the spectre of communism identified by Marx and Engels that haunts them, no matter how powerful they may appear to be.

In conducting its offensive against the workers, capital helps to promote and take maximum advantage of elements within the labour movement itself who vacillate and retreat in the face of this attack, and in some cases collude with capital in undermining labour’s resistance. The capitalists dream of an environment without trade unions, or of trade unions which have been “captured” and converted into control mechanisms. It

follows therefore that for the workers to defend and advance their interests against this onslaught, they will be increasingly compelled to struggle not only against monopoly and its governments, but also against those within labour itself who advocate compliance with the corporate agenda. Actions and ideology that weaken the fightback are elements of corporate influence and strength within labour, and they must be exposed and isolated.

The working class, and especially its leading edge, the organized trade union movement, must develop forms of resistance and struggle suited to today's conditions. This needs to include the development of left leadership within organized labour capable of resilient tactics. Compromise, the ability to attack and retreat, transient alliances and stubborn resistance are all part of the same whole, and the catalyst is struggle.

As noted above, the monopolists and their state have escalated their ideological offensive to attack labour using the current crisis, unemployment and impoverishment to try and divide organized workers from the 70% of the working class who are not organized. They use the media to shift the blame onto “fat cat” organized workers who are portrayed as spoiled, overpaid and the cause of economic ruin. This tactic was employed, for instance, to demonize the CAW in order to ‘soften up’ that union to accept major concessions. A similar strategy was employed against CUPE municipal workers in southern Ontario during their recent strikes.

The main thrust of the attack has been against the manufacturing industrial base in Ontario and to a lesser degree in Québec. British Columbia has not been ignored; over the last few years over 120 mills have closed and raw unprocessed logs are being shipped for processing, mostly in the United States. In every province, the attack against labour, against social programs, pensions and working conditions, the sell-out of resources, de-industrialization and loss of sovereignty are escalating phenomena that require organized response.

There have been many militant struggles in recent years, both by public sector and private sector workers. Unorganized workers too have taken significant actions. Hundreds of thousands of industrial workers, disenfranchised and ejected from their plants, are having a hard time trying to conduct the fightback and handle unemployment simultaneously.

The fact that most of our mining, petroleum and manufacturing industries are foreign-owned and controlled complicates matters, because the attack is orchestrated from outside our borders, as in the case of Steelworkers fighting the Brazilian-owned Vale Inco Corporation. Furthermore, it has reduced the power of

Canadian workers and long-term benefits to the Canadian economy and undermined Canadian sovereignty. However, it would be wrong to conclude that the key problem is that major parts of our resources and industry are owned by foreigners – such as by “Americans” in oil or by “Japanese” or “Americans” in auto manufacturing or by “Brazilians” or “Swiss” in nickel mining. Canadian finance capital, including Canadian transnational corporations, continue to dominate Canadian state policies. They have allowed and encouraged the sell-out of Canada and their behaviour towards Canadian unions and workers is no better than that of foreign transnationals. We need only look at corporate-government behaviour in recent strikes in the rail industry or PotashCorp or at the CIBC bank in Sudbury or, in the public sector, in health care and education.

While there have been a number of pitched battles on the labour front, generally speaking a coordinated fightback – especially on a Canada-wide scale – has been slow to develop. There are many reasons for this, including the intensity, speed and escalation of the assault.

Another is the weakness of the left in the labour movement, which puts the need to build our Party on the agenda. The Cold War attack on the left and the socialist states also ushered in the dominance of right wing social democracy as the main ideology of the trade union leadership, with some sizable elements of open bourgeois support. This has definitely hampered attempts by organized workers to develop extra-parliamentary political struggles to resist plant closures and economic attacks as militantly as the French or the Greek workers.

But workers have not been passive in the face of the attack. There has been notable resistance by public workers and educators in Atlantic Canada. The anger of GM workers who closed down the GM Head Office in



USW miners are mounting a valiant struggle against concessions demanded by Vale Inco

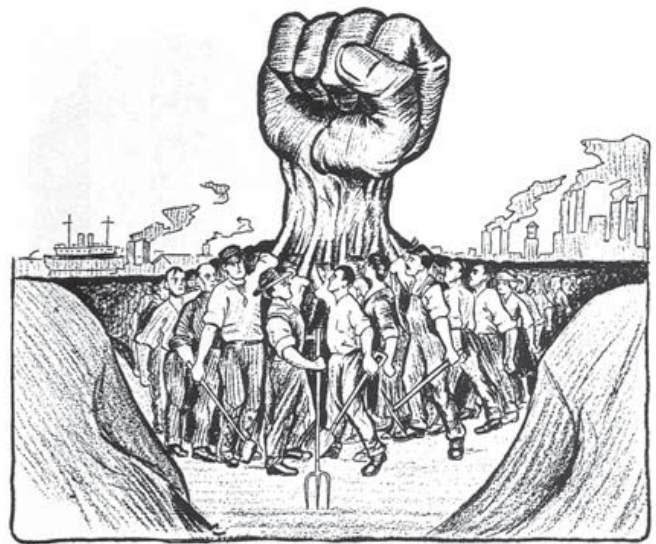
Oshawa showed their ability to mobilize. The CUPE workers who took on the City Councils in Metro Toronto and Windsor put up a stubborn defence of their benefits and wages. The Steel Car Workers in Hamilton defied lock-out and refused to give in without a fight. The embattled Steelworkers in the US Steel (Stelco) chain have fought innovatively and well for many years; currently the same union is squared off against Vale Inco in Sudbury, Voisey's Bay and Port Colborne. The British Columbia struggles for the last ten years have been difficult and hard fought; the 2004 strike by the Hospital Employees Union almost sparked a general strike, and the next year the BC Teachers defied the Campbell Liberals and the courts to force the government to negotiate. CUPE civic workers in Vancouver held out for months in 2007 against an attempt by the NPA Mayor and Council to gut their contracts; their courageous strike helped defeat the NPA in the 2008 civic election. Currently the paramedics in BC are on strike, but forced to work as an essential service. The BC ferry workers are facing an impending attack and preparing a defence. There are smaller strikes and skirmishes going on across the country. Their struggles are not reported in the corporate media, except in many cases as lost causes or objects of sneering ridicule.

But there is a problem. It could be seen in Oshawa, in Windsor and in the Manufacturing Matters campaign. In each of these cases, Labour managed to mount significant campaigns at the initial stages, but has not found a way to make the second, follow-up step in these struggles. This has allowed the opponents of labour to adopt a policy of containment with predictable results. The Toronto Labour Council was able to assemble 1200 stewards and activists early in 2009 for a fightback conference, but failed to bring this resource to bear in the CUPE strike. The CAW workers in Oshawa mounted a creative struggle shutting down the GM Head Office for several days, but were dismissed by a simple court injunction. CAW workers in Windsor occupied a plant and then settled for a minor portion of the severance owed them. The CAW again mounted an impressive pension demonstration in Ontario that showed their ability to mobilize. The ability of workers to organize is a given – but what next?

These trends are also evident in the trade union movement in Québec, despite its higher level of militancy and working class consciousness. Following the election of Jean Charest in 2003, his Liberal government adopted a series of laws attacking trade union rights. The largest mobilization of the Québec trade union movement since the 1970s came the next year with a national day of disruption by a common front of the unions, including a demonstration of 100,000 on May 1, 2004, in Montreal. This mobilization culminated in a 24-hour political general strike, involving the public and private sectors, and all the major trade union federations. Unfortunately, this

fightback was sabotaged from within. The government seized the occasion to enact a special law imposing poorer working conditions, a 2-year wage freeze, and increases below inflation for the next three years. The law also imposed penalties so excessive that a violating union's very existence could be threatened. Because they failed to truly unite and conduct an independent political response to the Charest government's anti-working class offensive, the trade unions in fact suffered a major defeat.

With the onset of the economic crisis, trade unions in Québec, particularly within the CSN, attempted to mobilize a broad front across Canada to demand



improvements to Employment Insurance, starting on May Day 2009. Unfortunately this important initiative was not picked up by the CLC. More recently, a common front of the Québec unions has been formed for the renewal of collective agreements for public sector workers, which will expire in March 2010. This common front, along with measures to discourage raiding within the Québec labour movement, provides an encouraging outlook for a more unified and militant labour strategy.

The establishment in Québec of a broad coalition of unions of public employees ahead of the renewal of collective agreements that terminate at the end of March 2010 offers a very interesting perspective. Learning from the past, this time labour unions have negotiated a historic non-raiding pact and established a common list of demands. Together they account for nearly half a million workers, or about 12% of the workforce in Québec which will be negotiating in a single block. If we consider the families of these people, these negotiations could have a direct impact on the living standards of nearly 40% of the population of Québec. And yet, in a context of economic crisis, as the leader of the Red Trade Union International, Alexander Lozovsky, would say, it is precisely the workers in public utilities

and services who “*must be at the forefront of the struggle, fighting against the bourgeois tactics of lowering salaries, in order to consolidate the positions gained.*”

Although the mobilization is only starting after a rather long period of lethargy (and of union reorganization in the health sector), and although it is not safe from divisive manoeuvring by the government and possible betrayals by union leaders, this Common Front is the biggest potential for response to attacks by the bourgeoisie to have developed so far in Canada in the context of the economic crisis. This struggle will undoubtedly be difficult because the government intends to maintain a hard line and obtain further concessions by trying to isolate public sector workers, accusing them of being privileged to have a job. But success in this struggle could put the working class on the offensive. This struggle is therefore crucially important for the Communist Party, particularly in Québec. In the words of the 3rd Congress of the Communist International:

“Communist parties can only be developed through struggle. Even the smallest Communist parties should not confine themselves to mere propaganda and agitation. They must be, in all the mass organizations of the proletariat, the vanguard which leads the hesitant, latecoming masses, by formulating for them goals for concrete struggle, by encouraging them to fight for their basic needs...”

The attack from the corporations and their governments will escalate. The corporate drive to force two-tier wages, pensions and benefits on youth is an attempt to split the generations and ultimately destroy labour by cutting off its future. The appointment of a “blue-ribbon” panel to examine the strike history of employees under federal jurisdiction is an ominous signal that the Harper Tories are preparing to gut the collective bargaining rights of these workers, particularly if the Conservatives manage to win a majority in Parliament. The Harper agenda also includes plans to privatize significant parts of the operations of Canada Post. In BC, Québec and other provinces, 2010 will be a year of negotiations for public sector workers. In other words, major working class struggles are on the horizon.

The problem of leadership – or lack thereof – in the fightback against the corporate agenda is not primarily organizational, but rather *ideological* in character. It is absolutely essential to build the left and provide workers with a vision of something larger, of a road that leads somewhere. This could begin with modest accomplishments. A vital first step would be to pressure the CLC to call a special emergency conference of affiliates, provincial federations, the Québec labour centrals and social justice allies to develop a

comprehensive strategy to confront the impact of the current crisis. One of the key issues of such a conference would be labour unity and the cessation of raiding between unions. This must be a prerequisite for an extra-parliamentary fightback program that has a perspective of ultimately creating its own anti-monopoly parliamentary expression – a People’s Coalition led by the working class and its allies.

But to build the fightback and forge such a People’s Coalition, it is also necessary for the left – while fighting always for unity and alliances – to sharpen its criticism of tendencies of compliance within our class, to explain the danger of such tendencies to the workers and demonstrate alternatives. This competition for ideological leadership between the left and right forces is actually an integral part of the fight for unity, the unity of the left and centre.

The People’s Movements in the Struggle for Change

Other broad democratic movements are also in action against the Harper Tories and the corporate agenda, with varying degrees of success. These movements are all key sections of a potential People’s Coalition to steer Canada away from the dangerous right-wing course pursued by the present government.

The political crisis in the country takes place against the backdrop of the imperialist war in Afghanistan, where US/NATO bombings continue to inflict huge casualties on civilians. The occupation forces now admit that their efforts to crush the insurgency have failed. Public opinion across Canada has tilted decisively against the war, and a majority want the troops brought back home before the “exit date” of July 2011. The fraud-ridden August 2009 elections and general corruption within the Karzai puppet regime have further eroded support for the war in Afghanistan. Ending this imperialist occupation is more urgent than ever as the “field of combat” has now extended into Pakistan and may develop into a regional conflict.

But even as Canadian casualties in Afghanistan mount, anti-war forces under the umbrella of the Canadian Peace Alliance have not been able to mobilize large protests in the recent period. There are several reasons for this frustrating situation, not least the huge propaganda blitz by the Harper government, the corporate media, and the Canadian military brass, branding any vocal opposition to the war as “unpatriotic.” While this PR campaign has not increased support for the war, it has made it more difficult for anti-war movements to get larger numbers of Canadians into the streets. Another

factor is the belief by millions of Canadians that their views are simply ignored by the Harper Tories. This view is fuelled by the failure of the parliamentary opposition parties to make more than token gestures against the war. The NDP, which once advocated bringing the troops home immediately, has retreated under right-wing pressure. Jack Layton now speaks about “supporting our courageous troops,” and issues regular statements praising their “sacrifices for our country.” While the NDP remains formally on record against the war, the Layton leadership does nothing to encourage its members to join in building anti-war protests.

In a related development, the Harper Tories are attempting to whip up chauvinist and militarist sentiments by posing as “defenders of Canadian sovereignty” in the Arctic. This is ironic to say the least, given the Tory record as strong advocates of the Security and Prosperity Partnership and other projects to accelerate the process of “deep integration” of Canada with the USA. While the government revives Cold War rhetoric about the “Russian threat,” the only real threat to the sovereignty of Canada and that of the Inuit people is posed by U.S. imperialism. Plans for huge Canadian military spending in the North are a cover for opening up the region for massive exploitation of oil and gas reserves by U.S.-based transnational corporations. Far from protecting the North, the Canadian state’s militarization of the Arctic will only expand hydrocarbon emissions which lead to further global warming and the melting of the Arctic icepack. Canadians should also have legitimate concerns about other imperialist countries grabbing Arctic resources. If not stopped, all these developments could lead to the complete destruction of the Inuit people and their culture. The Communist Party condemns the Harper government’s hypocrisy on this issue and calls instead for policies oriented on international cooperation to protect the Arctic, including a ban on exploitation of sub-surface resources in this region, and an end to all militarization of the Arctic.

Peace actions must be stepped up across the country through the Canadian Peace Alliance and the network of local anti-war coalitions. We also welcome the renewed and expanding presence of the Canadian Peace Congress, with its explicitly anti-imperialist perspective. The anti-war movement is an important part of the broad people’s forces for a fundamental change of policies in Canada, away from militarism, environmental devastation and corporate domination, and in favour of peaceful economic development across the planet.

The Communist Party welcomes the upsurge of militant struggles by Aboriginal peoples in recent years in defence of their inherent national rights, and to demand an end to racism and the appalling living conditions imposed by centuries of colonial domination. The heroic land reclamation in Caledonia by the Six

Nations, the occupation of the Tobique Hydro Dam by the Maliseets in New Brunswick, the Grassy Narrows blockade in north-western Ontario, the resistance against the staging of the 2010 Winter Olympics and other tourism expansion on unceded territories by Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia – all these and many more such struggles prove that far from being crushed, the Aboriginal peoples within the borders of the Canadian state remain a powerful force of resistance against the corporate agenda. We will continue to extend our solidarity to all such struggles and to encourage every effort to build wider unity of all Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal popular movements on the basis of recognition and support of the just struggle to win the inherent national rights of Aboriginal peoples to their tribal sovereignty and historic territories.

The youth and student movement remains another key source of popular opposition to the corporate attack. While the student movement in English-speaking Canada is hindered by splits caused by right-wing forces on a number of campuses, the Canadian Federation of Students and the militant and progressive sections of the student movement in Québec have continued to fight against the rapid escalation of tuition fees across the country. Post-secondary students have been extremely active in anti-war actions, opposition to the apartheid policies of the state of Israel, free speech movements and many other progressive issues. Young workers’ groups aligned with Labour Councils have been prominent in the fight to increase minimum wage rates, the rights of youth in the workplace, and related demands in many areas. Since our 35th Convention, the Young Communist League/Ligue des jeunes communistes has held its refounding convention, and clubs are active in several provinces. The YCL and its magazines *Rebel Youth* and *Jeunesse militante* have become an increasingly visible presence within the wider youth and student movement, helping to build these struggles and to advance the perspective of a socialist future for youth in Canada.

An emerging struggle of growing concern especially in the youth movement is the future ‘throttling’ or ‘traffic shaping’ of the internet, potentially restricting access to certain web pages (and allowing tracking of internet use) being pushed by telecommunications corporations. Our party supports demands for net neutrality and also calls for *fair use* and the abolition of Crown copyright, and immediately making private, non-commercial copying of content legal.

Recent years have seen ongoing resistance against government policies of deregulation, contracting out, “public-private partnerships” and other expressions of the neoliberal attack on the public sector. There have been important struggles around the defence of Medicare and opposition to P3 projects which

undermine public and democratic control of the health care system. These movements have succeeded in preventing many such initiatives and in maintaining strong public support for the principles of Medicare – universality, portability, etc. We note that the Harper Tories have refused to counter the outrageous lies being spread by the U.S. corporate health sector against the Canadian Medicare system; in fact the Tories welcome such attacks, which will help them prepare the next steps in their assault on public health care in Canada.

In several provinces, moves by provincial and municipal governments to privatise key elements of the hydro and water systems have met with vocal opposition. These actions have been closely linked with the wider campaign against the so-called “Security and Prosperity Partnership” which has been undertaken by the Council of Canadians, many trade unions and other groups. The



When it comes to selling out Canadian sovereignty, both Harper and Ignatieff sing from the same song-book

SPP, as our Party has already noted, is backed by corporate bodies such as the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, and is intended to “harmonize” Canadian and Mexican laws and standards to US levels. The campaign against the SPP and similar brazen moves to wipe out the remaining elements of Canadian sovereignty has helped to slow down the Harper government’s drive to privatize the public sector and sell out Canada to transnational capital.

However, the determination of the Tories to accelerate “deep integration” with U.S. imperialism is shown by the new Canada-U.S. procurement (‘Buy American’) agreement, and the impending Canada-European Union trade agreement. The “Buy American” agreement would bind the hands of present and future provincial governments, in return for access to a mere \$4 billion in potential U.S. government contracts. If adopted, this sellout would permanently bind provincial governments to World Trade Organization rules that restrict or even ban policies that encourage local development, such as “buy local” or domestic content rules, or investment

requirements. The WTO’s Government Procurement Agreement (signed by only 40 countries) explicitly forbids governments and agencies from including any condition or undertaking on government contracts. By signing Harper’s deal, the premiers will surrender important economic and social policy tools used by provinces, cities, universities, school boards, social service entities and hospitals.

Meanwhile, secretive negotiations are underway for a Canada-European Union trade agreement, which would give Canadian corporations better access to European markets in exchange for access by European corporations to Canadian services contracts amounting to as much as \$200 billion annually. Such an agreement would put even further pressure on provincial governments to privatize public services such as utilities, transportation, child care, education and public health care. If Canadian and transnational capital succeed in imposing these deals, the result would be yet another critical blow against Canadian sovereignty. Everything possible must be done to mobilize the labour and democratic movements to expose and block these treacherous sellouts.

Debates around the sale of public power utilities by Canadian provincial governments have become more urgent. The Communist Party supports the major struggles now being waged against interprovincial purchases of public utilities in Atlantic Canada, in order to avoid a loss of democratic control of power generation and transmission in the region.

The sell-off of NB Power’s generating stations to Hydro Québec is being actively promoted by corporate interests in Québec and also in New Brunswick – particularly by the Irving family – whose industrial concerns would receive significant cuts in energy rates. But it would actually increase power rates for families and communities in New Brunswick, while accelerating the export of cheap power to the U.S. market, further skewing our energy grid on a North-South axis rather than reorienting in the preferred direction of an East-West power grid for Canada. The CPC strongly opposes the pending sale of NB Power’s generation assets to Hydro Québec, and welcomes and supports the groundswell opposition to this deal.

The struggle against privatization of public power utilities is also gaining momentum in other parts of Canada, such as opposition to the BC Liberal government’s “run of the river” strategy which turns over control of waterways to private corporations. The ability of public utilities to encourage small, experimental or alternative power generation must be maintained by disallowing any purchases that would create exclusive out-of-province or private control of access to provincial power lines.

Women in Canada still face persistent inequality, such as the infamous wage gap of about 30% compared to men with similar qualifications. Violence against women remains a widespread reality and women face higher rates of poverty across Canada, especially Aboriginal and immigrant women. While their participation in the labour force matches that of men, higher numbers of women are engaged in 'self-employment' or in temporary, part-time or other forms of precarious employment. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women, which emerged in the 1970s as the major coalition of equality-seeking groups, became a powerful political force. This led the pro-corporate Chrétien Liberal government of the '90s to slash funding for NAC, a process which continued into the current decade and led to NAC's demise. Similarly, women's programs, coalitions, shelters and other groups have faced drastic funding cuts by all levels of government in recent years, imposing incredible hardships on the women's movement. Following the Harper government's initial attacks on women's programs, the Ad Hoc Coalition for Women's Equality and Human Rights emerged to promote the continued struggle for pay equity, a country-wide child care system, and other critical demands of the women's movement. The Communist Party will continue to support this initiative to rebuild a strong Canada-wide women's movement, which is an essential element of any future People's Coalition alternative to the right-wing agenda.

The Women's International Democratic Federation is the global organization of anti-imperialist women. As in the case of the peace movement, the Communist Party understands the importance of this anti-imperialist women's organization as an important component in building and developing the broader women's movement. Our Party commits to working with the WIDF to develop its presence in Canada, and will work to promote participation of Canadian women in the WIDF Congress in 2011.

As awareness grows of the threat to human existence posed by climate change and global warming, the environmental movement across Canada has played an important role campaigning to reduce reliance on fossil-fuel energy. This objective has become evermore urgent given that the Kyoto targets, which aimed to restrict global temperature to a two degree (Celsius) increase by 2012 (compared to 1990 levels), have already been exceeded. The Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change in December 2009 was a crucial test whether or not such increases (caused mainly by carbon emissions from fossil fuels) can be arrested and reversed. Directed by the giant oil monopolies and a handful of smaller corporations, the Harper government is pushing for even more massive developments of the Alberta tar sands. These corporations must be blocked from further development and closed within five years, with jobs

guaranteed for affected workers in more sustainable industries at equivalent wages.

However, there are sharp differences within the environmental movement around the possibilities for radical shifts under the present capitalist system. The Green Party of Canada, like its counterparts in other countries, considers itself 'above the left-right divide.' In practise, this often means that the policies of the Green Party and some large environmental groups are based on the implicit acceptance of private property relations and attempts to encourage "green capitalism." This factor played a negative role in the May 2009 B.C. election, when some prominent environmentalists backed the Campbell Liberals' plan for privatizing rivers in the name of "green energy" projects with the potential for severe consequences to other aspects of the ecology. The presence of environmental groups with a keen awareness of the dangers of corporate control of resources is urgently needed in the movement to build a powerful People's Coalition in Canada.

A critical part of the environmental crisis relates to the production and use of energy resources, especially in our country. In September 2008, our Party issued a *People's Energy Plan for Canada* which noted that:

"Our world – and our country – are entering a period of grave dangers, an era of potentially devastating climate changes, widespread hunger and chaos, all linked to the unchecked growth of fossil fuel consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and wars to control oil reserves. In response, the Communist Party of Canada proposes far-sighted and radical policy changes, requiring a courageous struggle to take urgent and decisive action... *The most decisive aspect of such a policy – the cornerstone upon all other measures must rest – is the public ownership of energy.* Any meaningful transformation of the energy "system" is impossible without wresting control from the private energy monopolies – both domestic and foreign-based – and returning that ownership and control to Canadians, including the Aboriginal peoples whose lands have been ravaged by Big Oil."

The incoming Central Committee is directed to give wider circulation and publicity to these proposals, and to support all broad campaigns around energy and the preservation of our environment that are consistent with the objectives outlined in this "People's Energy Plan".

Yet another movement which has played a visible role in opposing the right-wing agenda is the struggle to defend the rights of immigrants and undocumented workers in Canada. Groups such as No One Is Illegal have done much to expose the racist corporate drive to exploit such marginalized workers, to deprive them of democratic and civil rights, and to use them as disposable sources of

profit extraction to be deported back to their home countries at the whim of employers and governments. Employees brought in under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, the Live-In Caregiver Program and the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program are denied most of the legal and political rights of Canadians. In a world where corporations and right-wing governments seek to eliminate all barriers to the actions of big capital, it is vital to defend the rights of workers to seek employment and to enjoy equal rights wherever they live, including the right to organize and bargain collectively and to seek citizenship in Canada. The struggle to unite all workers must include principled efforts to fight for the rights of immigrants and undocumented workers and to oppose scapegoating campaigns such as the Harper government's racist attacks against Roma people, Mexicans, and others seeking refugee status in Canada.

Ethnic groups and communities fighting for full equality are also another potential democratic force of the people's coalition, not least as racialized communities are expanding the ranks of the urban working class. The Harper Tories' recent inadequate apology for the Komagata Maru "incident" angered many in the South Asian Canadian communities who continue the battle against racism including anti-Hinduism and anti-Sikhism, as well as Islamophobia. In recent years reactionary forces have particularly tried to whip-up Islamophobia. Chinese-Canadians, the second-largest ethnic group in Canada, recently successfully won an apology and limited redress against the racist Head Tax and Exclusion Act but continue to fight many forms of racism like the attacks on the Asian Anglers. Black Canadians, Afro-Caribbean and African Canadians also face particularly acute racial discrimination by the police and in areas such as housing, employment, and education. Our party, in calling for people's unity for social transformation, opposes national chauvinism and reaffirms its support for anti-oppression policies and programs.

The struggle to defend civil and democratic rights in the post-9/11 political environment has become another key component of the movement to create a genuine alternative to the right-wing agenda. The Communist Party of Canada has played a leading role in the legal and political battle to protect and expand the electoral rights of voters and small political parties, and also works to resist the campaign of "racial profiling" against Muslims, Arabs and other minority groups. We condemn "security certificates" and other measures to remove the legal and civil rights of non-citizens, which also pose a grave danger to the rights of all Canadians. We are outraged by the shocking treatment of Maher Arar, kidnapped and sent to a Syrian jail with the complicity of Canadian security services; Suaad Hagi Muhamad, the Canadian who was blocked from returning home after a trip to Kenya; and Abousfian Abdelrazik, trapped in Sudan for over a year by the government's refusal to issue him a



Canadian passport. Similarly, the government refuses to lift a finger to bring home Canadian child-soldier Omar Khadr, who remains jailed without trial at the U.S. Guantanamo concentration camp for over seven years, in blatant contravention of international law. For the Harper Tories, Canadian passports are virtually worthless pieces of paper, not even accepted as ID to cast a ballot in elections.

Restrictions against free speech have become increasingly common in recent years, with the overt encouragement of the federal government. This applies particularly to movements on university campuses to express solidarity with Palestinians against the apartheid policies of the state of Israel, and the preparations for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver-Whistler. The struggle to defend free speech and all civil and democratic rights for all who live in Canada is a necessary element of the wider movement to protect the interests of working people.

The hostility of the Harper Tories towards hard-won social equality gains is increasingly evident in their bigoted treatment of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) communities, and the "trial balloons" by backbench MPs aimed at testing the waters for legislation to undermine women's reproductive rights. The struggles to defend and expand LGBT equality and women's rights are integral to the broader movement to build a united opposition against the Tory agenda.

In western Canada, the Tory push to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board by attempting to eliminate single-desk sales of wheat and barley is further clear evidence of the Harper government's role as the agent of transnational capital, in this case the big grain monopolies. Tory agriculture ministers have repeatedly trampled on the legal and democratic rights of family farm grain producers who are another important component of the class forces which must unite to build

a People's Coalition. Corporations are continuing to bankrupt smaller farmers, intensifying the trend to larger, corporate farms which are often integrated with agro-monopolies. The issue is becoming a more urgent political issue for millions of people and the fightback is becoming more important for a people's food policy.

There are other significant developments in the struggle to build a stronger people's movement for such a shift in economic, political and social policies. In Québec, the December 2008 elections to the National Assembly saw a crushing defeat of the far-right *Action Démocratique Party* (ADQ); and the breakthrough election victory of Amir Khadir, the co-leader of *Québec Solidaire*, the broad progressive party which has the support and participation of our Party at the provincial level. The election of Khadir as a member of the National Assembly representing the working class riding of Mercier on the island of Montréal was a significant victory for working people in Québec.

At its last Congress in November 2009, *Québec Solidaire* changed its position on Québec sovereignty by stating that there is no other option for Québec and by making this position its main objective. *Québec Solidaire* (and previously, the *Union des forces progressistes*) has for a long time been under intense pressure from nationalist forces to align itself more clearly in favour of sovereignty and with definitely narrow nationalist positions. These internal and external pressures have increased since the election of Amir Khadir to the National Assembly. For example, there is currently a lively internal debate advanced by the most nationalist of these forces who are accusing the leadership of QS of not demanding a total ban on Islamic headscarves or other religious symbols, in all circumstances, for state employees. On this particular issue, the leadership is resisting and maintaining a correct and democratic position.

The alliance that the PCQ had made with the *Regroupement pour une Alternative Progressiste* (RAP) and the *Parti de la Démocratie Socialiste* (PDS) to establish the UFP in June 2002, advanced an electoral platform of reforms based on the demands of unions and popular movements. To enable this alliance the PCQ had agreed to accept the sovereigntist position of the majority, while retaining the right to preserve its own views on the national question, on condition that the sovereignty project truly serve the project of social emancipation which should remain the priority.

The founding Congress of the UFP adopted a proposal from the PCQ which, while acknowledging the existence of a diversity of views among its members about the national question in Québec, stated clearly that for the UFP, “... independence is not a goal in itself for those who are promoting it, but a means for achieving our vision of society. Popular sovereignty will be carried out through the creation of the Constituent Assembly ...”. The fusion

of the UFP with *Option Citoyenne* to establish *Québec Solidaire* did not change this approach which was renewed at the outset.

However, the position of the PCQ in the UFP and subsequently in QS was weakened by the split of 2005 with the Parizeau group. Officially recognized by the Chief Electoral Officer as the legal owner of our name, this group, now narrow-nationalist in character, has manoeuvred to get itself recognized officially also in QS and to try to isolate us.

Already at its 15th Congress in 2007, the PCQ noted in its political report that “*The struggles that we have led within the UFP will be continued in Québec Solidaire, which will inevitably be traversed by struggles regarding the desire to make electoral gains quickly, the search for credibility, and the tendency to give precedence to Québec sovereignty rather than socialism or even the tendency to make the sovereignty of Québec the cornerstone of all social progress, all of which entails considerable risks of skidding to the right. In fact it may take us back to a “PQ” of the early 70s ...*”

The creation of the UFP and QS was the culmination of a process aimed at unifying the left precisely beyond their differences over the national question. However, the position adopted by QS in the last Congress on the contrary calls into question the bases of the unity of the left and is an attempt to rally the nationalist forces.

We cannot however consider, at least for the moment, that QS has finally turned right. Beyond the fact that there is still resistance to the most nationalistic pressures, QS continues to carry in its program a large part of popular and union demands. QS is progressing steadily in surveys of voter intentions. The creation of QS represented significant progress for the working class. The PCQ believes that we must not lower our flag and retire, but continue to lead the fight against narrow nationalist positions and defend our position inside QS, and publicly, in a way that is friendly and non-sectarian, but decisive and clear.

Another victory was the improved showing in Vancouver's November 2008 civic elections by COPE. After overcoming divisions which had threatened its unity, this labour-left civic reform coalition party is now marking its 40th anniversary. During these four decades, COPE has elected many activists and leaders of grassroots movements, including a number of Communists to City Council and School Board. The examples of *Québec Solidaire* and COPE show that even during periods when the struggle against corporate domination has had only a muted parliamentary echo, significant electoral advances can be achieved through consistent tactics and strategies designed to build genuine unity around working class policies.

A Comprehensive Action Plan to Defend People, not Profits

All of these struggles need to be addressed in the context of the overarching economic crisis which is driving the right-wing attack. What is required today is a comprehensive action plan – an economic and political solution which serves the interests of people, not profits – including the following:

- protections for Canadian working people through the immediate introduction of plant closure legislation to stop the exodus of manufacturing jobs;
- emergency measures to protect secondary industries, along with iron-clad guarantees preventing layoffs, job cuts, wage or pension reductions, and requiring corporations to reinvest in the domestic economy;
- the expansion of EI to cover all workers for the full duration of unemployment (including the elimination of the waiting period), with benefits at 90% of former earnings;
- a moratorium on evictions and mortgage foreclosures and utility cut-offs due to unemployment;
- an immediate increase in the minimum wage to \$16/hour, along with legislation to protect and improve wages, benefits and pensions for all workers, to help raise incomes and stimulate domestic consumption;
- emergency action to support Aboriginal-led delivery of effective economic and social interventions in Aboriginal communities and in urban areas;
- a massive public investment program to construct affordable social housing, to rebuild Canada's decaying infrastructure, in environmental protection and conservation, and in job creation programs for youth and the arts;
- sweeping progressive tax reform based on ability to pay, the revocation of all corporate tax breaks, write-offs and deferrals at every level, abolition of sales taxes, and the introduction of wealth and inheritance taxes – measures that will shift the tax burden from working people onto the corporations and the wealthy;
- emergency steps to protect and extend our public healthcare, education and other social programs, including the establishment of a public system of universal, quality, affordable childcare with Canada-wide standards; and
- Canada's immediate withdrawal from the disastrous war of occupation in Afghanistan, and a 50% cut in military spending.

The security and effectiveness of these anti-crisis actions requires more transformative measures to safeguard the jobs, incomes and services for the Canadian people, including (amongst others):

- The nationalization of the auto and steel industries in Canada;
- Public ownership under democratic control of the big banks, insurance and other financial institutions in Canada;
- the nationalization of the energy industry to guarantee domestic supply and to provide the material basis for the economic rebuilding of Canadian industry and the creation of hundreds of thousands of jobs, especially in projects such as renewable energy, mass transit, and the mass production of a more fuel-efficient Canadian car;
- Canada's immediate withdrawal from NAFTA, a halt to the "Security and Prosperity Partnership" (SPP) negotiations, and the adoption of a much more diversified, multilateral trade policy based on mutual benefit; and
- the introduction of a liveable, guaranteed annual income (GAI) for every individual, as well as a shorter work week with no loss in take-home pay.

We are not surprised, given the class interests represented by the Harper government and the Ignatieff Liberals, that such policies have not been considered by Parliament. Yet this is precisely the kind of far-reaching set of demands around which the organized labour movement and its allies in the broad people's movements – Aboriginal peoples, youth and students, women, farmers, seniors and all those democratic forces engaged in the struggle for peace, for the preservation of the environment, and for equity rights – need to unite and fight at this crucial time.

Only united action on a mass scale, drawing millions of working people into struggle, can breathe real life into such a comprehensive anti-crisis plan. That is why we have urged the leadership of the labour movement – the Canadian Labour Congress, the labour centrals in Québec, and all of their key affiliates – to come together along with its allies in the social movements in an emergency conference to articulate such a unified program of demands, a fightback strategy based on escalating mass action, and with committed resources to see it through.

85. Such a perspective could help to bring together a broad People's Coalition which our Party has long advocated. Such a Coalition would of course emerge largely from the united grassroots struggles in communities across the country, fighting in the workplaces and on the streets to defend the people's vital interests. As it matures, a People's Coalition would become Canada-wide in character, moving the mass struggle onto the offensive, eventually taking on an electoral expression. This is the kind of Coalition required by our class and our country at this time of profound

economic and political crisis, and our Party will work tirelessly to help forge such a new alternative.

At the same time, we are keenly aware that another federal election may soon be underway. The working class cannot be indifferent to the outcome of this election, whether it takes place this fall or later. As in the 2008 election, the Communist Party will call for the defeat of the Harper Tories – the most deadly expression of the corporate domination of Canada – and to block the right, by also denying a majority to the pro-corporate, pro-war Liberals under Ignatieff, whose differences with the Tories are primarily over the pace and scale of imposing the continentalist and corporate agenda.

We are deeply concerned over the increasingly evident rightward shift by the NDP leadership in the recent period. As noted above, Jack Layton has retreated a long distance from his party's earlier stand of calling for a swift end to Canada's military mission in Afghanistan. In the area of the economy, while the NDP supports certain reform measures to reduce the impact of the crisis on working people, Layton has also yielded considerably to big business pressures. We recall his comments last January to a luncheon sponsored by one of the foremost bodies of monopolists, bankers and financiers in this country, the Toronto Board of Trade: "It's that courage of the Canadian people which makes our country strong. Let's match that quiet courage with smart investments for the future... It's that kind of courage workers will need to take a pay cut so your friends at the plant can keep their job."

At the August 2009 federal NDP convention in Halifax, much of the media attention was on resolutions which proposed a name change for the party, dropping the word "New". These resolutions and other 'controversial' matters were shuffled off the agenda, while leading spokespersons vigorously denied that the NDP would support 'old ideas' such as public ownership of the banks or the energy industry.

These shifts in NDP policy reflect a strong tendency at the leadership level to accommodate to the demands of big business. It would be wrong to conclude, as some have, that there is no longer any difference between the NDP and the big business parties. But under Layton's leadership, that difference has narrowed – much to the dismay and opposition of many progressive NDPers with whom we work in the labour and people's movements, in coalitions, etc. – to the detriment of a powerful and united working class response to the corporate attack. Instead of gaining votes and seats, the NDP may well lose support from working people who see less reason to go to the polls to support a party lacking a clear-cut progressive alternative platform.

There has been some shift in the Green Party's earlier more pro-business stance, but the party is still far from identifying itself with the interests of Canada's working class majority. While the Greens take some positive

positions on matters of peace, democracy and civil liberties, they remain wedded to the incorrect view that environmental change can be won primarily through measures to encourage "green capitalism".

In this situation, the Communist Party of Canada will once again enter the next federal election by nominating about 20-25 candidates in selected ridings across the country. The Communist campaign will strive to win votes and support for the immediate measures in our platform, and to strengthen the ability of the working class to mount a longer-term fight for a People's Coalition to turn this country in a progressive direction, and ultimately for socialism.

There is no contradiction between advocating a powerful and united mass movement to tackle the immediate problems facing the working class, and the Communist Party's goal of a socialist Canada. In fact, a larger and stronger Communist Party would help to overcome the passivity and retreat which today characterize the top leadership of the CLC and the right-wing leadership of the NDP. The public and electoral campaigns of the Communist Party are a necessary part of the political and ideological struggle which is needed to raise the need for a united mass fightback, and for the kind of People's Coalition which is so desperately needed to overcome the political crisis in Canada today.

Building the Communist Party: the Decisive Question

As the corporate assault on workers' rights and living standards intensifies, so does the ideological assault. The massive transfer of wealth from the working class to the largest corporations, mass permanent unemployment and the relative and absolute impoverishment of millions, have to be justified by affixing blame onto the working class, and organized labour in the first place.

As \$20 billion was handed over to the big five Canadian banks, \$14 billion to the auto companies in Canada, and billions more in stimulus funds to corporations across the board, an unprecedented attack campaign on the "greed" of Canadian autoworkers was unleashed by the combined might of the auto companies in Canada and the US, the Ontario, federal and US governments, and the collective clamour of North American capital and media. Their demand was to strip billions of dollars from the deferred wages, benefits and pensions of the strongest and best organized section of workers in the Canadian labour movement, to strike terror into the labour movement, and to recruit the unemployed, the unorganized, and the dispossessed to join in the attack.

It happened in just a few weeks last winter, and it set the pattern and the pace for the attack on both private and

public sector workers across the country and the continent. More is coming.

Throughout this last twelve months, the Communist Party has been campaigning to expose the great danger from the right that the media, corporations and state apparatus are doing everything possible to cover up. There is no recovery on the way that will benefit or include the working class, women, youth, labour, the unemployed, and the poor. In fact, it is corporate profits that will recover, on the backs of the workers who create that wealth. Recovery for the workers, on the other hand, is directly tied to the development of a mass militant and united struggle to curb the power of the corporations, bringing the people into the streets, and building class political consciousness to ultimately challenge the system itself.

This is the message that our two newspapers (and *Rebel Youth* magazine), the tour by Comrade Miguel Figueroa across Canada, and the distribution of 50,000 leaflets at demonstrations, plant gates, picket lines, Labour Councils, and union meetings this past spring have delivered. We have issued a call to action to the CLC to convene an emergency summit of the labour and democratic movements across Canada, to develop a plan of action and a counter offensive that can lead the people back into the streets in escalating strikes and demonstrations to bring down the Harper government.

It is these ideas, policies, program, and strategy that make the Communist Party much bigger than the sum of its still far too small membership.

Our policies and strategy have the potential to bring down governments, and change the direction of Canada. When these liberating ideas and demands are taken up by the masses of the people, they become a material force for change. This is why the ruling class and the state loathe socialist ideas, and will do everything possible to blunt the growth of the left forces, and especially the Communist Party. It is our revolutionary essence, and our objective potential to grow in size and influence as the systemic crisis of capitalism deepens, that makes the Communist Party a potent threat to the capitalist system and a consistent force in the struggle for fundamental change and for socialism in Canada.

The task of the Communist Party is to help fuse these revolutionary ideas with the working class movement, to help the working class understand its immediate tasks as well as its historic leading role in the struggle against imperialism, war and reaction. Armed with scientific theory, the working class is freed to struggle politically, to fight with vision and clarity on the economic, political and ideological fronts. *'Theory without practice is sterile', said Lenin, 'and practice without theory is blind.'*

Providing working people with a real and full analysis of what is taking place, of what can be done, of what is being done by working people struggling across the country and in other parts of the world, as we work hard to do in the pages of *People's Voice* and *Clarté*, in *Spark!*, and in the many leaflets and flyers we publish, strips away the corporate arguments and gives workers and their organizations the means to fight more effectively.

This is the battle of ideas, and it is an arena in which the Communist Party can contribute more and better and in the period ahead. More articles and materials on the urgent issues before us, more frequent publication, and much broader distribution and circulation can strengthen the left and progressive forces and provide ammunition to workers struggling with vicious corporations and reactionary governments. The urgency of the situation is obvious.

A bigger, stronger Communist Party

To become larger, more effective, and more influential in the working class movement, among youth, and among women – this is the most urgent and decisive task. All efforts in the next three years must be directed to accomplish this objective. A stronger Communist Party will mean a stronger, more effective labour movement, a stronger and more united left, and a stronger, more effective fightback.

Party clubs and committees across the country must take stock, and take whatever measures are necessary to strengthen their Leninist core, and their links with the working class and peoples movements. Every club and committee should have an organizer, education director, press director, and plan of work. Every club should be connected with the main organizations in its area of responsibility, including the labour councils and local affiliates, peace organizations, youth and women's organizations, and the fightback movements and coalitions in each area. Clubs should take the initiative wherever possible in the struggles developing in their areas, giving particular attention to strikes, picket-lines, workplaces, struggles of

**Working people
didn't cause
this crisis...**

**and we
won't pay
for it!**

**Unite and fight to
defend our jobs,
services and rights!**

the unemployed and unorganized, and struggles involving youth.

The Central Committee, National Committee in Québec, and Provincial Committees should provide leaflets and materials needed by the clubs to campaign and help make the clubs and the Party more visible and influential in each area. Cadres must be developed at the club, central and provincial levels to provide leadership to the Party, and within the mass movements. Educational work must be regularized and become a much more integrated part of club and Party life. The development of new members needs special attention.

The national question is intensifying as an important issue because of the national oppression of Aboriginal people and the potential of Québec independence, requiring our Party to continue to deepen its study and political work in these areas.

Leninist organizational principles of collective leadership, assignment and check-up, criticism and self-criticism, must be more vigorously applied at every level, starting with the Central Committee, to make our work most effective and productive. We need to raise the élan of the Party, and to do it by getting better results.

In driving the agenda of the Communist Party forward, the role of the Central Committee is the political heart and brain of the party apparatus centrally, just as the club is the heart and brain of the party operation locally. Electing a vigorous, powerful CC is a vital task of our convention. The Convention instructs the CC to address the revitalization of three aspects of its work. First, the CC has to identify and solve the obstacles to the efficient operation of our commissions, especially the trade union commission, the central education commission and the women's commission. Secondly, the CC should clarify the character and forms that report-back/check up and criticism/self-criticism should take today and the role of party activists and cadre. Thirdly, the CC needs to identify where the party must go in terms of raising the standards of our work. It is essential for the CC members to actively reinforce the CC's role, empowering the Provincial Committees and the Québec National Committee to initiate the kind of united momentum that is necessary to expand the party.

In April 2009, the Central Committee sent Comrade Sam Hammond to work in BC to help turn the situation around there. In a short period of time, good results began to be achieved, and the CEC and Central Committee asked Sam to make himself available to continue working in BC for another two years. Since then, comrade Sam has been elected as the new party leader in British Columbia. We hope this will help the BC Committee and the members in British Columbia to strengthen Party work on the West Coast. Comrade George Gidora is stepping

down after having served as BC leader for 15 years, and the entire Party extends thanks and appreciation to him for the work that he did during this time and for his continuing contributions in whatever ways he is most able.

Across the country there needs to be more assistance from the Centre to help Party committees, on the prairies and in the Atlantic in the first place and in Ontario and Québec as well. The incoming Central Committee needs to work more closely with these committees to determine what is the best way that help can be given and work improved.

While membership has not registered significant net growth since the last convention, the composition of the Party has continued to change, with a younger membership overall, and many new members from South Asian, Latino, and Middle Eastern and other new immigrant communities. We need to give more thought about how to work with the labour and mass organizations in these communities, and at the same time identifying the most progressive and politically active individuals to recruit to the Party. It is becoming increasingly important that we translate and publish some of our materials in a number of languages in addition to French and English, both during election campaigns and in our extra-parliamentary activity.

Canada's high internet use is reflected in our own membership, friends and allies. The Party's many websites – *People's Voice*, the *Spark!*, *Clarté*, the PCQ site and the main Party site – have become a crucial point of connection with these militants and new recruits. After several years of neglect, some progress was being made in this area on the eve of the convention. Our convention instructs the incoming Central Committee to grasp the significance of this area and support and guide the continued improvement of this work.

In Ontario, the Party has built two new clubs and re-established another since the last convention. These are the Shafik Handal Tri-City Club in Guelph-Kitchener, the N'kosi Club in Windsor, and re-establishment of the Eric Blair Club in St. Catharines. These clubs are comprised mainly of younger people, and are located in industrial cities where the Party was influential in the past. These new clubs have fielded candidates in the last three federal and/or provincial elections, the Shafik Handal club providing three candidates in Guelph and Kitchener last year, enabling us to put forward our policies and ideas in important centres where we have not run candidates for many years. In Guelph, the Party club includes leading members of a thriving YCL club, and both the Party and YCL have a strong profile on the University of Guelph campus.

There is also a new club in Calgary, the Punjabi People's

Club, which is comprised of comrades active in the South Asian community.

Since the last Convention, the Communist Party in Manitoba has taken several initiatives to help build movements against the right-wing attack and pro-corporate governments at the federal, provincial and civic levels. This work has included the leading role of Communists in the annual “Four Directions Walk Against Poverty,” in the struggles to defend Winnipeg’s public water utility, and important demonstrations by the “Real Majority Agenda Coalition” against Stephen Harper and the federal Tories. The Penner-Bethune Club’s recent protest against Harper’s Middle East policy received wide attention. Two Manitoba women comrades have received awards for their work around women’s and human rights, and YCL members have been elected to student government positions.

In BC, the Upper Fraser Club was established almost 2 years ago, and is very active in the South Asian community there. In Trail, a new club has been established as a result of the very lively and effective provincial election campaign last spring by Comrade Zack Crispin, our candidate there – the first Communist campaign in Trail for almost 50 years. The Party and YCL have new friends and contacts as a result of this effort.

During the last three years, the PCQ has continued its recovery from the major internal crisis in 2005 and has

been active on a number of fronts. It has been involved in several campaigns, presenting candidates for the Party in federal elections and for *Québec Solidaire* at the provincial level. The YCL has also expanded its membership and activity in Québec. Despite these advances, the lack of cadres and the dispersion of comrades’ efforts in too many responsibilities have resulted in difficulties, especially at the Club level. The recent PCQ Congress agreed to take steps to rectify these problems, to strengthen its leading bodies, and to re-open a functioning party office in Montréal.

The new members who have joined across Canada since the last convention are very welcome and most are active in the Clubs where they have joined. Many are interested in the Party’s educational and theoretical work, yet with the exception of BC which has a summer school every year “rain or shine”, schools have not been sufficiently regularized across the country.

Schools for new members, club educationals, provincial schools, the Central Committee’s recently launched central summer school – all these are crucial for building strong and theoretically-grounded Communists. They are also important in bringing our members, friends and supporters together to discuss Marxist ideas and problems as they relate to today’s conditions, and to assess our practice.

Yet the rate of recruitment overall is still too low in relation to the potential for Party growth which

exists today. Response time to new enquiries and membership applications is still too long, and more work must be done to improve this process, both at the central and provincial levels and in terms of follow-up by local Party clubs.

As well, more attention must be paid in the clubs to recruiting in mass organizations and in the workplaces where our clubs and members are active. This is where the bulk of new members should be coming from, and where we need to put more emphasis and resources.

Our Press: Organizing, Educating, Agitating

The Communist press – *People’s Voice* and *Clarté* – is the main vehicle with which we reach out to ‘organize, educate and agitate’ working people in the sharp struggles around us. It comes as no surprise therefore that a significant portion of our energy, resources and new fundraising is directed to maintaining these publications. This commitment is necessary and appropriate today and into the future.

Our readership base allows us to speak with our supporters and sympathizers on a regular basis on all the main subjects of the day. This is consistent and on-going agitational and ideological work that we need to build on to keep up an active dialogue with our friends, while also maintaining our press financially.

People's Voice

21 issues per year
\$30 / yr.; Low income - \$15 / yr.
706 Clark Dr.
Vancouver, B.C. V5L 3J1
pvoice@telus.net

Clarté

20 \$ pour 8 numeros
Faites votre chèque au nom de:
People's Voice,
5359 Ave Du Parc, Suite "C",
Montréal, QC H2V 4G9
pcq@cpc-pcc.ca

REBEL YOUTH

\$10 / 4 issues
Young Communist League
290A Danforth Ave.,
Toronto, Ont. M4K 1N6
ycl_ljc@ycl-ljc.ca

Distributions are also important, since that is an important way of reaching new contacts who are not yet subscribers. Regular distributions at Labour Councils, trade union meetings, at demonstrations and on picket lines (with stories about their strikes and struggles featuring prominently) are an excellent way to reach activists in the labour and democratic movements. Timely personal follow up is the key to building readership of our publications. Sales at local and left and progressive bookstores also help our press to reach out beyond the current readership.

Gains have been made over the past year in circulation, particularly with the special \$2 introductory subscription drive in 2008. These advances must now be consolidated with renewals – the decisive factor in increasing overall circulation. The Party Club is the most important instrument in building our press. Where clubs have press directors, there is good connection between the Party and press work; otherwise, there is a poor connection and the paper suffers.

YCL: Struggle to Learn! Learn to Struggle!

Shortly after our 35th Convention, the Young Communist League of Canada was successfully refounded after a long absence dating back to 1991. From a fledgling start, it is now an established and very active organization from coast to coast in English-speaking Canada and Québec. The YCL has been particularly active on campus and has developed relations with many other youth organizations through its work, and has resumed its international work through membership in the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY). It is publishing *Rebel Youth* on a more regular basis, as well as maintaining its own website, blogs, etc. Congratulations are due to the hard work of all young comrades leading this work, especially Cde. Johan Boyden, the YCL's bold and energetic leader.

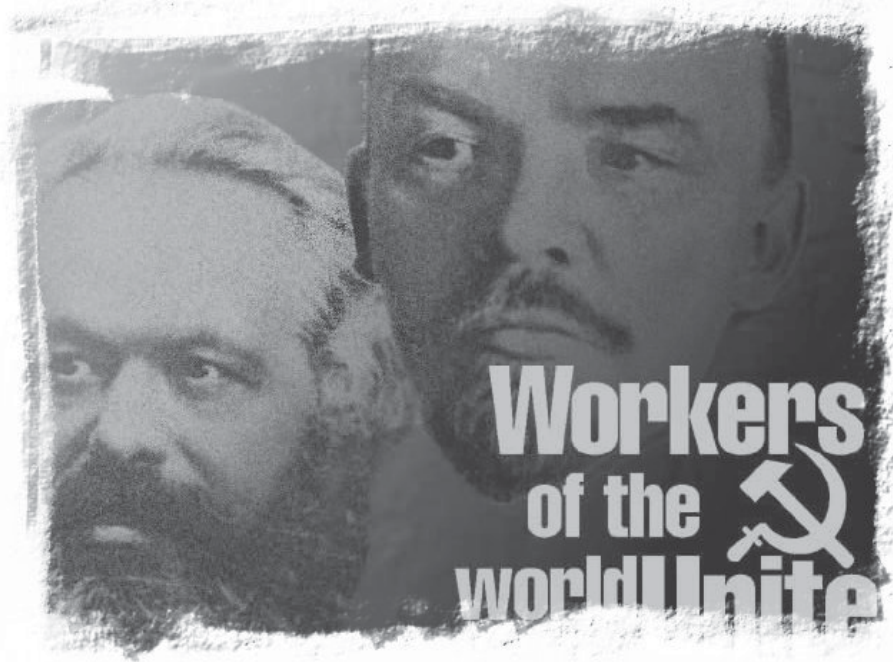
Wherever the YCL and Party work very closely together, this has helped to ensure more effective work for both our organizations, more visibility and broader outreach to

members, supporters and new contacts alike. The Party will continue to support the YCL in every way possible, including assigning young Party members to the YCL and in supporting their initiatives and activities as best we can.

90 Years of Struggle!

2011 will mark the 90th anniversary of the Communist Party of Canada. In every respect, the history of the CPC is the history of the class struggle in Canada. Our roots are sunk in the rich experience of working class struggles throughout the decades. Many of our leaders were also mass and labour leaders of some of the most significant struggles in Canadian history. Our history is closely linked to the fight for universal socialized medicine, for universal public pensions, for unemployment insurance, for trade union rights including the right to strike, for women's rights including reproductive choice, pay and employment equity, for the rights of the Aboriginal peoples and new immigrants, the fight for Canadian sovereignty, democratic and equality rights, and the right to live free of the threat of nuclear annihilation.

We will mark this anniversary not simply to remember the past, but to light up the future. Another world is possible, urgent, and necessary, and Communists today will fight to force open those doors to social progress and socialism with as much determination and commitment as those who came before.



Proposals for Future Party Work

To paraphrase Lenin, ‘once the political line is decided, organization determines everything’

In line with our basic Party Program, the 36th Convention is charged with setting our Party’s political direction over the coming period. The third section of the Main Political Resolution, “Building the Communist Party: the Decisive Question”, focuses primarily on party-building and party organization, and lays out our main priorities in this respect. This report elaborates on some of these priorities and introduces a proposed Plan of Work from now until the 37th Convention.

The Main Political Resolution correctly centres on party-building as our decisive task. The elaboration of our political line – a scientifically-based, militant path for the working class to confront capitalism and to win socialism – is of course key to moving our Party forward, but it is not, in and of itself, a *sufficient* condition for advance. Even the very best program or ‘line’, if not combined with appropriate tactics and organization, and the necessary resources to see it through, will remain as dormant as an unplanted seedling. That is why building the Party, the press and the YCL is so decisive, especially at this crucial moment in the class struggle.

Furthermore, party-building is not simply a matter of improving our recruitment efforts, as important as that question must be for us. In order to break out of our ‘smallness’ and reach the necessary critical mass which will allow our Party to significantly extend its influence and impact on the political landscape in our country, *we need to examine all*

aspects of our activity: our visibility and public profile, our ideological and educational work, and our internal organization and discipline, based on improving Leninist norms within our Party – democratic centralism, criticism and self-criticism, individual responsibility and collective guidance and leadership.

I. Party Visibility and Profile

Since our last Central Convention in 2007, our Party has issued almost 60 public statements on a broad spectrum of issues – government policy, labour issues and struggles, social and democratic questions, and peace and foreign policy matters. And this figure does not include the dozens upon dozens of statements and releases issued by provincial committees, nor the countless articles and columns in our press which also reflect the political perspective of our Party. Most of these statements have also been posted on our websites, and issued in leaflets and flyers for public distribution at rallies and protests, on picket lines, and in working class neighbourhoods.

There has been a vast improvement in our work in this respect, and has added to our public visibility quite significantly. However we must improve both the frequency and the reach of Party information and propaganda. Given our current resources, the three main methods for popularizing the positions of our Party are: (1) through our press; (2)

via our website and related media: and (3) through mass campaigning, distributions and personal contacts.

A. Press work – the party press is and must remain our primary means of reaching working people. In this respect, there has been some important improvement in press circulation since our last Convention, particularly with respect to our English-language press which has scored an increase of some 40% since 2007. There is also some improvement in mass distributions of our newspapers. However, overall circulation remains far too small, and efforts to improve our retention rate and expand circulation among new readers must become one of our main priorities. In particular, we must ensure that all Clubs have a Press Director, and that updated subscription lists are provided to all Clubs on a regular basis, along with other press-building materials, to facilitate this work.

We acknowledge that with every passing year, more and more working people turn to the Internet to access news and analysis on political events and developments. But despite this phenomenon, we are convinced that it is both *possible* and *necessary* to fight to increase paid subscriptions to our print editions. Much of this effort will be undertaken centrally, but these efforts – especially with renewals and ongoing contact with our readers – must also be undertaken locally by Party Clubs, members, and our press supporters.

Based on the above, we therefore propose that we *establish a target of increasing overall paid circulation of our press by 50% from now up until our next (37th) Convention*. This is an ambitious but fully realizable goal if we work methodically at this task in every centre and locality.

Another side of our work in this field relates to our efforts to increase exposure via the mass press and media. While anti-communism and efforts to marginalize and dismiss our Party continue to prevail, especially in the monopoly-controlled media, there are still many opportunities for our Party to gain exposure.

Proposals:

1. *that we set a firm target of increasing the net (paid) circulation of our press by 50% from now up until our next Convention; and*
2. *that we convene a Media Outreach collective to advise and help to develop improved strategies to access both the mainstream press/media, and also specialized (ethnic, youth and student, etc.), local, neighbourhood and alternative media across the country.*

B. Website and Internet-based Communications –

due to the expansion of Internet use by youth and working people generally across Canada, this means of communications is rapidly increasing in importance, and our Party is not yet taking sufficient advantage of its capacities to reach and influence people, and draw the most advanced closer to and into our Party. The maintenance and updating of our central website has been inadequate and the site is sorely in need of sweeping design improvements. Nor are we making sufficient use of other avenues to reach people through blogs, social networking sites, Youtube, etc.

A special committee of experienced comrades has recently been

convened to redesign our main website. This is a welcome development, and we urge that this task be completed as soon as possible, using the most advanced technologies available, and with expanded content.

Proposals:

3. *that the redesign of the main Party website be completed immediately, and that the incoming Central Committee allocate sufficient funds & resources so that the necessary improvements as developed by the Internet Commission can be implemented;*
4. *that we undertake a review of all other Party-related websites (provincial, local, press, election, etc.) to ensure better coordination;*
5. *that we expand our use of YouTube (through the production and posting of more videos), and social networking sites (Facebook, Unionbook, MySpace, Twitter, etc.), and targeted blogs under collective Party supervision and control; and*
6. *that the incoming Central Committee & CEC ensure that the Internet Commission, composed of qualified comrades, functions on a regular and disciplined basis.*

C. Mass Campaigning –

Mass campaigning is and must remain a vital aspect of our overall public activity. The main expressions of our public campaigning are (1) election work; and (2) extra-parliamentary campaigning. Since our last Convention, we have organized three major campaigns – the “Drive Out the Harper Tories” campaign in the Spring of 2008, the Federal election Campaign in the Fall of 2008, and the Anti-Crisis campaign in the Spring of 2009 – as well as a number of smaller or provincially-based campaigns.

The next federal election, which could come as early as this year and

certainly by 2011, will be a crucial battleground for the working class and the people’s movements – the Aboriginal peoples and the progressive national forces in Québec, the peace and solidarity forces, the environment, women’s, youth and students, and other people’s movements – to defeat the Harper Conservatives and take our country in a new, progressive direction.

The coming election also provides an excellent opportunity for our Party to project our militant, fundamental alternative to the capitalist crisis and the pro-corporate policies of the ruling class parties, as well as the tepid and increasingly indistinguishable platform of the NDP. Canada has entered a period of great political volatility, and people are listening as they haven’t before, frustrated with same old deceptions and lies of the old-line parties.

We therefore propose our active participation in the coming vote. As the Main Political Resolution notes, we plan to nominate about 20-25 candidates in selected ridings across the country. Campaign planning must proceed immediately following the Convention, including the identification of candidates and key campaign cadres, the updating of our main platform, and the development of core election-related materials, the election website, etc.

At the same time, we must continue to expand our political campaigning on the extra-parliamentary front. The advantage of these campaigns is that they constitute an immediate (or relatively immediate) response to the most burning issues facing our class at any given moment.

The “Drive Out the Harper Tories” and the Anti-Crisis campaigns were significant in this regard, and although we did not achieve all the objectives projected for these campaigns, they were quite

successful overall and involved the vast majority of our Clubs and comrades in one respect or another. The main campaign materials were very well received and the public meetings during the leader's tours were well attended.

We need more follow-up and assessment of our main political campaigns, recognizing the valuable work done and initiatives taken by our comrades 'on the ground', and reporting on how and where our efforts have produced positive results. This in turn will further improve and stimulate participation in future campaigns.

Another important aspect of raising the public profile of our Party relates to the mass work of Party members in the labour and social movements, in various coalitions and united front actions, etc. While avoiding sectarian or dogmatic approaches in our mass work, we must also struggle against the tendency to hide or bury the presence of our Party in the mass activities of the Communists. This requires a skilful effort to overcome any 'divide' or mechanistic separation between our mass and independent party work. The key here is through the strengthening of *collectivity* among party activists engaged in mass and united front work across the country, so that comrades engaged in this work do not feel isolated and can contribute more effectively to the overall struggle in their respective areas of mass work (labour, peace and solidarity, work among youth, Aboriginal peoples, women, seniors, etc.), while also helping to build the Party, press and YCL.

Proposals:

7. *that the incoming Central Committee be instructed to begin immediately to prepare for the coming federal election, and begin planning and preparations as soon as possible;*
8. *that the incoming Central*

Committee be directed to organize at least one major extra-parliamentary campaign each year, the content of which to be determined by the CC, and in consultation with National Committee of the PCQ and provincial committees; and

9. *that concrete steps be taken to improve collectivity among Party members active in specific areas of mass work across the country through the formation of party fractions where possible, and the enhanced use of teleconferencing, regular email contact, etc.*

II. Ideological and Educational Work

Ideological rigour must be the cornerstone of a revolutionary Communist party. The 'battle of ideas' is not an abstraction; it is the cut-and-thrust of the class struggle on a daily basis. The propagation of bourgeois ideas is relentless and pervasive, and does more to disorient and weaken the resistance and fightback of the working class than any piece of legislation or police action. The most powerful antidote to this ideological offensive is the science of Marxism-Leninism and its creative application to current conditions. That is why we must constantly strive to improve and expand our ideological work, both within our own Party ranks, and amongst the working class as a whole.

At our last Convention we resolved to improve our efforts in this critical field, and while some progress has been registered, there remain serious shortcomings. While our press has carried a number of articles dealing with theoretical issues, we have yet to establish a regular feature column to take up theoretical and ideological matters. The *Spark!*, our political and theoretical journal, still comes out far too infrequently, and its

circulation must be expanded. But we should not limit our attention to these ongoing publications alone; we need to publish more extended pamphlets and tracks on specific issues, and ensure their broadest circulation.

In terms of party schools and seminars, these have improved somewhat but these too must be better organized and held on a more regular basis across the country. After many years, we finally managed to organize a well-attended Central Party School in August 2008. We propose to organize this school again in the summer of 2010 and thereafter every other year, alternating with provincial/regional-based schools, so that at least one major school takes place every year. Educational work at all levels, especially for new members, must be improved and regularized wherever possible, ensuring that our educational activities across the country are closely coordinated to avoid scheduling conflicts.

The work of the central Education and Ideology Commission get off to a successful start after the 35th Convention, but its activity has slacked off over the past year. Given the critical importance of our work in this field, the incoming Central Committee is directed to strengthen and regularize the work of this Commission.

More attention in particular should be paid to the development of our *theoretical research work* (and subsequent publishing) in areas of vital concern to our Party and our class. The main focus of this research should be directed to the current and future challenges facing the working class of our country; e.g., deepening crisis of capitalism in Canada around the world, and its offensive against the working class and the people; problems relating to the Canadian state and the struggle for national rights of Aboriginal and Québec nations; and issues relating

to energy, the environment and the struggle to defend Canadian sovereignty; etc.

Given the ongoing and intensifying bourgeois ideological attack on socialism and its efforts to distort and falsify the history of our Communist movement, our theoretical research priorities should also focus on advancing the strongest possible case for socialism as the only alternative to capitalism, and a fighting defence of the history of our Party (especially the history of the inner-party struggle which culminated following the 27th Convention in 1990 – a history which has yet to be fully documented), and that of the Communist movement internationally.

Proposals:

10. *that the theoretical content of our press be improved by the inclusion of regular features and/or columns devoted to theoretical and ideological questions;*
11. *that the new party website include more ideological and educational materials and resources;*
12. *that the Central Party School and provincial/regional-based Party Schools be held on alternating years, so that at least one major school takes place every year;*
13. *that the Spark! be published twice each year, beginning in 2010;*
14. *that the work of the Central Education & Ideology Commission be made a high priority by the incoming Central Committee to undertake and/or coordinate party schools and educational classes at every level of the Party, the publication of educational materials for party use, etc.;*
15. *that the incoming Central Committee be directed to take additional steps improve the Party's theoretical research capacities as outlined above, perhaps through the*

establishment of a special Research teams on specific topics.

III. Internal Party Organization

At its January 2009 meeting, the Central Committee made a review of various aspects, problems and challenges we face with respect to internal party organization, especially at the central level. It noted that although there has been some improvement in the work of leading bodies, there are still a number of shortcomings. One particular problem relates to the infrequency of meetings of the Central Committee – the leading body between Conventions – due to financial constraints. Steps have now been taken to permit the convening of CC plenums through Internet-based teleconferencing. While such meetings are no replacement for full (in-person) plenums, the CC should test out this new possibility, at least for limited use, as one means to help the new Central Committee to gel as a vibrant political collective and to play its full and proper role as the leading collective in our Party. *We must strive for an ever more mobile, outward-looking party leadership at the level of the CC and CEC – one which is more active and visible.*

Another problem relates to the functioning of central Commissions which, with few exceptions, has been sporadic at best. The incoming CC must ensure that the work of all Commissions be improved and that they meet (primarily through our new teleconferencing system) on a regular basis.

Another area requiring greater attention deals with communications between the Centre and other levels of the Party, including the need for more direct contact with Party Clubs and individual members. E-bulletins

should be sent out (or mailed through surface post where appropriate) to all party organizations and members on a regular basis.

In order to improve communications with Party members, as well as with our supporters and others interested in the views of the CPC, steps must be taken to regularly update the central database of the Party, and to share and coordinate contact information with provincial committees and local Party Clubs. While largely technical in nature, this task will help to improve the effectiveness of our political agitation, as well as our recruitment and fundraising efforts.

The incoming Central Committee also needs to take steps to strengthen the work of our basic units – the Party Clubs. The Club must be a dynamic point of political activity for all Party members, and should strive to immerse itself in local class, democratic and other political struggles at the local level. The Party should undertake a thorough review of the work of our Clubs, in close coordination with provincial bodies, and should aim to assist Clubs in improving all aspects of their party work – agitation, education, party-building, etc. – including club reorganization where necessary and the formation of new Party Clubs wherever possible. Such assistance is especially vital in the case of newly-formed Clubs which in most cases regroup new members and therefore lacking in experienced cadres conversant in the proper functioning of Communist collectives.

The incoming Central Committee and CEC must also address the ongoing serious problem relating to the timely and comprehensive translation of party documents, statements, etc. in both official languages. Currently, too much of the burden of this task rests on shoulders of our comrades in the PCQ, and this must be rectified.

Translation is the responsibility of the whole party, and immediate steps must be taken to establish teams of translators from across the country to facilitate this work.

While the recruitment of new members is still being conducted in a sporadic and less-than fully-organized manner, some tangible improvements have been made in the recent period. Our Party is becoming a point of attraction for many activists and politically conscious people, as class, democratic and social struggles intensify under the weight of the deepening crisis of capitalism. We should do everything possible to facilitate their entry, while safeguarding the unity and political integrity of our Party, based on our Program and Constitution.

As a revolutionary, working class party, our recruitment priorities should be directed at bringing the most advanced activists in the labour movement into our ranks, as well as the most militant and class-conscious activists in the Aboriginal, peace, solidarity, women's, youth and other people's movements.

Aboriginal people are joining our Party and we need to examine how to further promote their recruitment into our ranks. This will require deepening the understanding of the national question by all members, and improving the work of Party bodies to strengthen the political presence of the Communist Party among Aboriginal peoples.

Another significant portion of recent recruits are new immigrants to Canada, or from within immigrant communities. We should welcome these new comrades, who often bring prior experience in revolutionary struggles along with many talents and skills, and we should move quickly to integrate them into the life of our Party. We must improve our efforts to reach out to these new communities, increase our activity and visibility in

them, and seek out the most politically advanced and sincere, winning them to our side. The timely translation of party leaflets and statements into other languages will significantly improve our efforts in this respect.

The incoming Central Committee should prepare recruitment-oriented materials for central, provincial and local use, and ensure that all potential recruits who express an interest in joining our ranks – either through the Internet or through other contact – are followed-up in a timely manner.

Last, but certainly not least, we must continue and increase our support to the Young Communist League/Ligue jeunesse Communiste across the country. The YCL has made some important strides since its reformation in 2007. *Rebel Youth* is being published regularly, the Internet is being put to good use to reach politically-active youth and students, and the YCL leadership is speaking out on a good number of youth, social and international issues. The League faces certain difficulties arising from a fairly high rate of membership turnover and a lack of leading cadres, but overall, some good progress is being achieved in different parts of the country.

The Party needs to render all-sided assistance to the further growth and development of our Communist youth organization, whose future is, after all, closely connected to the future growth and development of the Party itself. In addition to providing political advice and guidance to the leadership of the YCL, it should be the responsibility of the Party at every level to actively assist the League, including making timely assignments of younger comrades to work in this field, and to help to build the League in every province and centre where the Party is active. The upcoming 17th World Festival of Youth & Students, expected to take place later in 2010,

will be an invaluable opportunity for the YCL/LJC to extend its influence amongst Canadian youth and to build its ranks, and the Party must give every support to this important project. And we must also continue to provide financial support to our youth organization so that it can maintain and expand its activities.

As the League begins preparations for their upcoming Convention, we have every confidence that the YCL will emerge as an even stronger, more vibrant and militant organization with a bright future.

Proposals:

16. *that the incoming Central Committee conduct its work on a more regular basis, possibly including convening plenums by teleconference in addition to at least two in-person meetings each year;*
17. *that the work of Commissions and Bureaus, as appointed and mandated by the CC, be improved and regularized;*
18. *that communications between the Centre and all Party Clubs, bodies and members be enhanced;*
19. *that the incoming Central Committee, in conjunction with the PCQ and Provincial Committees, undertake a review of Party Clubs, and take steps to increase political, ideological and organizational assistance to all Clubs;*
20. *that the incoming Central Committee establish teams of translators from across the country to facilitate translation work in both French and English;*
21. *that more recruitment-oriented materials be produced and circulated to all party organizations and members, and that there be timely contact and follow-up with all new and potential party recruits;*
22. *that the Party continue and increase its all-sided support to the growth and development of the YCL/LJC.*

Other Convention Highlights

Invited Guests

The 36th Convention was honoured to receive greetings from a number of special invited guests. These presentations included:

■ **Khaled Mouammar**, president of the Canadian Arab Federation, who spoke about the continuing struggle of the Palestinian and Arab peoples for liberation and against occupation and aggression from Zionist Israel, as well as the dangerous assault on democratic expression and right to dissent in Canada under the guise of combating ‘anti-Semitism’;



■ His Excellency **Duc Hung Nguyen**, Ambassador to Canada from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, who delivered a message of greetings from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam;



■ **Roger Keeran** (right), co-author of the outstanding book *Socialism Betrayed*, spoke about “the counterrevolutionary overthrow of socialism, and its lessons and relevance for today”. Co-author **Thomas Kenny** also attended the convention;



■ **Jorge Soberon**, Consul General (in Toronto) of the Republic of Cuba, who conveyed greetings on behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba;

■ **Scarlet Salazar Quiroz**, Vice-Consul of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Toronto, who spoke of the struggle of the Venezuelan people to construct a new socialist society, and of the dangerous activities of its enemies to reverse the leftward course in Latin America;



■ **Barbara Jackman**, prominent civil rights lawyer, who spoke of the increasing assault on the democratic and civil liberties of all residents in Canada, and the need to unite and fight against this offensive as part of the larger struggle for social advance; and



■ **Johan Boyden**, General Secretary of the Young Communist League of Canada/ Ligue de la jeunesse communiste du Canada, who brought militant greetings from the YCL/LJC.



Special Resolutions

Several special resolutions were presented to the Convention. Due to time restraints, these were referred to the incoming Central Committee for adoption and follow-up. The resolutions dealt with a number of important matters, including a call for a People’s Summit to deal with the Crisis and the Fightback; a condemnation of the U.S. military build-up in Colombia and the intensifying attack on democratic and human rights by the Uribe regime; solidarity with the Haitian and Palestinian peoples; demanding a ban on the racist/fascist Aryan Guard; and a resolution dealing with the Vancouver Winter Olympics, among others.

Constitutional Changes

The 36th Convention also debated and adopted several amendments to the Party Constitution. Most of the changes were minor in nature, improving/updating wording and language in the Party rules. One important change regards the party emblem; delegates agreed to formally drop the use of the maple leaf in our logo, while retaining the cog (symbolizing workers) and the wheat sheaf (symbolizing farmers). It was also agreed to continue consideration of our party emblem by the incoming CC and party membership. The full text of the current constitution is available on the party website – www.comunist-party.ca.

Other Convention Highlights

International Greetings

Greetings to our 36th Convention were received from 43 communist and workers' parties around the world. Due to space limitations we are not able to publish these greetings in full but we express our appreciation to all of these sister parties for their support and solidarity, and extend our best wishes to these and all communist & workers' parties, revolutionary and national liberation organizations in our mutual struggle for peace and independence, against imperialism and for socialism.

Algerian Party for Democracy and Socialism
Communist Party of Australia
Communist Party of Belarus

Workers Party of Belgium
Communist Party of Bolivia
Communist Party of Burma
Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Movement (Chile)
Socialist Worker's Party of Croatia
Communist Party of Burma Cuba
AKEL (Cyprus)
Workers' Party of Korea
FMLN (El Salvador)
Communist Party of Finland
Finnish Communist Workers' Party
United Communist Party of Georgia
Communist Party of Greece
People's Progressive Party (Guyana)
Hungarian Communist Workers' Party
Communist Party of India
Communist Party of India (Marxist)
Communist Party of Ireland
Workers' Party of Ireland
Tudeh Party of Iran
Party of the Italian Communists
Jordanian Communist Party
Communist Party of Luxembourg
Communist Party of Malta
Party of Mexican Communists
Palestinian Communist Party
Communist Party of Pakistan
Portuguese Communist Party
Communist Party of the Soviet Union
Communist Party of the Russian Federation
Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain
Galician People's Union-UPG
Sudanese Communist Party
Communist Party of Sweden
Syrian Communist Party
Syrian Communist Party
New Communist Party of the Netherlands
Communist Party of Turkey
Communist Party of the USA
Communist Party of Vietnam

Election of New Leadership

The Convention elected of a new 20-member Central Committee, as well as 11 Alternate CC members. Of these, 14 are active trade unionists, and 35% of the new CC is composed of women comrades. The CC also includes communist activists from the Aboriginal nations, racialized communities across Canada, the Young Communist League, and the LGBT movement.

The Central Committee in turn elected a new Central Executive, which was then overwhelmingly approved by the Convention delegates. It includes Miguel Figueroa (CPC leader); Kimball Cariou (editor of *People's Voice*); Pierre Fontaine (chef du PCQ); Sam Hammond (BC party leader); and Elizabeth Rowley (Ontario party leader).

Vignettes from our convention

