

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Article 13 of the Party Constitution states that “The Constitution of the Communist Party may be amended by decision of a majority of voting delegates present at any regular or special Convention.” The following amendments have been submitted for discussion by the Central Committee, and in the case of the proposed change to the Party Emblem, by the Central Executive Committee.

Submitted by the Central Committee, CPC

1) Article 4, Section One

Fourth sentence, add the words “or her” so that it reads

“Every member has the right to be present whenever decisions are taken regarding his or her activity or conduct....”

Reason: inclusion

2) Article 4, Section Three

Eliminate the words “Ward territory”.

Reason: This structure does not currently exist.

3) Article 5, Structure (a) The Party Club, Section One

First paragraph, last sentence, add the following: “subject to confirmation by the Central Executive Committee”, so that the sentence would read:

“The club shall have the right to choose its own name, subject to confirmation by the Central Executive Committee.”

Reason: This is current practice, and ensures that the names chosen by clubs reflect the program and policies of the Party.

4) Article 5, Section Two

Fourth paragraph, first sentence, eliminate “the ward territory”.

Reason: This structure does not currently exist.

5) Article 5, (c) Provincial Organization, NB: Section Five

Last paragraph: Delete the obligation of a Provincial Committee to “give a duly audited financial statement annually to the clubs”, so that the paragraph would read:

“The Provincial Committee must give a duly audited financial

statement annually to the Central Committee, and a two year audited financial report to the Provincial Convention as indicated in Article 10, Section Three of the Constitution...”

Reason: Party finances are now strictly regulated by Provincial and Federal Election legislation in BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. In these provinces, the Party is required to hire outside auditors to examine both provincial and federal sets of books. Most internal audit committees now examine the books to ensure that money is spent wisely and raised in a timely way, as opposed to auditing for theft or misappropriation.

The amendment would bring the obligations of the Provincial Committees into line with those of the Central Committee, as set out in

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Article 7, Section 7. There are other sections of the Constitution (Article 7, Section 7, Article 10 (Auditing), Sections 1, 3, and 4) that cover financial reports, and ensure that there is reporting, check-up and control at every level.

6) Article 7, Section Four

Amend the fourth sentence to read as follows:

“All resolutions for the Convention must reach the Central Executive no later than eleven (11) days before the opening of the Convention, and such resolutions shall be made available in suitable form to all delegates.”

Reason: This will reduce the number of days from 15 to 11, enabling Nominating Conventions to be held two weekends before the Central Convention and to forward resolutions dealt with by these conventions within the deadlines set by the Constitution.

7) Article 7, Section Six

First paragraph, first sentence, add “a meeting”, so that it reads:

“The Convention shall by secret ballot and majority vote elect a CC and by a subsequent secret ballot and majority vote elected alternate members who shall replace members unable to attend a meeting

Reason: The addition makes clear that alternates do not replace members on a permanent basis, but only for a particular plenary session, unless the member resigns or is removed.

8) Article 7, Section Six

Fifth paragraph, amend to read:

“The Convention shall, by secret ballot and majority vote, elect the parliamentary Leader of the CPC.”

Current: “The Convention shall, by secret ballot and majority vote, elect the Party’s Executive members, including the party leader. The officers, whose number and responsibilities shall be determined by the Convention, shall constitute the Central Executive Committee.”

Reason: These are bits of Hewison era amendments that were somehow retained in the Constitution. This section conflicts with Section Eight, first paragraph, which sets out how the CEC is to be elected (by the Central Committee) and then ratified at a Convention. Section Eight reflects current practice. The proposed amendment satisfies the requirements of the Canada Election Act.

9) Article 7, Section Seven

First paragraph, second sentence, amend to read:

“It is responsible for carrying out convention policies and decisions and for upholding the Constitution.”

Current: “It is responsible for assuring the execution of convention policies and decisions and for enforcing the Constitution.”

Reason: these word changes do not change the intent, but place the Central Committee’s obligations in the positive, rather than the negative.

10) Article 7, Section Seven

Fourth paragraph, amend to read:

“Reports, summaries, decisions and other material adopted at Central Committee meetings shall be published and made available to all Provincial and Regional Committees, to the National Committee of the PCQ, and to the membership for study and discussion.”

Current: “Reports, summaries, decisions and other material adopted at Central Committee meetings shall be made available to all Provincial and Regional Committees, and to the National Committee of the PCQ, and shall appear in some Party publication available to the Party membership for discussion of Party policies.”

Reason: Clarifies the obligation of the Central Executive to make Plenum materials available to the membership in printed form.

11) Article 7, Section Eight

Second Paragraph, first sentence, delete “between sessions of the said Committee” and “to all Party committees and the membership”, so the sentence reads:

“The Central Executive is changed with carrying out the decisions of the Central Committee, and providing prompt and effective leadership.”

Current: The Central Executive is changed with carrying out the decisions of the Central Committee, between sessions of the said Committee and giving prompt and effective leadership.

Reason: Corrects awkward phrasing, and clarifies the CEC's obligation to provide prompt and effective leadership to the Party and to the working class.

12) Article 7, Section Eight

Second paragraph, delete the third sentence and move it to the end of Section 7, amended as follows:

“The Central Committee may establish sub-committees of an advisory character wherever necessary, responsible to it, whose function shall be to assist the Central Committee to implement Convention policies and decisions and assist the Central Committee in developing the Party's work in various fields of activity.”

Current: “The CEC may establish sub-committees of an advisory character wherever necessary, responsible to it, whose function shall be to implement the policies and decisions of the CEC and assist it in the guidance of the work of Party members in various fields of activity.”

Reason: there are no policies independent of the CC and Convention. The CEC's job is to carry through the work of the CC between sessions. Therefore the sentence properly belongs in Section 7 that deals with the work and responsibilities of the CC, not Section 8 that deals with the work and responsibilities of the CEC.

13) Article 7, and Article 9, Section One

Delete the phrase “suspension from

membership for a specified period”

Reason: Too broad, too vague.

Section One specifies the range of disciplinary action that can be taken against a member who is guilty of conduct or action detrimental to the Party and the best interests of the working class - the most serious offences. The disciplinary action noted in Section One is escalating (presumably to indicate seriousness of the offence) and includes:

“censure, removal from all responsible posts, suspension pending investigation, suspension from membership for a specified period, and finally expulsion”

Background: Suspension was introduced in 1991 by Hewison to eliminate the word “expulsion” while maintaining the substance (removal of rights of membership). This was in response to membership outrage at the summary expulsion of 7 members and trusteeship over the Ontario Committee.

The suspension provisions are in fact a kind of quasi-expulsion. They are a way to remove an individual without actually expelling them. Suspension should be reserved for very serious offences.

Suspension pending investigation indicates a timeline, a Constitutionally specified end-time (Article 9, Sections Two, Three, Four and Ten).

“Suspension from membership for a specified period” is pretty vague. Who determines the period? How long can it be? What is the purpose of suspension from membership for a specified period? What happens

during this period? Is it a punishment as well as investigation? Or what else beyond investigation is it? It is too broad and too vague.

14) Article 11, Section 1

First sentence, replace “Convention of the Party” with “Central Convention”, to read:

Initiation fees, dues and convention assessments shall be paid according to rates fixed by the Central Convention.

Reason: Only the Central Convention can amend the Constitution.

15) Article 11, Section 1

Second sentence, amend as follows:

“The income from dues shall be credited to the Provincial Committees, Regions and Clubs of the Party as determined by the Central Convention.”

Current: “The income from dues shall be distributed to the various sub-divisions of the Party as determined by the Convention.”

Reason: Elections Canada rules preclude distributing income to clubs and committees in this way. But credits can be given and direction can be taken from Party clubs and committees.

16) Article 16, Initiation Fee and Schedule of Dues

(1) Second paragraph, delete the words “and a receipt issued”.

Reason: Receipts must be issued for all income items, not only dues.

(2) After the third paragraph, add a new paragraph as follows:

“Club Treasurers shall show that a member’s dues have been paid by stamping the Party card in the square showing the month for which dues have been paid. Payment of the annual Convention Assessment and Initiation shall be shown in the same way.”

Reason: This amendment specifies that paper dues stamps will be replaced by a rubber stamp. The stamp will be issued by the Central Committee to each club Treasurer, and will include a unique CPC Dues/CA/Initiation identifier.

Submitted by the Central Executive Committee

17) Article 2, Party Emblem

Amend by removing the words “on a background of a maple leaf”, to read as follows:

“The emblem of the Party shall be a gear and pinion flanked by ears of wheat, symbolizing the unity of the workers and farmers of our land.”

Reason: The 34th Convention voted to change the Party emblem in deference fo national sentiment in Quebec which regards the maple leaf as a symbol of national oppression.

Central Committee report to the Membership:

At the August 21-22 Plenum, the Central Committee instructed the Central Executive Committee to prepare a proposal for a constitutional amendment concerning the Party Emblem.

The Central Committee also instructed the CEC to bring forward an amendment on Article 9, Sections Five and Nine, concerning Appeals, to clarify a contradictory process.

Finally, the Central Committed noted that Canada Elections Act

requirements have altered the way that some clubs collect Convention Assessments and Dues, putting club practice at odds with the Constitution, Article 7, Section Three, and Article 11, Initiation Fee and Schedule of Dues (Constitution, page 23), paragraph 2. The Central Committee therefore directs Clubs to follow the Constitution, to ensure that dues are paid regularly at Club meetings (Article 3, Sections Two, Five, Six), and that Convention Assessments are collected annually between September 1st and December 31st in accord with Articles 7, Section 3 and Article 11, page 23.

Contributions to the Discussion

Sanctified Capitalism

By Nazir Rizvi, Lower Fraser Club CPC

Capitalism is in crisis. People are losing jobs and homes, and suffering from hunger, especially in the Third World. Climate change is looming to inflict catastrophe. Finance capital has proven itself a fraud when privately-owned financial institutions lost the money and savings of the people.

Leaders of the governments grabbed public money to save private banks and stock exchanges, the deregulated, privatized, globalized market of capitalism. The U.S. and U.K. took the lead and found help in Islamic finance.

This sector of banking called Islamic finance is booming. Several trillion dollars come from oil-rich

Gulf countries yearly to western capitalist and imperialist countries for investment. Islamic finance makes products, gives loans and mortgages under Shariat laws, prohibiting interest and investment in gambling and pornography. Its claim is that stock exchanges, the market economy, and exploitative speculations are not gambling, and paying workers lower than liveable wages for maximum profit is ethically divine.

According to the *Guardian Weekly*, October 9, 2009, “it has become of the fastest growing sectors of the global banking industry, expanding between 15% to 20% a year.” All over Europe, Islamic finance is popular. The U.K. leads in glorifying Islamic finance by introducing it into universities as

an academic subject in the faculty of economics. Practically all universities teach Islamic finances from B.A. to M.B.A., M.Sc. and M.A. level. It has attracted Muslim students globally.

Non-Muslim professors have specialized in this field and Islamic finance institutes have been established in top universities. Thus, the capitalist ethic of highest exploitation has been sanctified. Both secular and Islamic capitalism have merged in the imperialistic venture of war and plunder.

Islamic finance does not teach that U.N Habitat Agency has disclosed that 1 in 6 - one billion people in the world - live in hunger, without water, electricity, sanitation, in squalor, caused by western capitalist imperialism. The majority of these people live in the Third World, including the Islamic world.

Islamic finance is invested in global financial institutions based on the ideology of the market economy for profit, with wealth massing into the hands of fewer people and denying basic human

needs. James Davies, co-author of a study conducted by the Helsinki-based World Institute for Development Economics Research of the U.N., writes “the world distribution of wealth (assets minus debt) is more unequal than the world distribution of income. The study shows that the richest 1% of adults alone owned 40% of global assets and the richest 10% owned 85% of the world total. By contrast, the bottom half of the world adult population owned 1% of global wealth.”

The richest 2% of adults own more than half of the global household wealth, and almost all of them live in North America, Europe, and the richest Asia Pacific countries. This section of the population has concentrated economic, military and political power to control world resources and resist any basic change.

Almost one billion poor people live in the Third World. The imperialist west not only owns wealth and military power, it also occupies many parts of the Third

World. It occupies Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine and parts of Latin America. It keeps Palestine as a prison whose people live like animals. The U.S. has 890 permanent military bases in 130 countries. The U.S., using unimaginable economic means to rape the sovereignty of any country it wants and buy raw materials, energy, advanced technology industries and almost all productive lands with paper money. It uses Israel as an off-shore military base and high-tech centre.

That is why imperialism is being challenged and resisted by the oppressed people in Latin America, the Middle East and parts of Asia and Africa. In this globalized world, workers of the first world have to show their solidarity with the people of the Third World for democracy, social justice and basic change. Only a just world will be able to establish peace and harmony for the survival of humanity. We have all the technical means, only the political will is lacking.

Not Introducing the Dictatorship of the Proletariat?

By Stephen Von Sychowski, and endorsed by Burnaby Club CPC

The capitalist economic crisis has been accompanied by a general offensive against the working class of the world as the capitalist class seeks to make working people pay for the failings of this crisis-ridden, exploitative system. One aspect of this offensive has been an ideological offensive aimed at obscuring the true nature of the crisis and the economic system which brought it on while seeking to stunt

mass working class action. In the face of such an ideological attack, Communists must strive to provide analysis of, and leadership to, the class struggle. In order to do this effectively, we need a clear and accurate view of where we have been, where we are, and where we are going. We need to be united around our revolutionary ideology - Marxism-Leninism.

Unfortunately, capitalism constantly breeds opportunism in the working class movement both from the left and, primarily, from the

right. As our draft Political Resolution states, “...we must note a growing differentiation amongst the parties on certain fundamental questions.” While the document does not lay out the specifics of these important differences, it is well known that these differences are of a primarily right opportunist nature and that they tend to move towards stripping Marxism-Leninism of its revolutionary essence, causing a shift towards reformism.

One aspect of this is opposition to the theory of the dictatorship of

the proletariat, often first identified as changes to language resulting over time in changes to the ideas the language represents. Even our own party's recent pamphlet *Introducing Marxism*, states "...Communists in Canada and elsewhere no longer use the formulation - 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'..." This, of course, was an error since our party programme Canada's Future is Socialism clearly uses the term.

Nobody who can claim to have read any of the Marxist classics at all can deny that Marx, Engels and Lenin wrote about the scientific theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is, after all, one of the major ideological points differentiating revolutionary Marxism-Leninism from both reformism and anarchism. It is also the central issue differentiating Leninism and revisionism.

As Lenin wrote in *State and Revolution* "only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat." As Communists, we fight for socialism - the transition period between capitalism and, our ultimate goal, Communism. And as Communists, we know that this transition period must be the dictatorship of the proletariat; working class state power.

Some would suggest that there is a mass public perception which identifies the word "dictatorship" negatively and that therefore it should be avoided. While this contains an undeniable element of truth, it is also true that there is a mass public perception caused primarily by Cold War propaganda that socialism is a terrible, vicious and totalitarian system - regardless of what we call it. While we have in the past rejected the assertion by

some that we should ditch the name "Communist" as a result, some of our comrades appear readily willing to apply the very same logic to the Marxist-Leninist formulation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In doing so we tread on a slippery slope. We risk our Communist ideology and identity.

Or is the primary issue at hand is not a negative perception of the concept as much as no concept at all? When we talk about what people think of that particular theoretical aspect of Marxism-Leninism we are dealing with a relatively small segment of the people who are the more education (or mis-educated as the case may be). The reality is that most people's knowledge of revolutionary theory is based on anti-communist propaganda and a few tidbits of often questionable historical information. There is rarely any understanding at the theoretical level, making fears of a negative perception of this phrase somewhat superficial.

So perhaps the problem is not people's perception of that theoretical aspect specifically but of the word "dictatorship" generally. This word could accurately describe a wide array of societies ranging from Hitler's Nazi Germany (1933-1945) to Pinochet's Chile (1973-1988) and so on. The more popular use of the term "dictatorship" in mainstream history and non-Marxist political theory is simply the concentration of power in the hands of an individual or small group of individuals and the curtailment of democratic rights and liberties. This definition ignores the class nature of the state which is what we are discussing when we use the term "dictatorship of the proletariat." In other words, as Marxists, we understand that the dictatorship of

the proletariat does not refer to individual dictatorship but the class nature of the state itself.

As Lenin wrote in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* "The term, 'dictatorship of the proletariat', hence not the dictatorship of a single individual, but of a class, ipso facto precludes the possibility that Marx in this connection had in mind a dictatorship in the literal sense of the term."

In fact, Marxist historical analysis would remind us that never in history has there been a "personal dictatorship" without its own class nature. The concentration of power in the state is relative depending on the conditions in the given society but regardless of this objective circumstance or our subjective view of it, the state has a class nature which cannot be removed. There is no state which does not have a class nature and there is no state which is not objectively the dictatorship of a given class. This is a theory which is fundamental to Marxism and a theory which is backed up by the history of every state known to human history.

Therefore, the dictatorship of the proletariat is the most democratic state-based system possible and therefore the most democratic society possible in a class based society as it puts absolute power collectively in the hands of the vast majority of the population (the working class and its allies).

(Due to the length of this submission, the final part will be included in Bulletin #3. Remember that translation into French requires us to limit first-time contributions to a maximum of 1000 words, with a 500-word limit for a second contribution. - Editors)

Projecting a real alternative to imperialism

*By Kimball Cariou, Vancouver
East Club CPC*

Our Draft Resolution gets right to the point, emphasizing that “unprecedented developments are shaking global capitalism to its very core, less than two decades after its so-called ‘final victory’ over socialism... (S)tructural 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.”

Unlike those who only recognized the current crisis when it steamrolled across the planet, our Party warned that such a meltdown was impending. This was not a lucky guess; it was the product of scientific understanding of the capitalist system combined with study of various crisis indicators. We know that capitalism necessarily goes through cyclical crises, and we could see that processes such as the widening gap between rich and poor, and the enormous shift towards speculative capital, were heading towards a major collapse.

And unlike reformist critics of the “excesses” of capitalism, we have consistently stressed (as the Draft notes) “that 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.”

The Draft Resolution presents a powerful argument for radical social

and economic changes to protect the interests of working people. Our public campaign earlier this year to deepen awareness of these issues and to popularize our demands met with a very positive response. More and more people are concluding that capitalism itself is the problem, and that revolutionary socialist change is necessary - even if such change is not on the immediate agenda for Canada. This is a factor in the modest growth of the Party in some areas, particularly among immigrant communities with a strong history of communist militancy.

The present crisis will have its own features and dynamics. We may be entering a period of rebounding profits and stock prices, combined with stubbornly high levels of unemployment. Or, as some economists predict, another serious collapse could shake the entire system once again. In either case, the former confidence of working people in the never-ending growth of capitalism will continue to be severely eroded.

As a small party with limited resources, we need to consider our role in these changed circumstances very carefully. We need to find ways to strengthen our own independent “agitation and propaganda”, reaching out much more widely to people who are drawing revolutionary conclusions. This necessarily includes a direct critique of reformist leaders who seek to ride the leftward shift in popular thinking without advancing radical policies, or engaging in the mass mobilization needed to win such changes.

But our political efforts do not take place in a vacuum or an

antiseptic laboratory. The ideological struggle is conducted in the real world, where millions of people are moved by their collective needs and interests, and influenced by their current understanding of history and economics.

The debate over the historical record of socialism during the past ninety years is an important part of this struggle. Abandoning this field to the anti-communists would only undermine the confidence of working people in our ability to create a new society free from capitalist rule.

But even more critical is the need to present a powerful and compelling argument for such a society to meet today’s challenges. At a time when the ideologues of imperialism weave a complex set of lies about the eternal nature of human greed, the so-called “democratic” nature of capitalism, and the necessity to seize control of natural resources, we need an overarching response, a call for a sustainable, peaceful, democratic, socialist future.

The main argument of the ruling class is that “there is no alternative” to their system of greed and violence. While others tinker with ways to reduce those negative features, our role must be to wipe this false argument off the map.

To the claim that there are insufficient resources to provide jobs, housing, social programs, hospitals and clean drinking water for the world’s population, we must show clearly how these problems demand the redirection of vast sums for military spending and wasteful luxury goods. When Big Oil and their puppet politicians whine that

reducing carbon emissions is “too expensive”, we need to present well-designed, comprehensive proposals for a radical change in transportation systems and other destructive features of the global economy. When the ruling class cries that these policies would hurt the interests of the wealthy, we should be in position to say, “That’s exactly the point.” And when the corporations and their talking heads protest that such ideas are “socialism” and “communism”, we must respond, “yes, to protect our future, we must construct a system based on collective ownership and

democratic decision-making to tackle the urgent crisis facing humanity.”

In other words, we need to elaborate a blueprint for a socialist strategy which will put the working class in power, remove the blight of imperialism from the planet, and quickly address the problems which endanger human survival. Such an approach must incorporate the thousands of immediate skirmishes and battles being waged today against neoliberalism and corporate power, into a vision of a comprehensive People’s Coalition movement with much more

revolutionary aims.

Many others will join in this process, and more as the revolutionary struggle gains momentum in other parts of the world. But the role of the Communist Party in this strategy is the crucial factor; alone in Canada, the Communists advocate the Marxist-Leninist political concepts which can shift the dynamic of the fightback, from defensive and sporadic to united, conscious and directed. Our ability to project a well-rounded socialist alternative to the crisis of capitalism will be decisively important in the period ahead.

Making Contributions to the *Discussion Bulletin*

This Bulletin continues the period of oral and written party-wide discussion leading up to the convening of the 36th Central Convention, which is the highest decision-making body of our Party. All documents and resolutions coming up for consideration at the Convention should receive the widest attention and debate throughout the Party. Discussion and debate involving all Party members, as well as efforts to solicit the views and contributions of our friends and supporters, will deepen and enrich our preparations for a successful Central Convention.

It is the democratic right and political responsibility of members to participate in these discussions. The debate will continue in clubs, in this Bulletin, at provincial, regional and Quebec National committee

meetings and conventions, and at the Central Convention itself.

We will publish further Discussion Bulletins before the Central Convention.

All members are encouraged to make submissions to this Bulletin. Submissions can be on topics relating to the political analysis and assessments contained in the Draft Political Resolution, issues concerning Party organization, policy, program, tactics, leadership, and so on. Amendments to the Draft Resolution, and other special resolutions and motions proposed by Party Clubs and/or other Party bodies will also be published.

Printed copies of the Bulletin will be distributed to all members. Electronic versions of the Bulletin will also be circulated in PDF format, and posted on the Party website, www.communist-party.ca.

Submissions should be sent to

the Co-Editors of the Discussion Bulletin:

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As stated in the Call, initial contributions should be limited to 1,000 words, with a further contribution up to 500 words in a subsequent issue of the Discussion Bulletin.

Please note that the final deadline for receiving amendments to the Draft Main Political Resolution is Monday, January 25, 2010.

For help in sending your submissions, please contact the Central office (416-469-2446), the National Committee of the Parti communiste du Quebec, or one of the provincial party offices.