

*36th Central Convention
Communist Party of Canada
February 5-7, 2010*

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.

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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.

- (1) 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 a one of our main priorities.

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 local efforts – especially with renewals and ongoing contact with our readers – must be undertaken locally by Party Clubs and/or reading circles.

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:

- (a) that we set a firm target of increasing the net (paid) readership of our press by 50% from now up until our next Convention.** This is an ambitious but fully realizable goal if we work methodically at this task *in every centre and locality*; and
 - (b) 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.) and alternative media across the country.**
- (2) 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:

- (a) that the redesign of the main Party website be completed immediately;**
 - (b) that we undertake a review of all other Party-related websites (provincial, local, press, election, etc.) to ensure better coordination;**
 - (c) 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**
 - (d) that the incoming Central Committee & CEC ensure that the Internet Commission, composed of qualified comrades, functions on a regular and disciplined basis.**
- (3) 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.

While we are not an electoralist-oriented party, we nevertheless affirm the importance of participating in federal and provincial elections wherever and whenever possible. We do so not in expectation of achieving electoral victories at the federal or provincial levels (at least under current conditions), but rather because the working class and working people generally tend to be more ‘tuned in’ to political issues during elections, and often do not understand why political parties would be absent from electoral contests. Elections also provide a good opportunity to demand (and sometimes receive) increased media exposure for our Party and its policies. Finally, it is crucially important that we continue to assert our ‘right’ under conditions of bourgeois democracy to participate openly in elections, and to raise our criticisms of the erosion of democratic rights, demanding proportional representation, etc.

With another crucial federal election on the horizon as early as this year, and certainly by 2011, 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. “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.”

Given the likelihood of a federal election in the near future, campaign planning must proceed immediately following the election, 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.

While we are determined to strengthen (rather than retreat from) our electoral work, public campaigning *between* elections is equally if not more important for our Party. *Indeed, the failure to do so would most certainly land us in the swamp of narrow electoralism.* The advantage of extra-parliamentary 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.

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, women, seniors, etc.), while also helping to build the Party, press and YCL.

Proposals:

- (a) 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;**
- (b) 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**

- (c) **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.

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 of neglect, we finally managed to organize a well-attended Central Party School in August 2008, and we must strive to make this school a regular annual event. Educational work at all levels, especially for new members, must be improved and regularized wherever possible.

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 in areas of vital concern to our Party and our class. This should include further research into 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. The main focus of this research should be directed to the current and future challenges facing the working class of our country; e.g., changing face of capitalism in Canada and its offensive against the working class and the people, problems relating to the Canadian state and the struggle for

national rights of Québec and the Aboriginal nations, and issues relating to energy, the environment and the struggle to defend Canadian sovereignty, etc.

Proposals:

- (a) that the theoretical content of our press be improved by the inclusion of regular features and/or columns devoted to theoretical and ideological questions;**
- (b) that the new party website include more ideological and educational materials and resources;**
- (c) that provincial/regional schools be regularized, in consultation with the PCQ and provincial Committees, and that the Central Party School be held annually;**
- (d) that the *Spark!* be published on a semi-annual basis, beginning in 2010;**
- (e) 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.;**
- (f) 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 Bureau or Collective; and**
- (g) that the incoming Central Committee undertake a review of the current Party program and submit any proposals for changes and additions to the Party prior to our next Central Convention.**

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 identified 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 which should help the new Central Committee to gel as a vibrant political collective and play its full and proper role as the leading collective in our Party.

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.

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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 regular 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 increase our political agitation, as well as our recruitment and fundraising efforts.

The incoming Central Committee also needs to take steps to review and strengthen the work of our basic units – the Party Clubs. This should be undertaken 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.

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.

A 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 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 to significantly improve our efforts in this respect.

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 re-formation 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 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. 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:

- (a) that the incoming Central Committee conduct its work on a more regular basis, including convening plenums by teleconference in addition to at least two in-person meetings each year;**
- (b) that the work of Commissions and Bureaus, as appointed and mandated by the CC, be improved and regularized;**
- (c) that communications between the Centre and all Party Clubs, bodies and members be enhanced;**
- (d) 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;**
- (e) 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;**
- (f) that the Party continue and increase its all-sided support to the growth and development of the YCL/LJC.**

Summary – Draft Plan of Work:

I. Party Visibility and Profile

- 1. that we set a firm target of increasing the net (paid) readership of our press by 50% from now up until our next Convention;**
- 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**

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- specialized (ethnic, youth and student, etc.) and alternative media across the country.
3. that the redesign of the main Party website be completed immediately;
 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;
 6. that the incoming Central Committee & CEC ensure that the Internet Commission, composed of qualified comrades, functions on a regular and disciplined basis;
 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 during each non-election 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

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 provincial/regional schools be regularized, in consultation with the PCQ and provincial Committees, and that the Central Party School be held annually;
13. that the *Spark!* be published on a semi-annual basis, 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 Bureau or Collective; and

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16. that the incoming Central Committee undertake a review of the current Party program and submit any proposals for changes and additions to the Party prior to our next Central Convention.

III. Internal Party Organization

17. that the incoming Central Committee conduct its work on a more regular basis, including convening plenums by teleconference in addition to at least two in-person meetings each year;
18. that the work of Commissions and Bureaus, as appointed and mandated by the CC, be improved and regularized;
19. that communications between the Centre and all Party Clubs, bodies and members be enhanced;
20. 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;
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.

