

Documents of the 37th Convention Communist Party of Canada April 5-7, 2013

Table of Contents

Keynote Address <i>Miguel Figueroa, CPC Leader</i>	pg. 2
Main Political Resolution: How Labour and People's Unity Can Defeat Austerity	pg. 6
<i>I. The Challenge of our Times</i>	pg. 6
<i>II. The Austerity Agenda and Fightback in Canada</i>	pg. 13
<i>III. Build the Communist Party</i>	pg. 23
Proposals for Future Party Work	pg. 27
Other Convention Highlights <i>Special resolutions</i> <i>International greetings</i> <i>Election of new leadership</i> <i>Photo vignettes of the Convention</i>	pg. 31

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Keynote Address

Excerpts of the opening address to the 37th Convention, delivered by CPC leader Miguel Figueroa on behalf of the Central Executive Committee

Dear delegates and members,
invited guests and observers

Welcome to Toronto, and to this 37th Central Convention of our Party. Allow me to extend a special welcome to a good number of first-time delegates to our Convention, and to members of our YCL-LJC in attendance as well. First of all, we would like to express our gratitude to the 55 sister Communist and revolutionary parties and organizations that have sent greetings to this Convention.

We have had a very useful and productive period of discussion leading up to this Convention, and a lot of work remains for us during the next three days. To lead off our discussions, the outgoing Central Executive has asked me to touch on the following few points. Let me begin with some comments on the international situation.

We know full well... the course of history is determined not so much by individuals, but rather that “history is made by the masses”. That however is not to discount the significant and sometimes decisive role played by individuals, so allow me to start my remarks by referring to two such outstanding revolutionaries.

The first is of course our beloved Nelson Mandela, the inspirational leader of the South African people in their struggle against apartheid, and first President of a free and democratic South Africa. Despite all his trials and tribulations – including his 20-year spell in a jail cell on Robbin Island – he has lived to the ripe old age of 94, but is currently hospitalized suffering from a life-threatening bout of pneumonia. We send him our very best wishes for a speedy and full recovery.

We also salute Hugo Chavez Frias, who passed away recently after a long struggle with cancer. The undisputed leader of the Bolivarian Revolution, he fought for a

people’s agenda for Venezuela. Unlike the lies and slanders about Venezuelan reality spouted by PM Harper on the occasion of his death, our Party mourns his passing and gives comrade Chavez a red salute. We know that his signal contribution is entrenched in the struggle of the Venezuelan people for peace, sovereignty, democracy and socialism. The worldwide struggle is stronger because of the ideals he championed, and by the gains which have been fought for and won first in socialist Cuba, and more recently in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and elsewhere throughout our hemisphere. The struggle continues, but the people – united – will never be defeated. The next test of the unity of the Venezuelan people will come a week from this Sunday, and are confident that the forces of Bolivarian Revolution will win once again. Viva Chavez!

* * * * *

A central focus of our Political Resolution deals with the deepening crisis of global capitalism, and with the working class and people’s fightback against the consequences of that crisis in Canada and around the world. We have been reminded once again that this crisis is far from abating by the recent events in Cyprus over the past several weeks, threatening to plunge the European banking system into yet another round of crisis. Even the *Financial Times* was forced to admit that the “risks for Europe are significant. . . The prescription of universal [sic] austerity combined with kid-gloves treatment of big investors in banks is increasingly toxic to European voters. Leaders have just added fuel to the fire.”

The Cypriot crisis also brings a much larger issue into focus – the stupendous amounts of ‘buried treasure’ which international finance capital has ferreted away in so-called tax havens to avoid paying taxes on wealth, of which the Cypriot banks are but the very small tip of the iceberg. According to the Tax Justice Network, the total value of such organized ‘tax avoidance’ has now



CPC leader Miguel Figueroa addresses delegates

reached as much as **\$32 trillion dollars** worldwide. Bearing in mind that global GDP is around \$78trn, this suggests that the super-rich are hoarding the equivalent of

Tax Havens of the World



up to 40% of the world's annual output – yet further proof that 'austerity' is all about protecting monopoly interests and increasing the accumulation of capital, while making the working class and the people pay for the crisis.

The other fundamental aspect of the general crisis of capitalism is, as we know, increasing militarization and the drive to war, the drumbeats of which grow ever louder with each passing day. While the imperialist war machine has already rumbled through many countries over the recent past – from Yugoslavia and Afghanistan to Iraq, Libya and most recently in Mali – fresh wars are brewing against both Syria and the DPRK. Indeed a foreign-sponsored covert war on Syria has been raging for more than two years. Now, both Britain and France, under the 'socialist' government of Francois Hollande, are raising the stakes, pressing for overt military assistance to the Free Syrian Army and other armed groups fighting to overthrow the Syrian government.

Meanwhile, tensions have sharply escalated on the Korean peninsula, as the South Korean regime, Japan, the U.S. and the other imperialist powers including Canada are working overtime to provoke a military conflict with the North. It is naive not to see this dangerous escalation as a consequence of U.S. imperialism's recent strategic 'pivot to Asia', the main objective of which is to encircle and 'contain' the People's Republic of China. In both cases of Syria and the DPRK, groundless claims are being advanced that these countries have and are preparing to use Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), and that under the bogus doctrine of 'responsibility to protect' (R2P), direct imperialist intervention "may be required".

Needless to say, imperialist war in either of these strategic regions could quickly escalate into wider conflicts and possibly more generalized war, with horrific consequences for humanity. We express our solidarity with the peoples and governments of both Syria and the DPRK at this critical moment, and condemn the imperialist campaign to impose sanctions, hatch conspiracies and foment war against these countries. With this in mind, we should resolve to increase our anti-war efforts, especially within the labour and other

people's movements, against any further imperialist aggression – whether it be against Syria, the DPRK, Iran or elsewhere around the globe.

Let us now turn to the situation within our own country. The Political Resolution – which will be strengthened during the course of our deliberations this weekend – gives a rather comprehensive picture of the crisis as it reflects itself in Canada today, of the austerity agenda being imposed by governments at every level, and of the socio-economic and political consequences this capitalist offensive is having on the working class, Aboriginal peoples, women, youth & students, farmers, seniors, and so on.

The recent federal budget shows that there is no let-up in the intensity of that offensive, despite the hype in the corporate media downplaying its pro-corporate and anti-people content. Setting aside the window-dressing about cheaper baby clothes, hockey skates and hospital parking, the guts of this budget are very clear: (1) a further \$4 billion cut from program spending which will eliminate more jobs in the public sector (adding to the 2 million unemployed across Canada) and further erode programs and services for the people; (2) billions more in giveaways and tax incentives for corporate Canada; and (3) an accelerated drive to impose the pro-corporate CETA trade & investment treaty with the European Union, and to press forward with privatization.

These austerity policies – which are being applied at the provincial and municipal levels as well – have already proven themselves patently incapable of creating jobs for the unemployed, raising living standards, reducing social disparities and securing the future for working people; on the contrary, they are laying the foundation for an even greater recession and, depending on the impact of the deepening crisis in the global capitalist economy, a full-blown depression. Indeed, Canada's growth rate – measured in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – has slowed to 0.2% in each of the last two quarters. This amounts to an annualized growth rate under 1% – essentially zero growth. So much for the Tories' Economic Action Plan!

Why then do right-wing bourgeois governments stubbornly persist on this austerity course? Because from *their* class perspective, such policies actually serve the immediate interests of the big banks and monopolies. Crippling the trade union movement, swelling the ranks of the unemployed, privatizing programs and services, and increasing social *in*security – all these act to drive down the cost of labour-power and correspondingly increase the rate of profit and the accumulation of capital.

Only a powerful and united struggle of the workers and their social allies can create a *political crisis* which will

force the ruling class to retreat, and create conditions for the labour and people's forces to go onto the counter-offensive, to change the balance of class forces in the country, to curb corporate power and open the door to a revolutionary advance to socialism.

That is why the state of the resistance movement is the most decisive challenge confronting our Party and our class, and where we should focus our debate and action. How can the working class – and particularly its organized section, the trade union movement – mount a concerted fightback in the face of this brutal and all-sided capitalist offensive? We must rivet our attention on answering this central question.

Certainly part of the answer is the need to expose and defeat the current of business unionism and class collaboration which remains prevalent within the right-wing, social democratic leadership of the labour movement. This in itself is no simple task, but will most certainly require the building of left-centre unity to isolate the most right, opportunist elements within labour's ranks. We know from recent experience that workers across Canada – when given the chance to do so – are willing and able to mount the most militant and heroic resistance. Too often however, they are sold down the river by their own collaborationist leadership.

But there is another side to this problem. Even the most militant, struggle-oriented leadership still has to contend with the adverse objective conditions which complicate labour's ability to fight and win – the combined might of the employers and of the capitalist state (armed with back-to-work legislation, injunctions, crippling fines, etc.), not to mention the corrosive ideological power of a hostile mainstream corporate-controlled media.

These are no easy challenges to overcome, nor do we Communists claim to have all the ready-made answers to do so. But we are convinced that there is no other way forward except through the development of strategies and tactics based on *class struggle*, on building the maximum unity possible – first within the ranks of labour itself, and together with allies in the broader democratic movements. And we are further convinced that opposition to the Conservative/corporate austerity agenda, in itself, is not sufficient; it must be combined with a far-reaching and comprehensive alternative that breaks with the logic of neoliberalism – *one that puts people and nature before profit*.

It is in this light that we should look at some developments in recent months, since the Political Resolution was drafted and circulated. There has been in fact a swirl of activity on this front – a broad engagement of labour and other

progressive forces searching for a way forward. First, in December, there was the Port Elgin Initiative involving the militant Quebec student organization ASSE, CUPW, Occupy, the Ontario Federation of Labour and some others. They came forward with a broad call for a pan-Canadian coalition of local and regional popular assemblies “through which communities, organizations and activists can organize together to defeat the right-wing agenda led by Stephen Harper”.

This initiative was followed by the January conference of Common Causes, spearheaded by the Council of Canadians and several labour organizations, including CUPE National. Common Causes has a more electoral orientation, focussing on defeating the Harper Conservatives in 2015, but also embraces mass extra-parliamentary actions. This conference was followed by yet another meeting to form a “People's Social Forum” process to culminate in 2014.

While there are some obvious differences of emphasis between these initiatives – some are more activist and militant in character, and some have a narrower electoral objective of defeating the Conservatives – they



Common Causes rally in support of Idle No More - January 2013

nevertheless constitute important, positive developments in the search for unity-in-action to defeat this government and their vicious, pro-corporate austerity program. Some of our comrades are already participating in these meetings but we should become more engaged, and strive to bring these currents together into a united movement based on mass extra-parliamentary action and a comprehensive alternative, the kind of ‘people's coalition’ which we have long advocated.

We must also look at the negative side of the ledger however. Countervailing pressures are building up to restrict the development of a united, mass extra-

parliamentary front of struggle against austerity – pressures coming from the camp of right-wing social democracy.

The May 2011 federal election resulted in a Conservative majority government. But it also placed the federal New Democrats onto the benches of the “official opposition” for the first time in history. Many took some solace from this “silver lining” in an otherwise dismal electoral outcome, hoping that a stronger NDP presence on Parliament Hill would translate into a stronger ally of the labour and people’s forces *outside* Parliament. Such naive expectations were quickly dashed however. Under Thomas Mulcair’s leadership, the NDP has shifted even further toward the centre of bourgeois politics, distancing itself from key mass struggles – particularly the Québec student struggle and “Idle No More” – and embracing neoliberal, market-driven economics (e.g., support for CETA) and hawkish foreign and pro-military positions.

Now that the NDP leadership has had a whiff of power, they will stop at nothing to suppress independent labour political action and extra-parliamentary struggles, and attempt to channel all popular discontent into support for their narrow electoral ambitions leading up to the 2015 general election.

This was clearly evident at the recent “Political Action” conference sponsored by the Canadian Labour Congress where the two main speakers were CLC president (and principal NDP front-man in the labour movement) Ken Georgetti, and Thomas Mulcair himself, and where the entire focus was on improving labour’s ‘public relations image’ and on lining up ducks for the NDP’s electoral machine.

We should be perfectly clear here: there is a growing and completely understandable desire among ever-widening circles of the working class and popular forces to send Harper and his gang packing. There is even a campaign

underway to forge an electoral pact between the NDP, the Liberals and Greens to bring about a Conservative defeat in the next election. But an electoral pact of convenience, with no meaningful alternative to take the country in a fundamentally new direction, is a far cry from the kind of “people’s coalition” we envisage, and which is so sorely needed today.

The next election is over two years away. Think of all the damage that will be inflicted – that has already been inflicted – by the big banks and monopolies through their henchmen in Ottawa in the meantime. Damage to worker’s rights, to equity, social and democratic rights in general, to Aboriginal peoples, to the environment, to the cause of peace. We need united mass action to stop this capitalist offence NOW!

It is especially in this context that we need to grasp our vanguard role as a Marxist-Leninist party, as a party of the working class – to fight for unity-in-action with every ounce of our energies, and to confront and ideologically defeat those who would scuttle or divert that unity, who would weaken or negate a line of mass struggle. We are a small party, but we have compelling arguments. Truth and logic are our best allies, our strongest weapons. This is both our challenge and our calling.

Let me now say a few words about the Party itself. First of all, we should note that the pre-convention discussion confirms that there is a high level of unity among the membership around the main political line of the Party – around our program, our policies and our strategic approach. We sometimes take this for granted, comrades, but that would be mistaken. We should cherish, nurture and develop that unity, while at the same time welcoming criticism and debate – even the clash of ideas – on how to move our Party forward. Even the sharpest of debates, and the harshest of criticisms, can strengthen and deepen our unity, so long as they are conducted in a principled, constructive and comradely manner.



NDP votes to drop reference to “socialism” at Montreal policy convention, April 2013

At our last Central Committee meeting in December we had a very frank and healthy round of criticism and self-criticism, focussing on the need for a more operative central leadership, more and better inner-party communications, and greater efforts to rectify our many organizational weaknesses and shortcomings.

It was on this basis, and on the comments and views expressed by the membership during this pre-convention period, that we have prepared a Draft Plan of Work for consideration this weekend. Now let us get down to work. Thank you for your attention.

Main Political Resolution

How Labour and People's Unity Can Defeat Austerity

The following is the primary political document adopted by the 37th Central Convention. It is based on a draft version prepared by the previous (outgoing) Central Committee and circulated to all Party organizations and members three 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.

Section I: The Challenge of our Times

The 37th Convention of our Party takes place at a particularly complex and dangerous moment in the workers' and people's struggle. The systemic crisis of capitalism in Canada and internationally has continued to deepen over the past three years, reflected in ever-widening social disparity, intensified economic and social attacks against the people, fresh assaults on labour and democratic rights, the further degradation of the national and global environment, and increasing militarism, aggression and war.

The maturing structural contradictions of the global system of capitalism, which have been steadily gaining pace throughout the last century and particularly since the 1970s onwards, created conditions for the current global cyclical crisis – a crisis which erupted in 2007-08 and which continues today, making it one of capitalism's *most acute cyclical crises in history*. This crisis in turn has exacerbated all of the structural aspects of the general crisis of the capitalist system, resulting in greater instability, insecurity and intensified class struggle.

The austerity policies pursued by ruling circles in all of the leading imperialist states, including Canada, to resuscitate economic activity and profits on the backs of the working class and working people in general have failed miserably. The economies of the U.S., Europe and Japan – the 'tripod' epicentre of this global crisis – remain stagnant or in absolute decline. The crisis and the intense, all-sided offensive launched by the ruling class in its wake are exacting a heavy economic, social, cultural, physical, psychological and environmental cost on all humanity.

The main target of this anti-social offensive of capital is the working class, especially its organised section, the trade union movement. It also falls heavily on women, youth and students, indigenous peoples, immigrants and migrants, pensioners and the elderly, peasants and small farmers, the extreme poor and marginalized sections of the people, and on all those reliant on the social functions and services of capitalist states – benefits that have been won through many decades of hard struggle.

This capitalist offensive is understandably creating an atmosphere of insecurity and desperation among wide sections of the working class and the people, but it is also giving rise to increased resistance and struggle against ruling classes and their governments in many countries around the world, although this fightback is still *predominantly defensive* in character. Anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist sentiments are on the increase, and the size and capacity of forces consciously embracing the socialist alternative are continuing to grow, albeit unevenly and still as a minority current in most countries.

The counter-offensive of labour and people's movements is also growing across Canada. The historic Québec student strike and social struggle which took place in the spring and summer of 2012, and the Canada-wide "Idle No More" protests of Aboriginal peoples and their supporters which began last December are particularly significant in this regard. These struggles, taken together with the determined struggle of teachers in Ontario and many other mobilizations in defence of labour, social and equality rights and in defence of our environment, signal a qualitative change in the mood of the working class and its allies to fight back against the austerity agenda of Capital and its governments.

The challenge for our Party at this 37th Convention is to reach an objective assessment of the nature and trajectory of this capitalist offensive, to identify the class and social forces which are moving into action to resist and defeat this offensive, and to situate the Communist Party and its work so that it can best make its contribution to the building of a mass, united people's coalition, and to the building of a larger, stronger and more influential Party in the process.

The capitalist economic crisis

At our last Central Convention in 2010 we assessed that “while the global crisis is still in its early stages and is unfolding unevenly, [five] general features can now be identified” including: the growing impoverishment of workers and the masses of the people; an intense ideological offensive directed to split and disorient the working class; the aggravation of inter-imperialist contradictions; and the relative decline of US economic might. Finally we said that the labour and people's fightback has been slow to take flight and remains uneven because of a combination of factors including fear and insecurity, repression of dissent, and the failure of the right opportunist leadership of the labour movement to initiate a united and coordinated fight back movement.

More than six years since its onset, the global economic crisis of capitalism continues to deepen. While periodic cyclical crises of (relative) over-production are standard fare at every stage of capitalist development, the current crisis has unique features: (1) it is also a crisis over-accumulation of capital, due to the very high degree of financialization of the capitalist economy and its internationalization; (2) it is truly global in scale, afflicting all three imperialist centres simultaneously and rapidly cascading to all other national and regional economies; and (3) it merges with and further aggravates other structural crises under capitalism, not least the food and environmental crises.

This helps to explain why this crisis is so acute and protracted, with no ‘sustainable’ recovery in sight. In January 2012 the World Bank was forced to revise its predictions for global growth to 2.5 percent, down from its June 2011 estimate of 3.6 percent, adding that the Euro zone may actually contract 0.3 percent, compared with a previous estimate of a 1.8 percent gain. By last October, the International Monetary Fund had

reduced those forecasts even further, predicting a 15 percent chance of recession in the United States in 2013, 25 percent in Japan and above 80 percent in the Euro zone. The languishing global economy and associated fears about state debt defaults and bankruptcies in Europe and the continuing fiscal crisis in the U.S. are putting downward pressure even on the faster-growing Chinese economy and other relatively buoyant economies in parts of Asia and Latin America.

A number of European countries, especially Italy, Greece, Spain, Ireland and Portugal, are mired in deep recession and even depression. The imposition of vicious austerity measures demanded by the IMF, the EU and the European Central Bank as the price for credit extensions to avoid sovereign debt default have further eroded social conditions, resulting in staggeringly high levels of unemployment, mass poverty and despair. Even the relatively stronger economies in Germany, Britain and France are now faltering. Claiming that emergency measures are necessary to preserve the EU and the integrity of the Euro currency, monopoly capital is using the crisis to erase the vestiges of the ‘social contract’ and to further consolidate and centralize financial and political power in Brussels, in violation of the democratic rights of the peoples and the national sovereignty of its member-states. Labour and mass democratic struggles across Europe in response to the consequences of crisis and austerity policies have escalated marked by countless general strikes, mass demonstrations and factory occupations. Millions have come out into the streets of Greece, Spain, Portugal, France, Britain, Italy and elsewhere to demand jobs, decent wages and pensions, to defend labour rights, to insist on the restoration of health, education and other public services, and to denounce the austerity policies dictated by the EU at the behest on European bankers and monopolists.



Massive PAME/KKE rally in Athens - May 1st, 2013

These mass mobilisations are showing marked differences in strategic and tactical orientation. In France and Spain the Communist parties have taken a pro-European Union approach, including participation in the European Left Party which sees the European Union as part of the solution. In countries such as Portugal, Greece and Britain, the Communist parties' strategic positions are the opposite: calling for their countries to leave the European Union as a precondition for progressive social and economic change. Our Party shares the latter assessment. The European Union is a supranational (rather than international) organisation serving to relocate executive and legislative powers from elected national governments to the European Commission for the purpose of establishing an improved framework for business to circumvent, diminish and ultimately eliminate existing labour rights and structures of democratic accountability. These gains have been hard fought for over the course of the 20th century by the working class.

On the other hand, the crisis conditions are also being used by the extreme right to whip up narrow nationalism, racism and xenophobia, and anti-communism. There has been an alarming growth of ultra-right and neo-fascist movements and parties in a number of European countries, fearfully reminiscent of the rise of fascism in the 1930s. The growing number of "stateless people" – those who are not accepted by their country of origin nor their country of refuge – is being used by ultra-right movements to enflame anti-immigrant sentiments. Today, as in the past, the fascist movement is a dangerous ruling class tool used to weaken and divide the working class and popular forces, blunt class consciousness, and attack the left and revolutionary forces.

These conditions graphically confirm the utter bankruptcy of the prevailing bourgeois economic 'model' of neoliberalism to overcome the crisis. But this 'failure' masks a more fundamental and insidious process underway. International finance capital is using the current crisis and its consequences as an opportunity to impose its own set of 'reforms': to accelerate the erosion of the social rights of the people to accessible healthcare, education and other social programs and benefits; to fundamentally transform the capitalist state into an ever more efficient, repressive instrument to facilitate the further concentration and centralization of capital; and to weaken and undermine all social and class forces capable of mobilizing resistance to its agenda, in the first place the organized trade union movement and the Communist parties. The Portuguese comrades placed this process succinctly at their recent congress:

"Imperialism's hegemonic rule is... destroying gains and rights that had been achieved by the struggle of

workers and peoples throughout the 20th century. Its goal is to reinstate 19th century levels of class exploitation and national oppression. Capitalism's exploitative, aggressive and predatory nature has been exposed further by the devastating consequences of the [current] overproduction crisis..." [from "Theses – Draft Political Resolution: 19th Congress of the PCP, October 29, 2012 – emphasis added]

The austerity agenda is entirely consistent with and indeed flows from the neo-liberal economic policies of 'free' trade (i.e., the unbridled mobility of capital within and beyond national boundaries), privatization, deregulation, and the systematic gutting of the social functions of the State – policies which have predominated for almost three decades. It would be quite wrong however to conclude that these economic policies are simply the product of 'wrong thinking' or 'poor political choices' by the capitalist elite and the governments they control. On the contrary, *they are a result of how state-monopoly capitalism objectively functions today, and illustrate that capitalism is increasingly incompatible with the development of forces of production.*

The August 2011 Central Committee noted that:

"[I]n the 1970s the rate of profit began to fall precipitously for monopoly capital, dragging down growth rates in the U.S. and other leading capitalist countries as well. In order to arrest and reverse the decline in profit rates, monopoly (through the auspices of the State) introduced neoliberal policies – 'free' trade, deregulation, privatization, etc. – first in Britain under Thatcher and the U.S. during the Reagan years, and then throughout the advanced capitalist economies and beyond. The 'free trade agenda' was never primarily about freeing up the international movement of goods and commodities, but rather about radically increasing the mobility of capital flows across borders, thus increasing the grip of international finance capital ... That the banking and the financial service sector began to expand rapidly following the introduction of neoliberal policy was hardly coincidental. This sector has overtaken basic industry and manufacturing and non-financial services (where value is actually produced) in virtually all of the advanced capitalist economies today. *Neoliberalism was the structural instrument facilitating the movement of capital from 'value-producing' to non-value producing' (parasitic) forms of investment.*

It was precisely this objective class interest in reversing the decline in the *rate of profit* which dictated the abandonment of Keynesianism in favour of monetarism and then neoliberalism and all of its most brutal manifestations – financial speculation, the intensified

exploitation of workers and peoples, the stepped up plunder of the natural environment, and increased drive to militarism and war. The imposition of the neoliberal policy doctrine was facilitated by socialism's defeats in the early 1990s and the corresponding change in the international balance of class forces in favour of imperialism which resulted from those setbacks. That this fundamental policy shift in turn laid the foundation for the even more intense and protracted global cyclical crisis when it finally burst into the open in 2007-08 does not diminish in the least the essential truth of the underlying features of the *general crisis of capitalism* and the maturation of its most basic contradiction – that is, **between the increasingly social nature of production on one hand, and the private nature of appropriation of the fruit of that produced wealth** (ever more centralized and concentrated in the big banks and corporate conglomerates, and the monopolists who own and control them), on the other. It is a harmful, reformist illusion therefore to fantasize about a return to the 'good old days' of Keynes, the capitalist 'welfare state' and the social contract between labour and capital; modern international finance capitalism has all but shredded that possibility. While the fight against the capitalist offensive and for meaningful advances and reforms under the present socio-economic system is both necessary and urgent, we must never lose sight of capitalism's true nature – exploitative, aggressive and predatory – and of the fundamental reality that *the next rung on the ladder of human social development can be none other than socialism*.

The necessity for that transition to socialism in Canada and internationally has become all the more urgent in the face of the deepening environment crisis which increasingly threatens the very future of humanity and the liveability of our planet. Every effort to substantively overcome and reverse the impact of climate change and other environmental damage already committed, and to ensure environmental 'sustainability' into the future, is compromised not only by the specific policies of governments or decisions of corporations, but in fact by the socio-economic formation of capitalism itself. By its very nature, capitalist development prioritises private gain over social interests and over the protection of the natural environment. The drive for profit and the accumulation of capital trumps all other considerations. Indeed the very concept of capitalist economic growth, based on the limitless expansion of commodity production and depletion of resources, and the universalisation of the 'cult of consumerism', is fundamentally incompatible with the objective need to preserve our ecosphere for present and future generations.

In recent years the Earth has seen unprecedented climate disasters, highlighting the urgency of the environmental crisis and the need for radical change. The

2012-2013 North American drought, an expansion of the 2010-2012 Southern United States drought, devastated crops in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, costing over \$35 billion in the American Midwest alone, and increasing food prices dramatically. Hurricane Sandy was the second-costliest Atlantic hurricane on record, killing 285 people in seven countries and costing \$75 billion in damages in the United States. In Canada two people were killed from Hurricane Sandy and \$100 million in damage was caused in Ontario and Québec. Bushfires have ravaged Australia in the 2012-2013 season. The temperature was so hot the national meteorological bureau was forced to add a new colour to their map to represent 54 degrees Celsius. Despite the economic progress of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), negative environmental experiences and contradictions which arise in these countries should not be ignored – such as the continued destruction of the Amazon rainforest in Brazil. The environmental crisis will continuously worsen if a radical change in how we live does not take place.

The recent summit in Doha once again failed to make meaningful progress in requiring mandatory reductions in fossil fuel emissions – despite resounding appeals from the scientific community and world public opinion. This is compelling evidence of that basic contradiction between capitalist development and nature. The Harper Conservatives must be held to account for their shameful role in largely contributing to that failure.

Militarism and the drive to war are directly related to the global economic crisis, and the costs associated with the arms build-up and imperialist aggression and war – *more than one trillion dollars a year* – bleeds vital resources from the education, health and the social developmental needs of humanity, further intensifying its consequences. Military spending is one of the most effective



The latest Conservative budget continues to increase military spending, up 50% since Harper assumed power

and lucrative ways of redistributing wealth via the public purse at the expense of the working class and the people. In order to carry through such a large-scale diversion of public wealth, U.S. imperialism and the other imperialist powers including Canada exploit and enflame local and regional conflicts, and in some cases cynically manufacture perceived threats to national security. They arrogate to themselves the role of defending a global ‘civilized order’, with the ‘responsibility to protect’ the victims of alleged ‘rogue’ states and their demonized leaders, creating a permanent war mentality to justify bloated defence and security budgets at home, and aggression and war abroad.

But the stepped-up drive to militarism and war has a much more profound basis than the desire to transfer vast sums of public resources into the swollen coffers of monopoly capital. *War is an inherent feature of capitalism, especially in its final, imperialist stage of development.* The scramble of rival imperialist states and centres to capture, dominate and exploit markets and resources – “to divide and re-divide the world” through the export of capital backed up by the use of military force – is one of its most basic and important features. The overturning of socialism in the former Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries, which had acted as a counterweight blunting the imperialist drive to war, and the current acute economic crisis which has intensified competition to control markets and resources, have both served to spur this predatory dynamic of imperialism.

Indeed, the U.S. and other leading imperialist powers have stepped up their aggression and war preparations in the recent period, despite their fiscal problems arising out of the global crisis: the continuing war of occupation in Afghanistan and drone attacks in Pakistan; the costly ‘intervention’ against Libya; preparations for direct aggression against Syria and possibly Iran; the U.S.-financed Israeli attacks on Gaza; military interventions and “police actions” in a number of African states; ominous threats against North Korea (DPRK); the proliferation of foreign military bases and expansion of naval fleets around the world; and massive investments in ‘next generation’, high-tech weapons systems. The most basic principles of international law, respect for treaties and the rights of nations to sovereignty and national independence can also be counted among the casualties of this rapacious drive to dominate and exploit the entire globe.

The main vehicle for imperialist militarism continues to be NATO, the largest military organization in the world, which is dominated by US imperialism. Since our last convention, NATO has continued to expand its size and scope of operations, further embedded itself into the European Union and formed strategic alliances with countries like Australia that are far beyond its traditional

geographic arena. At its Summit in Chicago in 2011, NATO confirmed its commitment to developing and maintaining a nuclear arsenal, and re-stated its adherence to a policy of first-strike.

As imperialism becomes increasingly aggressive and seeks new pretexts for war, NATO has worked more forcefully to penetrate the United Nations and position itself as the UN’s “security partner.” As it does so, the UN is further weakened and distorted. Our party supports the anti-NATO campaigns that have been initiated by the World Peace Council, internationally, and domestically by the Canadian Peace Congress, and continues to demand Canada’s withdrawal from this aggressive military pact.



The current crisis has also accentuated another basic feature of capitalism and imperialism – *the law of uneven development.* While certain shifts in the relative strength of the imperialist centres – the US, EU and Japan – were discernible well before its onset, the crisis has brought the structural weaknesses of all three centres into sharp focus. To some extent, this has forced the main imperialist centres to seek agreement on joint strategies to overcome the crisis in a manner which advances their mutual interests. At the same time however, it has sharpened underlying inter-imperialist contradictions, competition and rivalry between the imperialist blocs.

Meanwhile emerging powers – most notably the People’s Republic of China and the other BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) – are increasingly asserting their economic power and political influence. These states are quite diverse – some have left

or centre-left governments while others are ruled by bourgeois national elites (e.g., Russia, India). All are manoeuvring to protect and advance their own interests in the context of the global capitalist system, interests which often conflict with the hegemonic ambitions of the U.S. and other imperialist centres. U.S. imperialism, while still the most powerful economic and military power, has been hard hit by the crisis. It is fighting back, using its control of supranational financial institutions (the IMF and the World Bank) and the NATO alliance to preserve and extend its dominant position globally.

In particular, the consolidated presence of US armed forces at Manas Air Force Base in Kyrgyzstan (as well as previously in Uzbekistan until 2005, when local protests forced their departure) illustrates a deep commitment by NATO to maintain and expand its direct military presence at the western borders of China. The struggle over the control of petrochemical resources in Central Asia, also referred to as ‘The New Great Game’, is showing all the hallmarks of becoming one of, if not the most important conflict zone in the world as the 21st century develops.

One very dangerous aspect of this imperialist manoeuvring and counter-attack is the US-led “Pivot to Asia”. This political/strategic policy is a very significant development that represents more than a general “re-adjustment”. It includes a move to shift 60% of US naval strength to the Asia-Pacific area by 2020, the formation of strategic partnerships between NATO and countries in the region, and it has spurred efforts by Canada’s Conservative government to build a network of foreign military bases that will explicitly support the US “pivot”.

The pivot to Asia is driven by the desire for the US to directly position its military against Russia and especially China to protect massive US investments and trade interests in the Middle East and Asian regions. It is an explicit use of force to preserve and expand US influence and power in the region, in the context of rising BRICS power and desperate competition among capitalist countries. It is important to note that virtually all US fleets and submarines therein are equipped with nuclear weapons. This means that Asia will become even more heavily militarized than the Middle East, and much of that militarization will be in the form of nuclear weapons proliferation.

The revolutionary forces of Nepal, having dislodged a Hindu theocratic state years ago, are still struggling to institute a democratic system. The Nepalese revolution is facing various challenges from within the country as well as without, as powers like India, China and the USA jockey for position. We stand in solidarity with the revolutionary forces in Nepal and throughout Asia in their struggles.

The global struggles for women’s genuine liberation and equality are gaining new urgency. In New Delhi, women have taken to the streets to protest the brutal rape culture that has led to numerous deaths. India now has a new rape law that criminalizes stalking, voyeurism and sexual harassment, increases penalties for repeat rape offenders. The new law will also charge police who fail to investigate a complaint of sexual attacks. The new law is a milestone in India’s women’s rights movement. In Pakistan, Malala Yousafzai, shot in the head by the Taliban for supporting women and girls’ rights to education, has become a symbol of the struggle for women’s rights in that country.

Africa is also increasingly becoming a target for Western imperialism, in a new ‘Scramble for Africa.’ U.S. imperialism is seeking to expand its AFRICOM division to have a military presence in over 35 African nations, and American forces have been sent to several countries across the continent including Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal, Nigeria, and more. Permanent U.S. drone bases are being built throughout much of the Sahel.

The European imperialist powers (especially France, Britain and Germany) are also attempting to re-establish control of their former colonies. French special forces have been sent into Niger to protect the uranium mines, which the French ruling class depends on for nuclear energy, and France has recently also intervened in the Ivory Coast and the Central African Republic.

France’s military invasion of Mali is part of this strategy of contemporary imperialism. France, Canada and other imperialist powers have strong mining interests in Mali and are invading to serve corporate masters as well as advancing the re-colonization of Africa. This invasion is not intended to – nor will it – serve the long terms interests of the Malian people.

The Harper Conservative government has enthusiastically supported the intervention in Mali, as it did in Libya. The Canadian military sent CF-17 aircraft to assist in the deployment of French forces, and Canadian forces have been sent into Mali, Mauritania, and Niger to ‘train’ the African forces for combat roles. The Communist Party of Canada firmly rejects these imperialist interventions, and we condemn the Conservative government’s plans to build military bases in Kuwait, Kenya, Tanzania, and elsewhere in an attempt to further integrate into the NATO and U.S. war machines.

The splitting-up of Sudan facilitates a natural resources grab by imperialism, and at the same time serves as legal precedent for future imperialist fragmentation of existing states in Africa. The independence of South Sudan marks the first internationally recognized departure from the founding principle of the African Union which recognized

the permanence of existing national borders as a framework of African unity, peace and stability. This dangerous precedent could be repeated within the DR Congo, for example, given the parameters of the internal conflict over the control of natural resources (especially mining) in eastern part of that country.

In the Middle East, US imperialism continues to promote its “New Middle East” strategy as an ongoing attempt to dominate that region’s energy resources and trade routes. By cynically manipulating mass discontent which has been building across the Middle East, North and Central Africa against the region’s monarchies and autocratic regimes, as in Egypt, Tunisia, and Bahrain, stirring up tribal, ethnic and sectarian differences, and forging ‘unholy’ alliances of convenience with religious extremist forces, imperialism is moving to close off any genuinely democratic, secular and progressive or anti-imperialist changes in the region.

The fragmentation of southern Iraq along national or ethnic lines is developing, and a new Kurdish ‘mini-state’ is now established in the north. Following the imperialist-led overthrow of the government of Libya, a similar process of fragmentation is now underway. Imperialism aims to ‘slice-and-dice’ this entire region into a patchwork of weak and compliant mini-states kept in check, in part, by its local ally Israel, with Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar as secondary, supportive powers. A similar fate could befall both Syria and Iran, the remaining obstacles to imperialism’s regional agendas. Indeed the Harper government has been in the front ranks of the campaign to economically and diplomatically squeeze both Syria and Iran in the hope of toppling their governments, and has signalled support for any future direct military aggression against these countries. This is a very dynamic situation which is rapidly developing.

The conflict in Syria is reaching a critical moment. Intervention by the imperialist powers and some of the reactionary Arab states (especially Saudi Arabia and Qatar) to topple the government of Syria is already well advanced, arming and coordinating the Free Syrian Army and other rebel groups and channelling foreign mercenaries into the conflict. Preparations for direct NATO military intervention, including air and naval assaults, are also being made, even in the absence of any UN mandate. “Regime change” in Damascus and its replacement with a more pliant, pro imperialist regime would compound this catastrophe for the Syrian people. It would also dramatically alter the regional balance of forces, weakening the anti imperialist forces, and providing a launch pad for NATO/Israeli aggression against neighbouring Iran. Our Party calls for full respect of Syrian national sovereignty and independence, the removal of sanctions, an immediate halt

to all financial and military support to the armed groups inside Syria, an immediate ban on arms sales to states sending arms to Syrian terrorist groups, the recognition of the right to self-defence of Syria, and a comprehensive national dialogue to restore peace in Syria.

Canadian foreign policy has taken an even sharper turn in a pro-imperialist, pro-war direction. In April 2012, Canada was the only country to support Washington in excluding Cuba from the 33-member *Summit of the Americas* in Bogota, signalling a disturbing shift in policy toward Cuba. In a bellicose move last September, Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird suspended all diplomatic relations with Iran, labelling it “the most significant threat to global peace and security in the world today.” On virtually every important foreign policy issue – from Libya to Gaza to Syria – the Harper government has taken openly pro-imperialist positions.

Since coming to office, the Conservatives have also dramatically shifted Canadian foreign policy to brazen support for Israel’s continued occupation of Palestinian lands and the negation of the national right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Every anti-Palestinian move of the Israeli state – from the repeated bombardments and siege of Gaza and the construction of the “Apartheid” Wall in the West Bank to the continued expansion of illegal settlements in the Occupied Territories – has been supported by all parties in Parliament, led by the Harper Conservatives. To its shame, Canada was among the very few states which voted against granting the Palestinian Authority non-member “observer state” status at the recent UN General Assembly.

U.S. imperialism, with the backing of the Harper Tories, has also increased its efforts to reverse progressive changes which have been gaining pace across Latin America in recent years, although with somewhat limited success to date. The imperialist-orchestrated overthrow of Honduran President Manuel Zelaya in 2009 has been followed by the removal from office of progressive Paraguayan president Fernando Lugo in June 2012. On the other hand, despite feverish attempts to unite the right-wing, proto-fascist and anti-Chavez forces, the late President Hugo Chavez was successfully re-elected as Venezuelan President and leader of the Bolivarian revolution in that country. Efforts to destabilize the Bolivian and Ecuadorian governments have also fizzled. Meanwhile, the Communist and other left forces have scored limited gains in Chile and elsewhere. Throughout Central and South America, workers and their allies are fighting against the pernicious and exploitative role of Canadian mineral monopolies plundering their resources. After many years of the ‘dirty war’ against the insurgency in Colombia, the Santos government has been forced by public pressure to enter

into peace negotiations with the FARC-EP. This most welcome development however is still at an early stage, and it remains to be seen if the talks can reach agreement which contributes to the struggle for genuine peace, national independence and social justice for the Colombian people.

In Haiti, capitalist economic, social and political prescriptions have been shoved down the throats of that resilient Caribbean people. The Haitian people have been the victim of a long history of imperialist interventions, occupations and economic strangulation, including the US-imposed dictatorships of the ‘Papa Doc’ and ‘Baby Doc’ Duvalier regimes. In 2004, Haitians were once again denied the right to determine their own collective fate when the elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide was overthrown in a coup orchestrated by U.S., French and Canadian imperialists. As a result of rampant exploitation, political repression, and the devastating 2011 earthquake, Haitians remain deliberately kept in abject poverty and misery despite the phony “aid” provided by imperialist countries. Cuban medical assistance to Haiti was the only real exception, a prime example of socialist internationalism. The Communist Party of Canada calls for reinstatement of the legitimately elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, or a genuinely free election which includes his Lavalas party, and an end to imperialist intervention and military occupation. Haiti must have true self-determination, especially in rebuilding their nation without imperialist interference.

Our Party continues to stand in full solidarity with the Communist, progressive and anti-imperialist forces and governments throughout Latin America and the Caribbean struggling to defend their national sovereignty in the face of imperialist plunder and dictate, and to advance the class and social interests of the masses of their own peoples, and the sovereignty of the region as a whole through the ALBA and related initiatives. We once again convey our longstanding solidarity with the Cuban government and people in their efforts to reform the economy while safeguarding its socialist character and the gains of their Revolution, to break the U.S. blockade, and to free the Cuban Five.

We stand in solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people to end the Occupation, to secure a genuinely independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, and win the right of return for all refugees displaced by decades of Israeli expansionism. We stand with the peoples of Egypt, Syria, Iran, Iraq and other countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa who are struggling against imperialist aggression and local autocratic rule, and to defend and advance their democratic and social rights. And we stand in solidarity with all the workers and

peoples in Africa, Asia and elsewhere around the world in their fight against imperialism and for peace, democracy, national liberation and socialism.

At the 37th Convention we also extend our warmest solidarity to our sister Communist and Workers’ parties, as well as to national liberation and revolutionary movements around the globe. We continue to support the “International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties” (IMCWP) process and work to advance ever higher levels of political and ideological unity and the active cooperation of its member parties and organizations on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

Section II: The Austerity Agenda and Fightback in Canada

Ever since our last Convention, and especially since the May 2011 general election, the political landscape of Canada has been largely shaped by the federal Conservative government under PM Stephen Harper. Freed of constraints in Parliament, the Conservatives have rapidly enacted changes which are profoundly anti-democratic, moving the country from the rule of law to rule by ministerial fiat and/or orders-in-council, while simultaneously enhancing the repressive function of the state by a series of “tough on crime” measures which criminalize increasing numbers of people.

But the most significant feature of the recent period has been the emergence of new grassroots resistance struggles. These have included the Occupy movement which put economic and social inequality back into public discourse, the fight by trade unions against the Harper government attacks on collective bargaining rights; the huge and successful strike by Québec students against tuition increases; the campaign to block destructive expansion of tar sands exports on the west coast; and most recently the “Idle No More” movement initiated by Aboriginal women to resist the Harper government’s racist policies. These and other militant struggles across Canada show the beginnings of a dynamic and powerful extra-parliamentary fightback against the corporate offensive.

Our Party accurately predicted the dire consequences which were to follow in the wake of the Conservative electoral victory, and the need to move the struggle decisively into the workplaces and onto the streets:

“The Harper Conservatives’ full-blown program will quickly come to the fore: their ‘law and order’ agenda, the further imperialist drive to militarization and war, and a sharpened assault on labour, democratic and social rights and services, not unlike the vicious austerity policies being imposed by right-wing governments across Europe, and by Republican-controlled states in the U.S. Workers in the federal public service are likely to be among the first targets of Harper’s plan to eliminate the deficit within three years... Given the new balance of forces within Parliament, the possibilities of actually blocking or defeating government bills by parliamentary means alone have all but disappeared. In such circumstances, the focus of resistance and struggle against this reactionary agenda must shift decisively to the extra-parliamentary arena. This is where the next battles will be fought... [CEC Statement, May 3, 2011]

A number of factors came into play to ensure a Conservative majority. The Tories used their huge bankroll to flood the airwaves with paid advertising. They ran a slick, heavily scripted campaign, employing US Republican political strategies. They made extensive use of government funds in the run-up to the election, buying votes with large project grants, especially in swing ridings, and with targeted tax breaks. Politically, they presented themselves as the best financial managers to deal with the economic crisis and that it was important to ‘stay the course’. They made effective use of so-called wedge issues (youth crime, gun registry, etc.) and ruminated about “Canadian values”, whipping up chauvinistic praise for the military, etc. And of course they cheated on a massive scale, as the “robocall” scandal later brought to light, and for which they have yet to be held accountable.

But the most important reason the Conservatives won the election was because of overwhelming support they received from Canadian and international finance capital. The Tories had long been the preferred political vehicle of some circles of monopoly, especially in the oil and financial sectors. In this election Tories definitively replaced the Liberals as the ‘party of choice’ for virtually all sections of big business in Canada – the party which finance capital relies upon to carry through its anti-social offensive ruthlessly and without hesitation.

Since consolidating governmental power, the Harper Tories have moved quickly to implement the full sweep of their agenda, which they could only cautiously apply during their first two terms as a minority government. They have acted on a wide range of policy fronts in *blitzkrieg* fashion, taking advantage of their numerical domination in the House, and also of the political difficulties and weaknesses of the Parliamentary opposition.

The complete list of these attacks and reactionary policy moves is staggering, and includes: the government’s flagrant assault on democratic principles and practices, e.g., widespread voter suppression during the 2011 campaign, withholding information and lying to Parliament, for which it was found in contempt, and efforts to suppress public criticism and dissent; its anti-Aboriginal policy, including funding cuts, harassment of Aboriginal organizations and plans to change the *Indian Act* to promote the privatization of Aboriginal lands; its betrayal of political and economic sovereignty through foreign corporate takeovers and onerous trade pacts negotiated behind closed doors, such as CETA and the Trans-Pacific Partnership; its attack on women’s reproductive and equity rights; the increase in the age of OAS pension eligibility to 67, a move with serious long-term negative consequences for working people; the gutting of the Canadian Wheat Board; cutbacks to the food inspection system; and removal of thousands of bodies of water from federal environmental protections. For purposes of brevity, we will focus on government finance, defence and foreign policy, energy and resources, immigration, and labour policy.

The Tories’ first post-election (2012) budget was stacked with austerity measures aimed primarily at ‘front-line’ federal public services, Aboriginal programs, environmental and other scientific research projects, the CBC and other cultural and arts programs. These cutbacks amounted to some \$10.8 billion and 26,800 job losses, according to Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page (substantially deeper than the government claimed). Tacked onto the budget was a plethora of other legislation, changing some 64 different Acts or regulations – everything from government employee pensions to environmental assessment processes to the *Indian Act* – all of which were rammed through Parliament in short order. These cuts were followed with significant changes to the Employment Insurance (EI) system, further reducing coverage and benefits for seasonal and other ‘chronic’ unemployed workers. EI recipients are compelled to accept jobs at lower wages and outside their fields, and/or at longer distances from their homes, or else risk losing benefits. These changes are particularly devastating for areas with long-term high unemployment rates and seasonal economies, such as in the Maritimes, Québec, and Newfoundland and Labrador. The Harper majority government also acted immediately to kill the gun registry, despite the fact that the rate of homicides with rifles and shotguns had decreased 70% since its introduction.

These austerity measures were dubbed ‘measured’ and ‘precautionary’ in order to eradicate the federal deficit within three years, following which federal surpluses would be used to slowly retire the accumulated debt. At the same

time, Harper and Finance Minister Jim Flaherty assured Canadians that the country had weathered the global economic crisis, and that recovery was well underway. The reality was and remains quite different. While profit margins and stock prices had rebounded quite handsomely since 2008 (the profits of Canada's five largest banks rose to \$22.4 billion in 2011, and oil monopolies to \$18.7 billion), there has been no sustained recovery for working people. Unemployment remains well above pre-crisis levels, especially among young workers. Household (consumer) debt is at an all-time high, due in large measure to the suppression of wage and income levels relative to the increasing cost of essentials such as food, housing, education, fuel and energy. Poverty and homelessness continue to rise, and local food banks are overwhelmed by increased demand. Millions among the working poor are one pay cheque away from financial distress.

In light of the faltering global economy and the fall in world commodity prices, Flaherty was forced in October 2012 to downgrade the government's rosy growth projections. He conceded that the three-year deficit elimination target was not achievable, only to be contradicted the next day by Harper himself saying that his government remains committed to this target. It is likely that the Tories will use these circumstances to impose an even more vicious austerity budget in 2013.

Meanwhile, the Harper government is pressing ahead with its massive rearmament program, despite objections to the astronomical costs. Recent reports confirm long-held suspicions that the F-35 fighter jet purchase will ultimately exceed \$45 billion, not the \$9 billion figure which the government had stubbornly defended. These latest revelations have forced the Harper government to make a tactical retreat, officially recanting on the F-35 deal, but it still intends to make a major fighter jet purchase, and to proceed with the massive expansion of the naval fleet and other acquisitions, as well as the construction of a network of foreign military bases. Over all, defence spending has grown by more than 50% since Harper came to power in 2006. The Conservatives are also ploughing huge sums into secretive 'national security' infrastructure, including CSIS, the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) and other shadowy agencies.

The Conservatives are facilitating the rapid expansion of the export-oriented energy and resource sector at the expense of Aboriginal rights and the environment. This reflects an acceleration of the strategic shift by domestic and international finance capital to abandon secondary industry in favour of resource extraction and exports. A powerful movement has emerged to reverse this corporate drive to increase dependence on resource exports, and in particular against the further expansion of the Alberta tar

sands and the related proposals to build the Northern Gateway, Keystone XL, and other new pipelines to deliver unprocessed bitumen from landlocked Alberta to the US and other foreign markets. Infuriated by the moves of the Harper government to gut the environmental assessment review process of new resource mega-projects, environmental and labour groups are forging unity with Aboriginal peoples whose land rights and communities are being violated. By challenging this resource plunder, this movement is objectively coming into conflict with the anti-sovereignty policies of the Canadian ruling class. This explains why our party's call for public ownership of energy and other resources as the material basis for an economy based on prioritizing the needs of working people and the environment over the greed of the transnational corporations is garnering new interest and attention. Unfortunately, the CLC leadership and the NDP resist any effort to put public ownership of energy resources on the agenda – even though this is official CLC policy.



Mass rally in Vancouver against the Northern Gateway pipeline proposal - October 2012

The Harper Conservatives are imposing the corporate resource agenda on unceded land or on land claimed by Aboriginal peoples, relying on the unjust claim that Aboriginal people only need to be "consulted" before the bulldozers start up. This is a total denial of the right of self-determination of Aboriginal nations, and highlights the unequal, second-class status of Aboriginal nations in Canada. The Communist Party supports the right of Aboriginal nations to veto pipeline, dam and other developments until such time as there is full and just land claims settlements and the full equality of nations is achieved.

With a majority government, the Tories – the most vocal opponents of the Canadian Wheat Board – have rammed through the removal of the single desk, the main reason for the existence of the CWB. This brings Canada in line with the United States and the WTO's ideals of a so-called "free market" political economy. The CWB, a major world supplier of grain, had huge influence in the global grain markets and was a counter-weight to the total

monopoly control of pricing by the transnational grain giants. These foreign-controlled corporations will undermine food security in Canada itself. Growing rapidly, corporate farms are a main exploiter of foreign temporary workers. Racism in rural communities due to the introduction of these workers puts added negative pressure on the unity of the working class in rural areas.

The Harper Conservatives have instituted substantive changes in Canada's immigration and refugee system which are fundamentally racist in character and designed to channel cheap labour to corporate employers. New obstacles have been erected to reduce immigration for family-reunification and other humanitarian grounds, and the number of successful applicants seeking refugee status has been sharply reduced. Visa requirements have been sharply increased, especially for certain nationalities and countries of origin, in a blatantly racist manner. Foreign visitors even remotely suspected of potentially seeking asylum upon arrival are being systematically blocked at ports of entry; those already inside the country are being hunted down and deported at an alarming rate, without the right to appeal. The Conservatives have chopped health benefits for refugees, refugee claimants and other non-citizens, denying thousands of people access to drugs, dental and vision care, and medical devices such as wheelchairs.

Meanwhile the Temporary Foreign Worker Program has been greatly expanded, funnelling foreign workers into poorly-paid jobs without legal rights, protections or benefits. Even the parental rights of temporary foreign workers have been removed, yet another example of the racist and anti-women outlook of the Tory government. These super-exploited workers are at the mercy of employers, and when their services are no longer needed, they must leave the country or face immediate deportation. The 2012 Conservative budget institutionalized Canada's participation in the global exploitation of temporary foreign workers by allowing companies to pay their guest workers 15% less than the prevailing wage. Similar trends are seen in many capitalist countries, as part of the global drive by big capital to treat workers as disposable profit producers rather than human beings. The TWFP serves to boost the profits of the corporations, but also to give right-wing forces an opportunity to divide the working class by promoting anti-immigrant racism. There is an urgent need to strengthen the anti-racism movements in Canada, to demand full rights and protections for all migrant workers, and to fight back against both the Tory government's racist agenda and the expansion of neo-fascist white supremacist movements.

At the same time Jason Kenney is promoting the immigration of highly-skilled people from other countries

to fit the needs of Canadian corporations. While the Liberal governments have introduced the point system to determine criteria for immigrants, Kenney has made steps to fast-track immigrants whose skills are needed by corporations. He spoke at Carleton University last fall on measures to give foreign students at Canadian universities faster tracks to citizenship as they already have been integrated into Canadian society.

Under this two-tier immigration scheme, temporary foreign workers are brought to Canada to perform low-skilled jobs and then sent back to their countries of origin, and a skilled immigrant community who will be loyal to the party that brought them to "prosperity" creates an immigration system to meet the varied needs of capital, while fostering resentment and divisions within the working class.

However, the use of temporary foreign workers is only part of the drive against job and income security for working people. Another part is the wholesale shift to the use of casualized workers, often hired through temp agencies. These non-unionized workers, often desperate for whatever income they can earn, are paid minimal wages and receive no benefits which are not required by law (and sometimes not even those). The drive to reduce labour costs and attain a flexible work force finds its ultimate expression in this brutal system of modern slavery, a system which generates, and feeds off, a huge pool of working poor.

All of these moves are part-and-parcel of a wider reactionary agenda which the Harper government, and its pro-corporate counterparts at the provincial and municipal levels, are carrying through on behalf of finance capital. Their goal is to accelerate the accumulation of capital through every conceivable means (such as privatization, state-restructuring, corporate tax cuts, etc.), and to weaken and suppress all working class and popular resistance. But at a more fundamental level, capital accumulation is determined first and foremost by the degree to which the 'owning class' can extract ever more surplus-value from labour – the creator of all new wealth. This is achieved by driving down the price (cost) of labour-power supplied by the working class – i.e., the vast majority of the people – in the production of goods and services. Since this offensive is directed squarely at the working class and its organized section, the labour movement, the Conservatives' labour policy is central and determinant, both to the ruling class and to all those resisting its agenda.

In this respect, it is hardly coincidental that the first target of the new Harper majority was organized labour. Within days of the 2011 election, the Tory government

intervened in the CUPW-Canada Post dispute, legislating a return to work and imposing terms for any arbitrated settlement that required concessions beyond even the demands of the employer. The Harper government threatened similar action against flight attendants and then the pilots' union unless they 'voluntarily' accepted the concessionary demands of Air Canada. Further 'interventions' followed, including at CP Rail, and again these actions were justified by Labour Minister Lisa Raitt as necessary to "protect Canada's fragile economic recovery".

Harper's 'war on labour' in the federal jurisdiction gave a green light to right-wing provincial and municipal governments to demand that workers yield concessions or face the legislative hammer. In Ontario, legislation has



Protests in Montreal and other Québec centres against changes to the EI system, part of Harper's anti-worker agenda

been used to negate free collective bargaining and the right to strike in several public sector disputes (teachers, transit workers, municipal workers, etc.). Indeed, there is a long history to such interventions. Since 1982, federal and provincial governments in Canada have passed 199 pieces of legislation to restrict, suspend or deny collective bargaining rights. What is qualitatively new, however, is the speed, ferocity and punitive nature of these legislative attacks.

At its core, this offensive is aimed at crippling and ultimately destroying the organized labour movement. The federal passage of C-377, requiring unions to disclose salaries, time spent on political activities and expenses (just one day after Michigan forced through right-to-work

legislation, becoming the 24th U.S. state to do so), is an ominous sign. It portends a coming assault on the Rand formula and the principle of the 'closed shop' in organized workplaces, the existence of which has been a cornerstone of the Canadian trade union movement since 1946. Already, Ontario Conservative leader Tim Hudak has come out in favour of 'right-to-work', and Brad Wall's Saskatchewan Party government has floated proposals to radically change labour relations, including the adoption of 'right-to-work' laws. There are now ominous signals that the Harper Conservatives are preparing to impose "right-to-work" legislation on workers under federal jurisdiction.

From the perspective of the ruling class, the weakening of the trade union movement is the key to reducing the cost of labour-power, and not only among organized workers. They know that such reductions will put tremendous downward pressure on the wages and incomes of all workers, most of whom have no union protection. Finance capital realizes that the labour movement – because of its size, resources and ability to take job action – is the only social/class force capable of uniting broad sections of the people against its offensive. The labour movement is the key to building broad struggles for the rights of all workers, for jobs and improved living standards, in defence of social services and programs, for gender equality, for justice for Aboriginal peoples, for young people's right to an education and a future, for genuine environmental protection, and for a foreign policy based on peace and disarmament.

The fightback against the Harper/corporate agenda, as we predicted back in 2011, has been waged mainly in the extra-parliamentary arena. Even if so inclined and armed with clear alternative policies, the opposition parties inside Parliament would be incapable of blocking government legislation. In fact, the situation has been even worse. The Bloc Québécois, after suffering a decimating defeat at the polls, continues to languish in existential crisis. The Liberal Party benches have not fared much better, financially strapped and without an elected leader for almost two years. Green Party leader Elizabeth May has put up a good fight around some issues, but has no legions behind her in the House. More to the point, the Greens, having situated themselves politically somewhere between the Liberals and the NDP, have little space to articulate a distinct position.

Many in the labour and democratic movements were looking to the New Democrats, with 101 seats and the mantle of "Official Opposition", to lead the charge against Harper's political agenda. But under Thomas Mulcair's leadership, the NDP presence has been barely discernible. It is true that in the immediate period after the election,

many caucus members were new to Parliament and still learning the ropes. But that argument no longer rings true. In fact, there is a conscious strategy crafted by Mulcair and his closest advisors to ‘low-ball’ their role in the Opposition, to avoid taking ‘controversial’ positions on critical issues, and to bide their time until the 2015 election in the hope that voters will tire of the Harper government agenda and turn instead to the NDP to take office. This hope of slipping into government by default reflects bourgeois opportunism at its worst, and is a recipe for failure and a sell-out.

At a more basic level, none of the parliamentary opposition parties have any fundamental differences with the main tenets of the neoliberal policy agenda advanced by Harper and company. Nor have those parties differentiated themselves in a principled way from the Conservatives’ imperialist and militarist foreign policy. With respect to the war on Libya for example, the one critical voice was that of Elizabeth May, primarily over the issue of inadequate Parliamentary approval and oversight. The NDP has long abandoned its initial criticism of the US-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, in favour of support for expanded militarism and the so-called “responsibility to protect” doctrine. This imperialist concept is essentially a new version of the racist “white man’s burden” ideology, a convenient excuse by NATO to justify wars and occupations in developing countries, in pursuit of control over resources by transnational capital. The NDP’s adoption of this doctrine has dealt a severe blow to the anti-war movement in Canada, for example by effectively muzzling anti-war elements in the trade unions from speaking out against militarism.

To counter the pro-imperialist “regime change” concepts of what has been called the “anti-anti-war movement”, we must do more to win the genuine peace forces to defend the principles of international law and national sovereignty. This situation highlights the urgent need to strengthen the most consistently anti-imperialist elements within the wider anti-war movement, especially the Canadian Peace Congress and its affiliates, which are part of the World Peace Council. It will also be important to mobilize support for other significant anti-imperialist initiatives, such as the 18th World Festival of Youth and Students, which will take place late this year in Ecuador.

It is important to pay tribute to the many principled and heroic members of imperialist armed forces have spoken out, deserted and sometimes agitated within the military itself against war crimes and unjust wars. There are over 200 American deserters and resisters in Canada asking for a place to call home. Kimberly Rivera will be court marshalled at the end of April and her family including four children split up because they were deported by the

Harper Conservative government. Rodney Watson has spent more than three years in church sanctuary in Vancouver despite being married to a Canadian. Joshua Key, the first combat veteran of the Iraq war who deserted to Canada has been here for eight years with no income, medical coverage, or eligibility to work and provide for his Canadian family. Like Joshua, many others need medical, dental and psychological care which the Harper government denies them. Continuing to stand against wars of aggression and for peace, the Communist Party recognizes their contribution to the fightback and we encourage all good people of conscience to support and aid them to continue to be strong.

At the provincial level, NDP governments in Manitoba and Nova Scotia have preferred to cut corporate taxes and protect the interests of the ruling elite, rather than taking significant action on pro-people demands raised by the labour movement and other progressive groups.

The continued rightward shift of the NDP leadership towards the centre of bourgeois electoralist politics has left many members and supporters increasingly disenchanted and questioning whether that party constitutes any meaningful alternative to the Tories. The rejection of extra-parliamentary forms of political struggle by the NDP leadership has weakened and divided the fightback, paralysing sections of the labour and people’s movements. This political degeneration is evident in many other countries as well, where right-wing social democratic parties have implemented neoliberal and pro-imperialist policies, and have opposed and even attempted to derail mass mobilizations of resistance. This raises a wider issue: to what extent can contemporary social democracy still be seen as a force which stands for progressive reforms, if not fundamental change? What is the role of parties such as the NDP? These will be critical questions for the labour and people’s movements leading into the 2015 election and beyond. The NDP’s shift to the political centre makes it all the more urgent for the Communist Party and other progressive forces to advance radical, anti-capitalist concepts and class struggle policies. This could help improve the conditions for a stronger left as part of a realignment of political forces in Canada.

Despite this rightward reorientation of the NDP leadership however, the struggle against the Harper/corporate agenda *outside* of Parliament has become much more vibrant and consequential. There have been significant mass mobilizations around a number of important issues – in opposition to the G20 Summit in Toronto; around environmental issues, especially the Northern Gateway pipeline in B.C.; against the EI cuts in Québec, in defence of women’s reproductive rights; against municipal cutbacks in Toronto and elsewhere; in solidarity

with the Egyptian Revolution and the people of besieged Gaza; around the poverty and oppression faced by Aboriginal peoples, etc.

Several of these mass mobilizations deserve special attention because of their magnitude and political significance. The first was the Occupy movement which began in the fall of 2011, with actions in virtually every major city and in many smaller centres, bringing scores of thousands into the streets and into Occupy camps. While this movement relied heavily on spontaneous protest and vague (and sometimes inconsistent) demands, it struck a sympathetic chord with millions of Canadians angry about social disparities and the widening gap between the social interests of the ‘99%’ and the privileged “1%”. This movement introduced many new, mostly young people into political action for the first time.

The largest and most politically significant mobilization was the Québec student strike against tuition increases, which grew into a major social battle against the neoliberal policies of the Charest government and the repressive Bill 78, which it introduced in a vain attempt to snuff out that



movement. At its height last spring and summer, hundreds of thousands marched in solidarity with the students’ demands, crossing all generational and ethnic lines, and forging broad social alliances. That tremendous struggle ended in resounding victory with the defeat of the Charest Liberals and the subsequent revocation of the tuition hikes and Bill 78. Both of these struggles had a palpable class and anti-capitalist character, and our party and YCL comrades played an active role in each.

The election of a new Parti Québécois minority government under Pauline Marois was made possible by the student strike, which compelled the PQ to campaign on a platform which included a number of progressive policies. Since then, the Marois government has retreated

under the pressure of big capital, confirming our view that the PQ is a nationalist party which defends the interests of the Québec bourgeoisie rather than working people. In this election, the left-oriented Québec Solidaire (which includes the PCQ) made important gains, doubling its representation to two MNAs in the National Assembly. While debates over the relative priorities of social issues and the national question continue inside the QS, this party projects a progressive alternative, based on the interests of the working class, in sharp contrast to the pro-austerity policies of other parties in Québec.

There were several critical lessons of the Québec student struggle – the “Printemps Érablé” or “Maple Spring” as it became known. One is that *unity is crucial to success*. Overcoming years of divisions around tactical, strategic and political questions, the various Québec student federations agreed to unite in opposition to massive tuition increases, and to refrain from mutual criticism during the course of this struggle. The Charest government made repeated efforts to “divide and conquer” the students, such as making minor offers to certain groups during negotiations, or by trying to paint the more militant sections of the movement as “irresponsible” or “violent”. But these efforts were foiled by the unity of the students, both at the leadership and the campus level. A second important lesson concerns the need for *constant democratic involvement at the grassroots level*. Over and over again during the strike which lasted for months, students on each campus were consulted fully about the latest developments, and repeatedly voted to continue their strikes. Just as important, this struggle showed *the importance of raising wider issues*, connecting the immediate fight against tuition increases with such demands as the call for free access to post-secondary education, and for an end to the neoliberal policies of the Charest government.

As noted above, this fightback movement built the largest sustained mass rallies in Canadian history, several times bringing as many as 250,000 students and their allies into the streets for the famous “casserole” pots and pans protests. Solidarity “casserole” actions took place across English-speaking Canada. Many union locals, labour councils and trade unions outside Québec sent donations to the CLASSE defence fund (despite a despicable attempt of the Québec Federation of Labour and CLC leaderships to discourage this support), and helped organize speaking tours and forums for leading spokespersons of the Québec students. This solidarity campaign helped strengthen working class unity among all the nations in Canada at this

critical time. The size and breadth of this movement, and its sharp rejection of neoliberal policies, shows that the conditions exist to mount much stronger resistance to the Harper Tories.

The Communist Party of Canada re-affirms its support for the progressive arms of the students' movements in their struggles for free and high quality education. Organizations such as the Canadian Federation of Students and the Public Interest Research Groups have recently come under attack from a reactionary minority of students that oppose the idea of activist student unions. The Communist Party condemns these anti-union campaigns and calls for students to continue the struggle to build, unite and mobilize progressive student unions.

Most recently, the Idle No More movement, launched by four Saskatchewan women against the Harper government's reactionary omnibus Bill 45, has won wide support among Aboriginal peoples and beyond. In all parts of Canada, there have been rallies and protests, largely organized at the grassroots level by youth and women.



The Idle No More campaign reflects deep anger at the refusal by governments to tackle the issues of poverty, unemployment, deplorable housing conditions, lack of clean drinking water, high dropout and incarceration rates, and repeated failures to consult on major resource projects (Muskrat Falls, the tar sands pipelines, Plan Nord in Québec, etc.) with huge impacts on the environment of First Nations peoples. Not least, this anger arises from the despicable failure by the Canadian state to seriously deal with the fact that thousands of Aboriginal women and girls have been murdered or gone missing over the past several decades.

The grudging and utterly inadequate response by the federal government to the housing crisis at Attawapiskat First Nation in northern Ontario was one of the sparks for the upsurge of militant actions which began on Dec. 10, 2012, International Human Rights Day. But the underlying

source of this movement is the national oppression of the Aboriginal peoples within and by the Canadian State. As the historic Idle No More manifesto says in part, "... The spirit and intent of the Treaty agreements meant that First Nations peoples would share the land, but retain their inherent rights to lands and resources. Instead, First Nations have experienced a history of colonization which has resulted in outstanding land claims, lack of resources and unequal funding for services such as education and housing... Some of the poorest First Nations communities (such as Attawapiskat) have mines or other developments on their land but do not get a share of the profit. The taking of resources has left many lands and waters poisoned – the animals and plants are dying in many areas in Canada.... There are many examples of other countries moving towards sustainability, and we must demand sustainable development as well. We believe in healthy, just, equitable and sustainable communities and have a vision and plan of how to build them. Please join us in creating this vision."

This powerful manifesto, and the courageous actions by the Idle No More Movement and the hunger strike by Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spencer, have the potential to rouse mass opposition against the oppression of Aboriginal peoples which is embedded in the history and policies of the racist Canadian state. As Lenin noted, uprisings by oppressed peoples can sometimes raise the entire revolutionary struggle to a higher level. These actions must meet with a broad and united solidarity campaign by the labour and democratic forces in all parts of Canada, to demand full national equality among the Aboriginal peoples, Québec, and English-speaking Canada, and to end the shameful racist policies which have imposed poverty and injustice against the Aboriginal peoples for centuries.

At a more fundamental level, the political, financial and the solidarity actions rendered by students and trade unions across English-speaking Canada in support of the Québec student struggle, and the growing solidarity with the struggles of Aboriginal peoples, engendered especially during the Idle No More mobilizations, have constituted a stinging rebuff to the efforts of the Harper Tories to whip up national chauvinism to divide and weaken popular resistance. Furthermore, it once again illustrates the critical importance of building unity on the basis of full national equality between the Aboriginal peoples, the people of Québec and the peoples of the rest of Canada. It confirms our Party's longstanding view that the struggle against national injustice and inequality – and for a new, equal and voluntary partnership – is a decisive factor in uniting the working class from coast to coast to coast to advance the class and social struggle against the capitalist offensive.

One of the most important sections of the people's

movements has always been the struggle by women to win economic and social equality, including wage equity, full access to employment, reproductive rights, child care, and freedom from violence. For decades starting in the 1970s, the most significant partners among the equity-seeking women's movement were united in the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). But not surprisingly, NAC and the women's movement were among the first targets of the neoliberal offensive in Canada, going back to the Liberal federal government's huge spending cuts in the mid-1990s. Since then, governments at all levels have eliminated nearly all spending on equity-seeking women's organizations, and NAC ceased to function a decade ago. Progress towards equality gained by previous decades of struggle have been halted or even rolled back in Canada and many other countries, showing that capitalism itself is hostile to the equality rights of women. The most reactionary elements in the Harper Tory government are laying the groundwork for a determined attempt to wipe out reproductive rights, especially if they win another majority in 2015.

Efforts have been made to make equality rights a major issue during federal election campaigns, and women have played a major role in social struggles such as the Québec student strike and the Idle No More movement. But there had been little progress towards bringing together a new organization representing equity-seeking groups from all parts of Canada. Promising recent developments along these lines include "Leadership, Feminism and Equality in Unions in Canada", a research-based initiative to identify barriers and current issues relating to women in the labour movements, and the ReBELLES conference held in Winnipeg in 2011, with 300 young women, student and worker delegates from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal nations. The creation of a new coalition of women's organizations and other equity-seeking movements is an essential part of the strategy to build a powerful resistance against the corporate/government attack on working people. The Communist Party of Canada gives full support to these initiatives. Our efforts to help build stronger resistance against the anti-women policies of the Harper Tories will be a high priority over the coming period of time.

Another important arena of struggle against the Harper Tories is around civil liberties, and democratic and electoral rights. The Tory "law and order" agenda aims at restricting the rights to freedom of speech and expression, denying government employees the right to speak to the media, and criminalizing large numbers of youth and others for trivial offenses. Yet this same party is accused of massive violations of the *Canada Elections Act*, with the intent of subverting the democratic will of Canadians during the 2011

federal election. Groups such as the Council of Canadians, which is leading the court case on the "robo-calls" scandal, are conducting important struggles to defend electoral rights.

Also of note, there has been a further deterioration in the food security of most Canadians since our party's last convention, continuing a dangerous trend that has emerged during the current era of neo-liberal assault on working people. Although the overall volume of available food items has increased for Canadians during the neo-liberal era, a concurrent increase in the concentration and intensification of corporate food processing in Canada, combined with major cuts to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency by governments hostile to corporate regulation, have increased the risk to food safety in Canada. The delayed response of the Canadian government in September 2012 in shutting down XL Foods' Lakeside beef processing plant in Alberta, despite clear warnings from the US Food & Drug Administration of an outbreak of dangerous *E. coli* O157:H7, was just the latest in a string of food safety fiascos, such as the Maple Leaf Foods listeriosis outbreak of 2008, killing 23 people, and the notorious BSE crisis of 2003.



Moreover, Canada's food security is in further doubt as new questions emerge as to the availability and affordability in real terms of nutritional food items relative to the ever-growing prevalence of cheap, high-caloric, low-nutritional food products in the marketplace.

The heightened risk to Canadian food security also extends beyond the food processing industry into primary agriculture. Due to various technological, market, and government policy changes over the past three decades, Canadian farm operations have experienced powerful forces of concentration and intensification in production. For decades, farmers in Canada have come under significant market pressure to increase economies of scale through greater on-farm mechanization and labour-capital substitution. Likewise, even farmers within supply-management industries, such as dairy or eggs, have seen the administration of the marketing board system operate in a manner that compromises the ability of marketing

boards to mitigate the effects of these market pressures.

When these pressures are coupled with a federal-provincial agricultural policy (i.e., Agricultural Policy Frameworks I & II) heavily biased towards farm-size expansion, farm incorporation, and intensive grain and livestock operations, the result has been the dramatic loss of small to medium-sized ‘family farm’ operations throughout Canada, replaced by large-scale, corporatized ‘factory farm’ operations. This process will only be accelerated for grain farmers now that the Harper government has moved to effectively dismantle the Canadian Wheat Board by terminating the single-desk marketing system for Canadian wheat and barley.

Combined, all of these dramatic changes in agriculture have not only helped fuel a rural exodus of young people to the cities, in which they abandon farming altogether as a career option, these changes also present significant new economic barriers to prospective agricultural producers from entering the market. Hence, the capitalist drive towards monopoly continues unabated in both Canadian fields and food processing plants.

The workers’ movement has been marked by a number of significant and often bitter struggles over the past three years. In addition to the Canada Post and Air Canada disputes, these included the fight in solidarity with the locked-out workers at the Caterpillar Electro Motive Diesel (EMD) locomotive plant in London, the struggle for pension rights and sovereignty by the Hamilton steelworkers, the aluminum smelter workers locked out at Rio Tinto Alcan in Alma, Québec, the battle in Ontario against Bill 115 which violated teachers’ right to meaningful collective bargaining, and the fightback against EI cuts by workers in Québec and Atlantic Canada (such as the Acadian fishermen), among many others.

But the overall state of labour’s fightback has so far been insufficient. Clearly, these are difficult times indeed, given the continuing socio-economic impact of the capitalist crisis, and the intensity and all-sided nature of the employer/government offensive. With the very real threat of strike-breaking legislation and court injunctions hanging over their heads, workers and their unions have often been left with little option but to yield, especially when the rest of labour (and sometimes their own leadership as well) does not mobilize to give them full backing. Our Party is not dismissive of the dilemma which many honest workers and trade union activists face under these adverse objective conditions. But we remain confident that given determined leadership and militant class solidarity, workers are capable of fighting and winning. Indeed, there is no way forward except through struggle.

As our Central Committee noted last May, the biggest subjective weakness restraining the fuller development of the fightback movement remains the lack of leadership from the upper echelons of the trade unions, especially the Canadian Labour Congress itself. The intensity of the current corporate/government onslaught has brought this inadequacy into ever sharper relief.

Years into the crisis, with a Harper majority in Ottawa and right-wing governments in most provinces and municipalities, a vicious onslaught by employers is underway at every bargaining table and on every shop-floor. Yet the CLC under Ken Georgetti (and the leaders of some important unions) have yet to draw the entire labour movement and its social partners together to map out and launch a broad labour-community ‘common front’ to fight back against austerity. Instead, the CLC is focussing on organizing ‘political action’ conferences to line up labour participation in the NDP’s electoral machine for the 2015 general election. Our Party, together with our left and class struggle-oriented allies in the labour movement, must build up pressure on the CLC and the key national affiliates to act now to build the extra-parliamentary fightback by convening an emergency ‘labour & people’s summit’, bringing together the *entire* trade union movement (including the non-affiliated CSN and CSQ labour centrals in Québec) and its social ‘partners – women, youth & students, environmental, Aboriginal peoples, LGBTQ, seniors and other mass democratic movements.

The abdication of leadership by the CLC must be turned around, starting with increased efforts by our own members and by other militant trade union activists, to build left caucuses in unions, labour councils and federations. As best as we can, the Party must work to overcome the tendency to convene left labour caucuses only at labour union conventions, or to reduce the work of the caucuses into electoral machines for progressive candidates. To become a real force to compel the top leadership to take action, such caucuses must become as active and dynamic as possible, both during and especially between labour conventions.

Despite the failings of the CLC leadership, there have been notable examples of positive fightback responses, such as the launch of the Common Front backed by the Ontario Federation of Labour leadership under Sid Ryan, and many important local struggles as noted above. These show that it is quite possible to build a stronger labour resistance against the corporate offensive, and to win broad support from many community allies. Indeed, there is every reason to be optimistic about these prospects. Despite the adverse conditions and subjective weaknesses, many labour and popular movements are becoming ever more vibrant and militant. Many more and new forces are getting

involved and coming into the fightback, and the strike movement, especially among public sector workers, is growing. Militant tactics and coalition-building can move labour from a defensive posture towards a fighting strategy of mobilizing the entire working class and its allies to block the right-wing agenda and to move onto the counter-offensive.

The situation elsewhere cannot be mechanically replicated in Canada, but the militant, class struggle trade unionism seen in Greece and other countries should inspire union activists here to demand a higher level of fightback strategies, such as general work stoppages. A Canada-

wide common front against the corporate/government attack in turn can win wider support for the goal of a labour-led People's Coalition to unite broad sections of the people's movements, not around misleading nostalgia for a rosy "Keynesian" past, but rather around a platform of radical progressive demands, and for a fundamental challenge to the economic and political hegemony of finance capital, both domestic and international. The most decisive factor in advancing such a strategy will be a much larger and more influential Communist Party, capable of raising the revolutionary consciousness of the working class and its historic role in the defeat of capitalism and the achievement of a socialist Canada.

Section III: Build the Communist Party

Our 37th Convention convenes at a most difficult juncture in the history of our country and of the world. The global economic crisis affects every aspect of life. Imperialist aggression and war proliferate. Our environment is tottering on a precipice. And capitalist rulers and their governments are launching a comprehensive and devastating offensive against the economic and social conditions of the people, against labour and democratic rights, and against the foundations of social justice for which we have long fought.

And yet, at the same time, this is also a most dynamic moment, pregnant with real possibilities for democratic and social advance. Across Canada and around the world, workers and their allies are moving into action on an unprecedented scale to combat the consequences of the capitalist crisis and the austerity offensive which has come in its wake, to defend labour, equality and democratic rights, to protect the natural environment, and to resist imperialist aggression and war.

With every turn of the screw, the deepening systemic crisis of capitalism is provoking more and more resistance and struggle, with the class battle lines reflected not only on the economic and political fronts. There is also a sharpening 'battle of ideas'. Our party needs to step-up our efforts in combating the mantras of both neo-liberalism

as well as Keynesianism. The continued and rising influence of neo-classical economics deserves special attention in our work in the labour and trade union movement, as well as in trade, university and college campuses and schools – reflected in the relevant textbooks. At the very least, we need to win the presentation of a contrasting, Marxist economic analysis in the remaining labour publications, labour educational work, and the media in general.

The patchwork of illusions and outright lies woven by bourgeois ideologues are being increasingly questioned and rejected across Canada, especially by the youth. For example, the Merriam Webster online dictionary reported its most frequently searched words in 2012 were capitalism and socialism. While the peoples of Canada by and large still have a reformist outlook, anti-capitalist sentiment is spreading, particularly among activists in the labour and people's movements, which leads people towards revolutionary and socialist consciousness and the Communist Party. At the same time some leftist tendencies outside our party are increasingly adopting Marxist rhetoric while promoting a narrow, sectarian and opportunist approach.

In this context – as the fightback rises and grows in different sectors and regions – the role of the Communist Party is critical. Throughout the past century, there have been many moments in which we have witnessed the rapid growth of class struggle – manifested in strikes, demonstrations, occupations, and many other forms – and sometimes this struggle has been accompanied by a sharpened anti-capitalist analysis. However, throughout most of the post-WW2 period of capitalist expansion the fightback has not been able to develop



beyond a protest movement, even when mobilizations have been large and well-organized. Simply put, these “spontaneous” struggles will always be limited in their effectiveness – and will always have to be repeated – if they are not connected to a unified movement that is oriented toward defeating capitalism.

If there is no clear path between the struggle for immediate reforms and the overall struggle for revolution, the working class will be stuck in a defensive struggle that it must regenerate and rebuild time and time again. This is particularly important in the current conditions of austerity policies and deepening capitalist crisis. No other political party – not social democracy, not the ultra-left – is positioned to provide the clear leadership necessary to find such a path. As our program states:

“Workers wage a daily economic struggle in the workplace for better wages and working conditions. However, socialist theory and practice do not arise spontaneously out of the workplace. The Communist Party, through its work, fuses scientific socialism with the class struggle and by so doing spreads political and socialist consciousness among the workers – an awareness of their historic mission as a class.”

In such circumstances, our Party is called upon to place the highest expectations on its work and to rise to meet the many challenges we face and to seize upon every opportunity to broaden and unite the fightback, despite our small size. Our main challenge, as always, is to become a more effective and militant instrument for our class, capable of leading workers to a better future.

As a revolutionary party, we realize that the working class can only fully resolve the contradiction of this crisis ridden system and emancipate itself through the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of socialism on the path to a classless society. It is when the decisive sections of the working class embrace the ideas of scientific socialism that the prospects for victory will grow and be realized. We need to more effectively project our revolutionary perspective for the future of the working class and humanity as a whole, to fuse our ideology with the growing struggles of workers and mass movements, building the confidence of the working class and its understanding of the need for revolutionary change.

We understand that this will not be realized overnight, but rather through tireless effort to spread our revolutionary perspective while building and helping to unite the labour and people’s movements to meet the most immediate challenges – to confront and defeat the anti-social offensive of finance capital and its governments – federal, provincial and local. Our aim is to forge a genuine and broadly-based ‘people’s coalition’ united around a real alternative that

puts people and nature before profit, and a fighting strategy to realize that goal.

Our perspective towards a “People’s Coalition,” with labour at its core, would be to powerfully combine extra-parliamentary struggles with an electoral reflection. Electorally, using the outreach of its constituent organizations, interventions can be made by either a) supporting a non-affiliated candidate who would seek to represent the interests of labour to one degree or another, b) standing an independent candidate belonging to one of the Coalition’s constituent organizations or c) call for the casting of an invalid/blank ballot. But a People’s Coalition must not be an exclusively electoral alliance and indeed our experience with Québec Solidaire, which has some characteristics of a People’s Coalition, shows the necessity for continued work to oppose a narrow development.

AGAINST AUSTERITY & WAR:

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JANUARY 20th
2:00 PM @ OISE ROOM 5-260
ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION
252 BLOOR ST WEST**

**MIGUEL FIGUEROA
LEADER OF THE COMMUNIST
PARTY OF CANADA**

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**PRESENTATION
& DISCUSSION**

**JOHAN BOYDEN
LEADER OF THE YSL AND JOURNALIST
ON THE QUEBEC STUDENT STRIKE**

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Its work outside election periods focuses on raising issues of labour with elected representatives as well as communicating these to media outlets. During interventions in local labour, environmental or community disputes, Coalition members can draw upon relationships established with other constituent organizations, allowing

for more visible, numerically stronger and more broad-based actions. The Communist Party works within the trade union movement and popular movement to establish such a coalition, bringing together labour and community organizations locally, regionally and federally. This convention calls upon the incoming Central Committee to identify and work towards bringing together labour organizations for the establishment of such a coalition.

At the same time, through and in conjunction with this mass political objective, we must strive to build a larger, stronger and more influential Party, press and YCL, especially among workers, Aboriginal peoples, youth and students, women, and immigrant communities. This means making a strong case for the Party itself and its crucial role and place in the broader struggle for social change. In the first place, this requires that we patiently explain the Party's fundamental political perspective and our strategy and tactics, drawing a clear, dialectical link between the immediate struggle for reform and the revolutionary struggle for socialism. And it means rigorously upholding the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and engaging in ideological struggle against both social democratic and petty-bourgeois reformism on one hand, and infantile adventurism, anarchism and other shades of ultra-'leftism' on the other, while avoiding a narrow, sectarian approach, and always seeking a basis of unity and common action wherever possible.

All these priorities call for greater visibility, agitation and ideological work by the Party at every level. The Party needs to restart regular extra-parliamentary and bi-lingual campaigns with mass distribution of materials – including posters, buttons, stickers and banners. All levels of the party need to improve our coordinated presence at strikes, picket lines and protests establishing specific priorities according to their area of work. Above all, we can't abandon the street – this is what visibility means.

Flowing from this understanding, the convention instructs the Central Committee to make a comprehensive review and verify of our party's resources, committees, and clubs with the intention of strengthening and reinforcing our organization, identifying areas to improve our style of work, and improving our day-to-day activity. Particular attention should be given to: collectively throughout the part as a whole including revitalizing the central commissions and the editorial board of *People's Voice*; recruitment and retention, especially among women; and the development of more party activists cadres at all levels of party structure and bilingualism including the translation of the fundamental documents of the Party into French (i.e. the Constitution, forms, etc) bilingualism in the selection of cadre, and support for the PCQ. This will move us forward in the upcoming period and allow us to take full

advantage of the political opportunities that are arising.

The objective conditions to grow our Party are improving with every passing day. Crude, old style anti communism no longer carries the same sway it once did, especially during the so-called 'cold war'. That said, we should be under no illusions on that score. Anti-communism continues to be a key weapon in the arsenal of the ruling class to divide the workers and isolate and marginalize the revolutionary left. As the capitalist crisis deepens the class struggle intensifies and the Communists gain greater influence, ruling circles will play the anti-communist 'card' more and more. In Greece and a number of other European countries, for instance, right-wing populist leaders and pro-fascist movements are increasingly peddling anti-communist poison. This is a dangerous development. At the same time, the deepening systemic crisis is causing workers to search more seriously for fundamental anti-capitalist solutions and alternatives which go beyond demands for mere "cosmetic" reforms of the economic order.

An increasing number of activists agree with and respect our Party's political analysis, programmatic positions and practical work. Our members are active in a number of mass movements and struggles across the country. In our independent public work, both during election struggles and in our extra-parliamentary campaigning such as our current "No to Austerity and War!" campaign, our Party has a tremendous opportunity to reach many thousands of Canadians with our message. We are reaching thousands and thousands more through the increased distribution of press and topical leaflets, and through our electronic outreach. Our website has been refurbished and our public profile has been enhanced on many fronts. And we are winning new members through this increasing visibility and activity. These experiences show that well planned and executed campaigns can also help our Party to grow, especially when we are open and welcoming to new people, and ask them to join. One area where we are making significant recruitment gains is among immigrant and national minority communities, especially within the South and Central American and South Asian communities.

The main political resolution of the 36th convention noted the following: "Aboriginal people are joining our Party in significant numbers and we need to examine how better to promote their recruitment into our ranks. This will require deepening the understanding of the national question by all members." More effective action must be taken to fulfill this decision, including the re-establishment of the Aboriginal People's Commission.

One of our top priorities must continue to be our attention to ideological and educational activities. Raising

our theoretical understanding at every level of the Party, and especially for new members, is a critical pre-condition for our Party's advance. After all, it is the power of our ideas – our creative application of Marxism-Leninism to today's conditions and the elaboration of the way forward – which makes the most qualitative contribution to our class in its struggle for socialism. The theoretical training and development of party cadres is therefore decisive. In this respect, we have registered some noteworthy advances since our last Convention. Several central party schools have been held since the 36th Convention, and mid-level cadre schools, new member classes and other aspects of our ideological and educational work have improved. The Party comrades in B.C, for instance, have initiated a number of Marxist reading/study circles with friends and allies in the Lower Mainland, and this excellent initiative should be replicated elsewhere as well. More ideological content has also been added to our press and on our websites.

In Ontario the Provincial Committee has created an Education Commission with a mandate to help Clubs with educational as well as other matters that will increase the theoretical knowledge of Party members. Recently the Educational Commission was responsible for organizing a weekend provincial school for mid level cadre on the theme of 'Communist work in the Labour and Mass Movements'. The Commission is now beginning to organize a spring school of new members.

The Toronto Club Council has also created a *People's Voice* Forum committee to hold public events on important topics that would attract people who are not necessarily members of the Party but are interested in the topic.

One of the most alarming consequences of the closing of independent bookstores across Canada, or decisions to shrink the progressive content of these stores, has been the sharply reduced access to Marxist-Leninist books, pamphlets and other printed materials. The incoming Central Committee should take appropriate measures to help make such materials much more widely available to our members and to other progressive activists.

Build the Communist Press

Because of its frequency and visibility, the Communist press is our best means of spreading our ideas and winning new members, friends and allies to our Party – our most effective "agitator, educator, and organizer". Unfortunately, our efforts to build the press over the recent period have yielded somewhat mixed results. Some of our Clubs and individual members have made significant advances in press-building over the past three years. The Ontario party

has now established a special committee to work with the province's Clubs to improve press readership retention and win new subscribers. But in other centres press-building is stagnant or even declining, and the incoming Central Committee must take immediate action to rectify some of these shortcomings in press work. Some initiatives are already underway in this regard, to increase the online reach of our press (including online subscriptions), and to make a closer link to build our print editions as well.

Build the YCL

Since its 24th (refounding) Convention in 2007, the Young Communist League of Canada (YCL-LJC) has made some important strides, and the YCL's presence has grown in a number of centres, especially in Ontario and Québec. It has taken a number of timely and important initiatives in student and other youth-related struggles. The Party needs to continue and extend its all-sided support and assistance to the League and help it to grow and flourish in all parts of the country, while respecting its organizational independence. The YCL-LJC as a "school of communism" and a political home for young revolutionaries constitutes the very future of our movement, and we should do everything possible to help its advance.

Continued and better focused and disciplined work for, which Communists have a hard-earned reputation, is demanded of the Communist Party today. This way, we can decisively break out of our current numerically small position, overcome organisational weaknesses and financial constraints, and re-establish ourselves again as a consequential force across Canada. We must continue to take meaningful steps to renew our leadership with younger, capable and tested comrades. The basic unit of the party is the club. Life in the clubs needs to be improved with assistance from the Party centre. A stronger Communist Party will mean a stronger and more united resistance by the people, a more powerful and militant trade union movement. Objectively the party has a distinctive and indeed indispensable role helping grasp and realize new prospects in the struggle of the working class against capitalism and for a socialist Canada.

As we emerge from our 37th Convention, armed with our theory, our political line, and with a clear and audacious plan of work, we can build our party, press and YCL for ever greater advances, toward socialism!

Proposals for Future Party Work

Build the Party, press and YCL among the workers and wherever people are in struggle!

The 37th Central Convention is charged with setting our Party's political direction over the coming period. The third section of the Draft Main Political Resolution focuses on our main priorities for party-building and organization. This report elaborates on some of these priorities and introduces a proposed Plan of Work leading up to our 38th Convention.

First, it is necessary to make a critical and self-critical assessment of our successes and shortcomings, and to consider some factors which have affected our work during this period.

In general, we can take considerable pride that our Party, despite our small size, has had a visible presence in virtually every major mobilization across the country over the past three years, urging full solidarity with the resistance by the working class and democratic forces everywhere. We have issued dozens of news releases, statements, editorials, and leaflets condemning the neoliberal attack on working people and imperialist aggression around the world. We remain confident that the sharpening class struggle will improve the conditions for us to build the party, and we know that we must improve our own organization to turn this potential into reality.

The Plan of Work from our 36th Convention was quite detailed, ending with a summary of key objectives aimed at party-building and increasing our reach and influence: (1) to raise the visibility and profile of our Party, (2) to expand our ideological and educational work, and (3) to improve our internal organizational practices.

In the first area, we have seen considerable improvement our work around the party press – our main agitating, educating and organizing vehicle. Our English-language printed press has continued to publish regularly, drawing on a larger pool of volunteer writers. Over **200,000 copies of *PV*** have been distributed at rallies, picket lines, labour events, street sales, literature tables, etc., and our online readership has grown. This is a significant achievement, and we need to maintain and even expand this mass circulation of our press over the coming period, and involve the entire membership in this central task.

At the same time, we must note that the paid readership of *People's Voice* has remained at about the same level, rather than increasing as projected in the Plan of Work. In part

this is due to free internet access to a wide range of newspapers and magazines (including *PV*), but also because our clubs and members need much better support in selling subscriptions and accurately tracking renewals. The outgoing CC has taken initial measures to tackle this urgent task, which must be resolved to help build a much larger paid readership. As for our French-language press, the publication of *Clarté* has been less frequent than planned. The PCQ is taking steps to develop a wider range of contributors, and other changes to increase its presence and reach.

There has also been a marked improvement in our **website and related social media activity**. The collective of comrades responsible for this assignment overcame some obstacles which had hampered our activity in previous years, and they deserve our deepest appreciation. Our main website is being updated on a regular and consistent basis, its content has been expanded, and it is much more attractive in design. More efforts are required however to bring our use of social media up to the desired level, although there have also been significant improvements in this regard as well.

As the Plan projected, the party was deeply involved in the **May 2011 federal election**, in which we nominated 20 candidates and brought our platform to large numbers of voters through our leaflets and electronic media tools. This campaign confirmed that only the Communist Party of Canada projects a comprehensive and far-reaching alternative to the neoliberal agenda, and advances the goal of socialism. While there was a very positive response to our campaign, we must find better ways to translate such support into more recruiting.

The Plan directed the Central Committee to organize at least one major extra-parliamentary Canada-wide campaign during each non-election year. The current campaign "**Against Austerity & War: For a People's Alternative**", began in January and should continue throughout the spring months. Its materials have been popular, and the speaking tour by comrade Miguel Figueroa has been very useful to help reach new contacts and potential members in a number of localities. At least one more Canada-wide extra-parliamentary campaign will be organized leading up to the 2015 federal election.

The Plan called for concrete steps to improve collectivity

among Party members in specific areas of work, through teleconferencing and other methods. Some progress has been made, such as more frequent meetings of some **Commissions and Bureaus** via Skype (Peace and Disarmament, Women, Cuba Bureau, Internet). While some of our Central Commissions have functioned on a regular and consistent basis, others have met infrequently or not at all. We must develop and assign more party activists and cadres to ensure that *all* Commissions function effectively. Commissions play a vital role in assisting the work of the central party leadership, and weaknesses in this area must be overcome by the incoming Central Committee.

This coordination is especially important in key priority areas of the Party's mass and independent work: (1) in the **labour movement**; (2) around **Aboriginal issues and struggles**; (3) in **work among women**; (4) in the **youth and student field**; and (5) within **immigrant communities and among migrant workers**. Strong and effective Commissions in these fields will contribute to this effort, but the entire Party at every level must be focussed on achieving advances in these decisive sectors.

In the realm of ideological and educational work, our successes include the holding of regular one-week **Central Party Schools** on an annual basis. We must ensure that this significant progress is maintained and expanded over the coming period. There has also been the inclusion of more theoretical articles in our press and website, the publication of more educational materials, and the establishment of Marxist study groups in some areas. In other respects we fell short, such as the decisions to publish *Spark!* twice-annually to establish a research bureau or collective, and to review the current party program (a special resolution on this topic is on the 37th Convention

agenda.). We must resolve to correct these shortcomings.

The Plan of Work called for efforts to convene **CC plenums** by teleconference as well as the two regular in-person meetings per year; steps to increase political, ideological and organizational assistance to all Clubs; and production of more recruitment-oriented materials. Technical issues have made it difficult to convene CC meetings via Skype, although this may soon be possible. As noted above, some progress has been made in other respects, but we must frankly state that the central party leadership must do more to help clubs develop into stronger bodies at the grassroots level.

Finally, the plan called for all-sided support to the growth and development of the **YCL/LJC**. As we know, the League is our closest ally – organizationally independent but in complete ideological and political unity with our Party – and as such the League is the training ground for future militants and leaders of our Party. The Main Political Resolution notes that there have been some significant advances for the YCL/LJC, mainly in Ontario and Quebec. Over the coming period, YCL membership and political activity needs to grow elsewhere across Canada as well. Only strong party unity in support of the YCL can make it possible to move forward in building the League in all parts of the country. The incoming leadership must work with the YCL leadership to achieve this crucial task, especially since the World Festival of Youth and Students (in December 2013) and the next convention of the YCL are rapidly approaching.

One important priority not listed in the 36th Convention Plan of Work concerned the **party's resources and financial campaigns**. This remains an area of critical importance. As with our fraternal parties in most capitalist countries, our resources are limited, and it takes a constant struggle to

achieve our fundraising goals. But we have succeeded in maintaining our cadre and level of activities, and in publishing materials on the urgent political issues of the past three years. Most significant, we have made important gains in establishing stronger collective responsibility for our resources, which is essential to stabilize our immediate and longer-range activities.

Several factors have had an impact on our efforts to fulfill the previous Plan of Work.

The period since our 36th Central Convention seen intense political upheavals, and the emergence of grassroots struggles involving large numbers of workers, students, Indigenous peoples, and others. While we projected that the class struggle would intensify as a result of the deepening crisis of capitalism, these actions were beyond our expectations, especially the Occupy Movement, the Québec student strike, and the Idle No More movement. The Party and YCL quickly responded with efforts to help strengthen these mass movements. But it must also be noted that our participation in these popular upsurges sometimes stretched our resources and cadre very thin. The next three years will no doubt see similar trends, as popular anger against the attacks of the ruling class continues to build. We must be ready to help strengthen and to initiate such movements where possible. At the same time, as we bring our revolutionary perspective into these growing labour and democratic struggles against neoliberalism, war, and environmental destruction, we must not lose focus on the crucial strategic goal to build the Communist Party, the Press and the YCL.

A key lesson of the last three years is that our collective theoretical understanding of **Marxism-Leninism** and its application to the struggle for socialism in Canada, and our guiding organizational principle of **democratic centralism** must be strengthened.

Stormy seas lie ahead, and only a party of unity in action will be able to meet the critical challenges before us. Our party is not a collection of independent clubs, nor are Communists guided by the whims of individual conscience. As our constitution states clearly, “democratic centralism combines the maximum of democratic discussion and participation of the membership in Party life, with the self-imposed obligation to carry out majority decisions and execution of those decisions by an elected centralized leadership capable of leading the entire Party... All Party members must carry out Party decisions, the minority must abide by majority decisions, and lower organizations must carry out the decisions of higher organizations.”

Third, the CEC and CC are sharply self-critical about our shortcomings regarding certain important organizational tasks, such as consistent maintenance of our databases, and clear communications between our central leadership and the provincial committees and clubs. There are objective reasons for these shortcomings, as stated above, and in some cases we are going through cadre transitions and renewal. Rectifying these weaknesses of leadership in these areas will strengthen morale throughout the entire membership, and improve our ability to raise funds and carry out urgent political activities.

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As the Main Political Resolution states, “We must strive to build a larger, stronger and more influential Party, press and YCL, especially among workers, Aboriginal peoples, youth and students, women, and immigrant communities. This means making a strong case for the Party itself and its crucial role and place in the broader struggle for social change. In the first place, this requires that we patiently explain the Party’s fundamental political perspective and our strategy and tactics, drawing a clear, dialectical link between the immediate struggle for reform and the revolutionary

struggle for socialism. And it means rigorously upholding the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and engaging in ideological struggle against both social democratic and petty-bourgeois reformism on one hand, and infantile adventurism, anarchism and other shades of ultra-‘leftism’ on the other, while avoiding a narrow, sectarian approach, and always seeking a basis of unity and common action wherever possible. All these priorities call for greater visibility, agitation and ideological work by the Party at every level.”

With this in mind, we project the following priorities :

Further improvement of ideological and educational work

- a) Continue to hold the annual Central Party School, and expand provincial and regional schools and Marxist study groups, in consultation with the PCQ and provincial Cttees.;
- b) Expand features and columns in our press devoted to theoretical and ideological questions arising from the growing popular struggles for social change;
- c) Further increase the ideological and educational resources on our website, including more materials suitable for individual reading

and Marxist study groups;

- d) Make a wider range of Marxist-Leninist classics and books by Canadian Communist authors available to our members and supporters;
- e) Ensure that the *Spark!* is published on a semi-annual basis;
- f) Assign the Central Education & Ideology Commission to assist with organizing party schools and classes, and to publish more educational materials;
- g) Direct the incoming Central Committee to find ways to expand our theoretical research capacities, and if possible to establish a Research Bureau or Collective;
- h) Review the current Party program and submit proposals for changes and additions for discussion leading into the 38th Central Convention;
- i) Develop a comprehensive Woman’s Program to update our positions on women and the struggle for socialism. The program should be developed in consultation with all levels of the party, and regional party women’s conferences held, where possible, on the draft program in the lead up to the



next Central Convention. In addition, internal guidelines will be drafted for the party to assist in the recruitment of women into the party.

Expand our web presence and press circulation

- j) Overcome organizational shortcomings which hamper efforts to achieve a substantial increase in the net (paid) readership of our press;
- k) Provide assistance to help ensure more frequent publication of *Clarté*;
- l) Convene a Media Outreach collective to help develop improved strategies to access both the mainstream press/media, and also specialized (ethnic, youth and student, etc.) and alternative media across the country;
- l) Take further steps to improve coordination of all Party-related websites (provincial, local, press, election, etc.) under the guidance of the CEC and the Internet Commission;
- m) Expand our use of YouTube and social networking sites (Facebook, Unionbook, MySpace, Twitter, etc.), and targeted blogs under collective Party supervision and control;

Campaign to raise the Party's visibility and recruiting

- n) Identify and train more candidates for the 2015 federal election, and use this campaign to win a significant number of new Party and YCL members and readers of our press;

o) Organize a major extra-parliamentary campaign in each non-election year, the content to be determined by the CC, and in consultation with National Committee of the PCQ and provincial committees;

p) Develop targeted recruitment efforts to strengthen the class, gender and national/ethnic composition of our party – bring more workers (both unionized and unorganized), Aboriginal peoples and other peoples of colour, and women into our ranks; establish a strong and increasingly visible presence to the extent possible at Pride celebrations across the country;

q) Take urgent steps to ensure that all major Party statements and materials (including the Party Constitution) are fully translated into both French and English; expand translation efforts of Party materials into other key languages as well (Spanish, Punjabi, Chinese, Farsi, etc.).

Improve our organization and collectivity

- r) Improve and regularize contact and follow-up work with all new Party contacts and applicants;
- s) Take urgent measures to resolve the ongoing problems around databases, the coordination of financial reporting, etc.;
- t) Expand the collectivity among Party members active in specific areas of mass work across the country, through the enhanced use of teleconferencing, regular email

contact, etc., and by ensuring that mass assignments are reflective of priority movements and organizations (for example, focusing assignments in the peace movement on building the Canadian Peace Congress and rebuilding the Conseil de paix du Québec);

u) Between each of our two annual in-person CC meetings, convene a shorter CC plenum by teleconference to consult on urgent topics and check on fulfillment of decisions and assignments;

v) Continue to improve and regularize the work of Commissions and Bureaus, as appointed and mandated by the CC; re-establish the Aboriginal Peoples Commission; consider the formation of new Commissions, including (a) Cultural, (b) Youth & Student, and (c) Anti-Racism Commissions;

w) Assign an editor to ensure the publication of a quarterly Central bulletin focused on the Party's organizational activities across the country;

x) Continue and increase the party's all-sided support to the YCL/LJC, including for the League's efforts to help build a large and successful contingent for this year's World Festival of Youth and Students in Ecuador;

y) Direct the central party to conduct a yearly survey of clubs to track members' assignments, contact info, skills and educational interests; and

z) Review the progress on the plan of work and report to delegates prior to the 38th convention on our progress in the implementation of this plan.

Other Convention Highlights

International Greetings

Greetings to our 37th Convention were received from 55 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.

Left Radical Organization of Afghanistan
Algerian Party for Democracy and Socialism
Communist Party of Australia
Democratic Progressive Tribune – Bahrain
Workers Party of Belgium
Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB)
Brazilian Communist Party
Communist Party of Britain
Communist Party in Burma
Chadian Action for Unity and Socialism
Communist Party of Chile
Communist Party of China
Communist Party of Cuba
AKEL (Communist Party in Cyprus)
Communist Party of Bohemia & Moravia
(Czech Republic)
Communist Party in Denmark
Communist Party of El Salvador
Pole of Communist Renaissance in France
Unified Communist Party of Georgia
German Communist Party (DKP)
Communist Party of Germany – Worker's
League
Communist Party of Greece (KKE)
Tudeh Party of Iran
Iraqi Communist Party
Revolutionary Communist Party of the
Ivory Coast
Communist Party of Ireland
Jordanian Communist Party
Communist Party of Kurdistan - Iraq
Kuwaiti Progressive Movement
Lebanese Communist Party
Lao People's Revolutionary Party
Communist Party of Luxembourg
Communist Party of Macedonia

Communist Party of Malta
Communist Party of Mexico
New Communist Party of the Netherlands
Palestinian Communist Party
Communist Party of Pakistan
Peruvian Communist Party
PKP-1930 – The Philippines
Portuguese Communist Party
Communist Party of the Russian Federation
Russian Communist Workers Party
Galizan People's Union – Spain
Communist Party of the Soviet Union
Sudanese Communist Party
Syrian Communist Party
Syrian Communist Party (Unified)
Communist Party of Turkey
Communist Workers Party – Finland
Unified Communist Party of Ukraine
Communist Party, USA
Communist Party of Venezuela
Communist Party of Vietnam
New Communist Party of Yugoslavia

Election of New Leadership

The Convention elected of a new 22-member Central Committee, as well as 14 Alternate CC members. Of these, 13 are active trade unionists, and 34% 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 peace, solidarity, civic reform and LGBT movements.

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); Jane Bouey (BC civic and women's activist); Kimball Cariou (editor of *People's Voice*); Pierre Fontaine (chef du PCQ); Sam Hammond (labour activist); and Elizabeth Rowley (Ontario party leader).

(Highlights continued on next page)

Other Convention Highlights

Special Resolutions

Several special resolutions were presented to the 37th Convention. Two resolutions submitted by the outgoing Central Committee were unanimously approved: (1) to establish a Program Review Committee to consider possible updates to the CPC's program, "Canada's Future is Socialism"; and (2) to direct the incoming Central Committee to undertake a review of the Party Constitution with a view to streamlining party organizational structure in line with current requirements and practices, etc.

The Convention also adopted several action resolutions supporting the struggle of War Resisters in Canada, expressing solidarity with the fast of Elder Raymond Robinson, demanding a thorough, independent enquiry into the anti-democratic and illegal 'robo-call' violations, and calling for annual celebrations of the CPC's Anniversary, among others.

Special Contributions

Several guests made presentations during the course of the Convention, including:

- **Javier Ruiz**, Consul-General of Cuba in Toronto, presenting greetings from the Communist Party of Cuba;
- **Youssef Farha**, representative of the Syrian Communist Party (Unified);
- **Johan Boyden**, General Secretary of the YCL-LJC, bringing greetings on behalf of the Young Communist League; and
- **Stephen L. Endicott** & family, who made a special presentation and reading from his new book, "Raising the Workers' Flag: The Workers' Unity League of Canada".

