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Canada
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**Build the
Party, the
Press and
the YCL!**



**Report from the Meeting
of the Central Committee,
Communist Party of Canada**

The following reports and resolutions were discussed and adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Canada at its meeting held in Toronto, June 13-14, 2015.

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info@cpc-pcc.ca; www.communist-party.ca

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Main Political Report to the Central Committee

The following was presented by cde Miguel Figueroa on behalf of the Central Executive. The Central Committee adopted the Report unanimously, and directed the CEC to finalize the Report in line with the discussion.

There are a great number of matters before us this weekend, given the long interval since our last full plenum in September. We did convene a special CC teleconference meeting back in February to deal with federal election preparations in the event of an early writ.

This report will focus on two main questions: first, the socio-economic and political situation in Canada, the fightback against austerity and reaction, and the immediate priority of working to help defeat the Harper Conservatives in the coming election; and (2) the ideological, political and organizational work of our own Party, especially with respect to party building and extending our reach and influence in the broader labour and democratic movements.

This report aims to assess the most important developments in our country, and in our party itself, to deepen our ideological and political analysis in leading the work of our party. These valuable discussions should continue and deepen when we gather again in August for the Central School of the CC, and following the Federal election, when we discuss and adopt the draft documents for the 38th Central Convention.

Before proceeding to the heart of our deliberations however, we must first situate Canadian political reality in the broader global context.

International Developments

Internationally, the main feature today is the dramatic escalation in militarism and the drive to war by U.S. imperialism and its allies (either directly or via local proxies), by growing interference in the domestic affairs of other countries, and by the outright intervention to overturn states and governments perceived to be hostile to its regional or global interests. *This*

escalation in the drive to militarism and war is directly connected to the deepening cyclical and structural crisis afflicting the capitalist system as a whole, and the desperate attempts of the main imperialist centres to protect and extend their respective positions at the expense of their imperialist rivals, at the expense of the vast majority of the peoples and nations in the rest of the world, and at the expense of the global environment.

Within the imperialist countries (including Canada), this increasing aggressiveness manifests itself in an all-sided offensive to roll back the social and economic gains of the working class and working people generally, and sharpened attacks on labour, democratic and civil rights. Labour and the democratic resistance is also growing within the imperialist countries and around the world, but *resistance, united around a comprehensive democratic and anti-imperialist alternative, needs to be strengthened in order to turn back this offensive, and move onto the counter-offensive, for socialism.*

Internationally, the U.S. and EU imperialist blocs are the primary forces driving this heightened aggression, most often under the ‘flag’ of NATO. For its part, the Harper government is actively promoting the rising tide of aggression, particularly through its military involvement in Iraq and now also Syria, its strident support for the pro-fascist regime in Ukraine, its unqualified backing of Israeli expansionism, and its belligerent attitude to the Bolivarian government in Venezuela.

Whipping up tensions in turn serves to justify increased defence spending. As the World Peace Council recently noted, despite the economic crisis, overall military expenditures last year reached almost \$1.5 trillion dollars, some 2.4% of global GDP, 37 % of which was spent by the USA alone. The web of U.S. military bases and installations around the world continues to spread, now estimated at roughly 1,000.

A massive chunk of these wasteful military expenditures is going into the expansion of the NATO military alliance, in order to secure absolute military superiority for the U.S. and its European



allies, and to expand its 'sphere of operations' not only up to Russia's eastern and southern flanks, but also from the Middle East and North Africa up to the Arctic.

The escalation of imperialist militarism and aggression is not only reflected in military interventions in local wars and the fomenting of 'regime change' in individual countries. It is also pushing the world dangerously closer to world war. The bellicose campaign whipped by the US & NATO bloc against the Russian Federation over the issue of Ukraine, together with the 'eastern push' of NATO to tighten its encirclement of Russia (including the redeployment of NATO forces on its borders), raise the very real danger of possible thermonuclear war. PM Harper has been particularly vociferous in revving up this 'new cold war' against Russia. At the G7 meeting in Germany last week, he said "Mr. Putin runs an entirely different system... It is not at all like our economy, it doesn't share our interests, it doesn't share our values", and once again claimed that Russia was "expansionist" and constituted a "long-term menace".

Recent developments in Ukraine figure prominently into US/NATO's expansionist plans. Following the U.S.-orchestrated fascist coup d'état in February 2014, the illegitimately installed regime of Petro Poroshenko moved quickly to apply for NATO membership, and to call for NATO arms to beef up its brutal onslaught in the Donbass, against cities and enclaves of the Russian-speaking minority who are fighting for regional autonomy to protect their linguistic and other national rights under threat from the Ukrainian nationalist regime in Kiev. Thousands of innocent civilians have perished in this fratricidal conflict. In violation of the truce agreement signed in Minsk earlier this year, the Ukrainian army and its National Guard (made up mostly of fascist and neo-Nazi thugs and criminals) are continuing their assault in an attempt to crush the embattled opposition forces in the



Vladimir Putin and Petro Poroshenko shake hands in Minsk, but since then the nationalist-fascist government in Kiev has repeatedly violated the ceasefire.

East. These gross violations are taking place with the approval, and with the strategic military assistance, of the main imperialist powers including Canada. In light of the genocidal offensive of the Kiev regime, *the announcement this April of the Harper government's decision to dispatch 200 CAF personnel to help train the Ukrainian Army is deplorable, and our Party demands that this decision be rescinded immediately.*

Our Party also condemns the growing wave of anti-democratic and anti-communist repression currently underway in Ukraine. The Kiev regime has launched some 20 criminal cases against leading members of the Communist Party (CPU) including its General Secretary, and the government is fighting a battle in court to ban the party altogether. Furthermore, several weeks ago the bogus 'parliament' in Kiev passed a series of bills to "*de-communize*" Ukraine, banning communist symbols and tearing down monuments to the Soviet heroes of the Great Patriotic War. At the same time, the rump parliament approved legislation to officially restore the 'good name' of Stepan Bandera, the leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and infamous war criminal who colluded with the Nazis during Germany's bloody occupation of Ukraine in WW2. The legislation would also impose stiff sentences on anyone who exposes this grotesque rewriting of Ukrainian history. While Communists are the main target of this assault, other democratic opponents of the regime are also coming under attack. On June 8, a tent camp set up on the 'Maidan' in Kiev by demonstrators protesting against Poroshenko was attacked and torn down by fascist thugs allegedly hired by the authorities. In the face of this fascist repression, *our Party expresses its unwavering solidarity with the CPU and all democratic dissent, condemns the ugly wave of anti-communist frenzy, and calls on the Canadian government to publicly and unequivocally disassociate itself from the repressive actions.*

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U.S. imperialism has also embarked on a dangerous expansion of its war machine in the Pacific. The U.S. "Pivot to Asia" plan to 'contain' the People's Republic of China calls for the deployment of 60% of its naval fleet in the area, with grave consequences to the peace and stability of the region. Continuing military provocations aimed at the DPRK (North Korea), the 2014 're-interpretation' of Article 9 of the Japanese constitution by the Abe government to allow for accelerated re-armament of Japan's Self-Defence Forces, U.S. meddling in the dispute over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, and the expanding U.S. military presence in Australia are



all parts of this worrisome development. Canada is also moving to install a foreign military base in Singapore which will contribute to this 'pivot'.

The U.S.-led imperialist drive to encircle both the Russian Federation (through NATO's 'eastern push') and China (via the "Pivot to Asia") also has a South Asian component. Since its election, the BJP government under PM Narendra Modi has shifted India's domestic and foreign/military policy sharply to the right, contrary to the desire of the vast majority of the people. It has announced its intentions to privatize certain state utilities, mines and farms, has cut state food subsidies for 20 million of India's poor, and is actively promoting extreme Hindu nationalism (the so-called Hindutva



Modi leads India's sharp lurch to the Right

doctrine, literally "Hindu-ness"), and encouraging Hindu extremist attacks against Muslim and other non-Hindus at the local and state level in parts of the country. Modi and the BJP have a long record in this regard. In 2002, when he was Chief Minister of the Gujarat state, Modi was directly implicated in fomenting communal riots that left up to 2,000 Muslims dead. With respect to India's foreign policy, Modi is tilting ever more toward the U.S. axis. In January, his government renewed the 10-year Defense Framework Agreement with the U.S. that will now include joint weapons production projects. The two countries also announced a "breakthrough" on the stalled Indo-US nuclear cooperation agreement. In return for his willingness to make India serve as a strategic asset if not an outright ally of the U.S. in its crusade to counter "rising China," the Washington has declared that Modi would receive immunity from US lawsuits, even if they allege human rights violations he committed.

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Meanwhile, the U.S. & NATO imperialist powers are conducting another set of wars in the Middle East, under the cover of the 'war on terror'. In reality, this is part of the U.S. strategy of imposing a 'New Middle East', composed of a patchwork of weak, fractured Arab states divided

among sectarian lines, in order to undermine pan-Arab unity, facilitate Israeli expansionism and extend imperialist domination over the region and its resources.

When the U.S., Canada and other NATO powers first launched airstrikes against the Islamic State (ISIS), our Party warned that this was likely a pretext for imposing regime change in Syria. Four long years of a foreign-sponsored war, financed by the reactionary Arab states and coordinated from Washington, has left Syria a shattered country, with an estimated death toll of more than 215,000 including 20,000 children, and millions more internally displaced or driven into exile. The elected Al-Assad government in Damascus is now caught in a vice, between ISIS attacks in the western part of the country and a new 'coalition' of other extremists and mercenaries backed by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey (the al-Qaida-led "Army of Conquest") seizing territory from the Syrian army on its eastern flank. *In these dire circumstances, our Party must step up its solidarity with the besieged Syrian people, with the Syrian Communists, and with all the progressive, secular and democratic forces of the country striving to defeat this reactionary onslaught and to preserve the sovereignty and independence of their country.*

Our Party has condemned the Harper government's one-year extension of Canada's participation in the latest imperialist war in Iraq, and its expanded military mission into neighbouring Syria without the agreement of the elected government of that sovereign country. As the CEC statement noted:

"Clearly, this extension shows that Canada is on the way to another disastrous Afghanistan-style war of occupation, ultimately costing billions of dollars and thousands of Iraqi and Syrian lives. Predictably, the Tories call this a 'humanitarian' war to 'protect the women and children'. There is overwhelming evidence that the 'Responsibility to Protect' doctrine has... inflicted enormous damage upon civilian populations."

The wars in Syria and Iraq, the chaos in Libya, the Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen, and domestic turmoil in Egypt – all these are playing into the hands of the Zionist state of Israel to maintain and deepen its illegal occupation of the West Bank, Golan Heights and other Arab lands, and to negate the Palestinian people's struggle for national self-determination. The March 15 declaration by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that if re-elected, his party/government would ensure that Palestine never receives independent statehood confirms that expansionist Israel has



been lying to the world for decades, and that it has no intention of ending its occupation and of negotiating a just peace with the Palestinian people based on a two-state solution. Rather, the rapid expansion of illegal settlements on the West Bank, the construction of the ‘wall of shame’, the periodic bombardment and slow economic strangulation of Gaza, and its continued refusal to resume negotiations with the Palestinian Authority – all these actions unmistakably point to the real intentions of the Zionist state: namely, to make life under occupation unbearable for the Palestinians, to force them into permanent exile, and to complete the annexation of remaining Palestinian lands. This is a genocidal policy of ‘ethnic cleansing’, by any other name. As such, it is a crime against humanity.

It is absolutely appalling therefore that the Harper Conservative government should give unbridled political, diplomatic and economic support to the racist, expansionist state of Israel. Turning reality completely on its head, the Tories have threatened to prosecute Canadians who criticize Israel’s actions, and who support boycotts, sanctions and disinvestment (BDS) against Israel, on the basis that such advocacy constitutes a ‘hate crime’. In January, then-foreign minister John Baird signed a “Memorandum of Understanding” with Israel pledging to fight the BDS campaign, which he called “the new face of anti-Semitism” in Canada. Shortly afterward, Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney, in an address at the United Nations, characterized boycotts of Israel as anti-Semitic hate speech and violence. Blaney said Canada would take a policy of “zero tolerance” toward the BDS movement. *Our Party categorically denounces these anti-democratic threats intended to muzzle all criticism of, and active opposition to Israeli policy, and calls on our entire party to step up its solidarity with the Palestinian people’s struggle, and in favour of the BDS campaign against Israel.*

One encouraging development in the region has been the interim nuclear deal (the Joint Plan of Action) struck between Iran and the P5+1 countries (US, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany), which our Party cautiously welcomed in a recent CEC statement. Our Party is sharply critical of the autocratic, undemocratic regime in Teheran; however, we also condemn the use of the so-called “Iranian nuclear threat” as a pretext to impose sanctions on the Iranian people, and to foment imperialist aggression against Iran. Our Party therefore considers this ‘framework’ agreement is a small step in a positive direction on the issue of peace in the Middle East. However, we also warned that the deal avoids many of the underlying issues that have contributed to

insecurity, conflict and war in the region, not least of which is the fact that there is no consideration or inclusion of the role of Israel – a nuclear weapons state which has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty – in the agreement, nor any mention of the military buildup in the region by the US and its allies. *Our Party demands that the Canadian government immediately normalize relations with Iran and end all sanctions, reject its current foreign policy of provocation, interference, aggression and war, and adopt an independent foreign policy based on peace and disarmament, including withdrawal from NATO.*

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Imperialist intervention is also growing on the African continent. The first major operation after the formation of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2008 was the US/NATO operation (under a UN Security Council cover) to smash the Gaddafi-led government in Libya in 2011. But the U.S. has also been quietly constructing bases with drone capacity and “forward operating sites” (for special operations) in a number of African countries: Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia, Seychelles, Burkina Faso, South Sudan, Central Africa Republic, the Congo and elsewhere. One recent study found US military involvement in no fewer than 49 African nations.

France has also become conspicuously active in Africa, sending some 4,000 soldiers, including special forces, into Mali and another 1,000 troops to the Central African Republic (with German and British logistical support) to “suppress violence” following a coup there. According to the *Associated Press*, plans for a further French military buildup would include basing 3,000 permanent French soldiers in the Sahel, and placing Mirage fighters at an air base in Chad.

This growing imperialist military presence – including that of former colonial powers – on African soil is raising concern across the continent. US and EU officials claim that this is benign in character, intended to help local governments “restore order”, and to monitor and combat terrorist groups like Boko Haram, al-Shabaab and the Lord’s Resistance Army. The real intention however is far more sinister – to extend imperialism’s global network of bases and military infrastructure across Africa.

The Western military expansion in Africa is directly related to imperialism’s economic interests and intentions – to “re-colonize” this strategic continent rich in agricultural land, oil, precious metals and other resources, and to counter the growing economic presence of the People’s Republic of China and the political influence of South Africa on the affairs of the continent. This is



particularly evident in the surge in land purchase by foreign companies and governments to grow food and other crops for export. Such foreign land acquisitions have the potential to hurt domestic efforts to raise food production and could limit broad-based economic growth. Many deals have little oversight, transparency or regulation, have no environmental safeguards and fail to protect smallholder farmers from losing their customary rights to use land.

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The one continent where imperialist interests continue to suffer setbacks is South America. At the 7th Summit of the Americas in April, President Obama and his administration took a pounding, as delegation after delegation rose to condemn U.S. economic and political interference in their affairs, and to demand that Washington rescind its executive decree calling Venezuela a 'national security threat'. It was also a significant moment for socialist Cuba, with the island being invited to participate for the first time, represented by its president, Raúl Castro.

This breakthrough was made possible by the growing pressure from the vast majority of its member-states to end Washington's isolation of Cuba, and preceded by the historic December 17, 2014 announcement of steps – although still preliminary and partial – to achieve a political and diplomatic *rapprochement* between the U.S. government and Cuba, and announcing the release of the three remaining imprisoned members of the Cuban Five. The December 17th speech of President Obama was an historic moment, an admission by U.S. imperialism that its 55 years of economic blockade, subversion, and attempts to isolate Cuba had ended in dismal failure. The subsequent decision to remove Cuba from the U.S. Administration's list of states sponsoring terrorism was also quite significant. Of course, the legislative measures imposing the economic blockade still remain in place, and other important issues such as the repatriation of Guantanamo Bay to Cuba are still unresolved. In such circumstances, *it is vital that our Party continue to give its wholehearted support to the friendship and solidarity movement with Cuba. The recent convention of the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) has elaborated new priorities for this important work, and we must do everything possible to help realize these objectives.*

At the same time, we should take serious note of imperialism's continuing and unrelenting efforts to overturn progressive and anti-imperialist gains in Latin America. This past February, yet another coup attempt against the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela planned to bomb the Presidential Palace,

the National Assembly, Telesur TV network, and the Defence Ministry on February 12, the one-year anniversary of violent anti-government attacks which caused 43 deaths. Canadian complicity in this coup plot, in which an RCMP member was



Venezuelan President Maduro announces diplomatic sanctions against US after failed coup attempt

involved seeking information on airport capacity in case of emergencies, has never been explained or renounced by Ottawa. Fortunately, however, the planned coup was foiled in time by the Venezuelan government and people.

Perhaps even more serious is the protracted 'economic war' being waged on its national economy by the local capitalist class, with guidance and support from U.S. imperialism. By artificially creating shortages and price hikes, it aims to erode popular support among the people for the Maduro government and its ambitious program for economic and social reform. Taking a leaf from the sabotage handbook used to destabilize Allende's Chile before the Pinochet fascist coup in 1973, the forces hostile to the Bolivarian process – both domestic and foreign – are trying to create similar conditions as a precursor to another coup d'état. The message from Washington to the people of Venezuela is brutal and clear: surrender to a neoliberal dictatorship, or face slow death from starvation and bullets. Confronted with this vicious imperialist campaign, our Venezuelan comrades have asked us to strengthen our solidarity with their revolutionary process. *We should agree here to act accordingly, by condemning every manifestation of Canadian complicity in this counter-revolutionary campaign, by demanding a wholesale change in Canada's relations with Venezuela to one based on friendship and respect for national sovereignty, and by assigning more comrades to this field of work to help strengthen the solidarity movement across the country.*

A similar destabilization campaign, led by domestic capitalists with support from imperialist quarters, is being waged against the Correa



government in Ecuador. Prompted by the passage of the *Wealth Redistribution Law* which restricts the inheritances of the super-wealthy, reactionary forces have organized a series of violent demonstrations in an effort to destabilize and oust the democratically-elected government. However, popular support remains strong for President Rafael Correa, who won the 2013 election with an overwhelming 57% support.

In Colombia, the peace negotiations between the government and the FARC-EP insurgency continue to drag on. Although some progress has been achieved, it is becoming increasingly clear that the Santos government is purposely delaying the process in order to weaken the FARC forces on the ground. It has launched numerous bombing raids and ground assaults in recent weeks. In such circumstances, *our Party expresses its continued solidarity with the FARC-EP, and demands the Colombian government negotiate an end to the 51 year-long civil war, release all political prisoners, and agree to genuine land reform and other democratic demands of the Colombian people.*

Overall, the political and socio-economic advances which have been scored in Latin America in recent years are quite significant. We should note here that our sister Communist parties in Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia and elsewhere across Latin America have been very active in helping to build and deepen this process. While these partial advances are still developing, and in no instance constitute a ‘revolutionary leap’ in terms of the transfer of state power to the working class and its allies, they nevertheless mark real movement along the road to fundamental transformation. As Albano Nunes, a leading member of the Portuguese Communist Party succinctly placed it,

“...the challenges, doubts, and uncertainties [in the process in Latin America] should not lead us to underestimate the importance of what was achieved so far for the masses who were historically exploited and oppressed ... Nor should they make us forget that the ways of social progress, while obeying laws that have universal validity, are increasingly more diverse and influenced by the history and national specificities of individual countries. Indeed, they do not follow pre-defined ‘models’ but are rather the creative work of the masses with their revolutionary vanguard. ...We are living in the era, inaugurated by the October Revolution, when capitalism will be replaced by socialism, but the stages, forms and pace at which different countries move towards socialism will depend on the specific circumstances of individual countries and the

relations and relative strength of its various classes, and will therefore be very diverse.”

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The escalation in imperialist aggression, the main aim of which is to secure resources and markets for plunder, is directly related to the deepening systemic crisis of capitalism itself, and to the desperate attempts of the dominant imperialist centres to resolve this crisis on terms which preserve and advance their respective interests and forestall the advance of the BRICS countries. The impact of the worldwide economic meltdown of 2007/08 – by far the most intense and protracted cyclical crisis since the Great Depression – continues to resonate. Economic growth rates in the main imperialist centres – U.S., Japan and EU – remain sluggish. In Europe, GDP growth is virtually zero and many of the EU member-states (Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Italy) are perilously close to defaulting on their massive accumulated debt. The austerity measures imposed on these countries by the EU and the bankers to ensure repayment have led to a massive surge in unemployment and poverty among the masses of the people.

One of the sure signs that the capitalist crisis is far from over is reflected in the fact that the ‘debt bubble’ has continued to grow at a staggering and unsustainable rate. The McKinsey Global Institute, a bourgeois think-tank, noted recently that instead of indebtedness receding in the period following the onset of the crisis, “all major economies today have higher levels of borrowing relative to GDP than they did in 2007. Global debt in these years has grown by \$57 trillion, raising the ratio of debt to GDP by 17 percentage points. That poses new risks to financial stability and may undermine global economic growth.” Meanwhile, corporate and bank profits have rebounded handsomely, but both private (corporate) and state reinvestment levels in new goods and services production and infrastructure remain at very low levels in most leading capitalist countries, including Canada. This glut of so-called ‘dead money’ (assets not funnelled back into the cycle of extended reproduction), is instead being used to consolidate and centralize capital in the hands of a dwindling core of ‘super-monopolies’, and the largest global banking institutions.

This in turn is driving up structural unemployment rates *in real terms*, as full-time, well paying jobs are increasingly replaced by part-time, temporary and other precarious forms of employment, and forcing real wages to plummet. In the U.S., for instance,

“...median inflation-adjusted income last year was \$2,100 lower than in 2009 and \$3,600 lower than in 2001. 50% of all American workers made less than \$28,031 a year, while a



whopping 39% brought home less than \$20,000. Furthermore, the gap between high- and low-income groups is the widest it has been in 100 years and the share of U.S. consumers who call themselves middle class has never been lower.” [Money Morning Staff Reports, February 2015]

Even more serious than the current cyclical malaise is the longer term economic and political outlook for the U.S. and EU powers, as their hegemonic positions come under increasing challenge from the so-called BRICS countries. Currently, the combined economies of the BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – amount to 18% of global GDP but their share, led primarily by China’s economic growth, is expected to rise to fully 1/3 of worldwide GDP by 2030. Using a different econometric measure, the “Purchasing Power Parity” index (which adjusts



for the real value of respective currencies), the BRICS’ share would increase to over 45% of global economic activity by 2030. The recent talks between Brazil and the Russian Federation about plans to create a BRICS development bank and other moves to weaken the monopoly of the US dollar as the international reserve currency are sure signs of this changing balance of forces internationally.

This seismic shift in relative economic might has precipitated a number of counter-measures by the U.S. and EU to shore up their flagging position through an accelerated push for regional trade and investment pacts (CETA, and US-EU trade agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership [TPP], etc.), and through increased militarization aimed at pressuring and “containing” both Russia and the PRC.

Assessing the current role of the BRICS countries, both individually and as a “group”, requires more study and discussion. Clearly, it would be quite wrong to draw facile parallels between the class, internationalist role that the former Soviet Union and the socialist community of

states played through much of the past century, and the BRICS states of today. The BRICS cooperate around shared interests, but this group is not a stable, much less a coherent anti-imperialist, alliance. They operate within and largely accommodate themselves to the dynamics of global capitalism, even if some take positions on certain international issues which overlap with the stance of the peace and anti-imperialist forces around the world. At the same time however, it would be equally wrong to dismiss the BRICS as a just another rival, imperialist formation. *BRICS policies and actions that help to inhibit the aggressive agenda of imperialism should be welcomed; BRICS policies and actions which undermine international peace and security and/or run counter to the interests of the working class and oppressed peoples (including the working class and peoples of their own countries) should be criticized and resisted.*

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Despite the failure of neoliberal recipes to re-fire growth, ruling capitalist governments have in the main stubbornly struck to pro-austerity, anti-labour measures (even when mixed with fiscal stimulus), the results of which continue to place an overwhelming burden on the backs of the working class and its allies – indigenous peoples, women, seniors and retirees, youth and students – while protecting corporate wealth and even accelerating the concentration and centralization of capital.

Indeed, this concentration of accumulated wealth on a global scale is reaching dizzying heights. As an Oxfam research paper released earlier this year points out, “the richest 1 percent have seen their share of global wealth increase from 44 percent in 2009 to 48 percent in 2014. Members of this global elite had an average wealth of \$2.7 million per adult in 2014. Of the remaining 52 percent of global wealth, almost all (46 percent) is owned by the rest of the richest fifth of the world’s population. The other 80 percent share just 5.5 percent...”

In the face of this widening social disparity – caused in the main by corporate-driven wage cuts and other takebacks, pro-austerity cuts to public and social services by capitalist governments, and by regressive tax policies that shift the burden onto working people – labour and popular resistance continues to grow particularly in Europe where the austerity agenda has been most harshly implemented. Strikes and protests have continued in Greece, Spain, Portugal and many other countries, such as Ireland, where this March, up to 40,000 anti-austerity protesters marched through Dublin against additional charges for water. The Communist parties have played an important and in



some cases decisive role in building up the mass anti-austerity movements across Europe, especially the KKE (and PAME) in Greece and the Portuguese CP in Portugal.

Broad opposition to the cuts imposed by the *Troika* (European Commission, IMF and the European Central Bank) have led sections of working people, ruined farmers and small business people, and sections of the intelligentsia and middle strata to embrace newly spawned (or reconfigured) social democratic parties and movements such as Syriza and Podemos which advance radical-sounding promises to ‘stand up’ to the austerity agenda of the *Troika*. In Greece, the January 25th general election actually resulted in Syriza winning a plurality of seats in the Hellenic parliament, although short of an absolute majority. Podemos is positioned to make similar gains in Spain in the general elections slated for this coming December.

The rise in the political fortunes of Syriza, Podemos and like-oriented ‘new’ parties in other countries, must be understood not only as an angry reaction by the electorate to the *Troika* and the austerity dictates of finance capital, but also as a mass rejection of the political bankruptcy of the older, established social-democratic parties which dutifully imposed those very same neo-liberal, austerity policies while in office. In Greece for instance, the once-powerful PASOK saw its electoral support plummet to under 5% in the last election.

It is significant that more and more working people are rejecting not only the parties of big business, but also the mainstream social democratic parties, and are searching for alternative paths forward. That many are gravitating to ‘new left’ (but still essentially social democratic) formations is not surprising. But *these ‘new, improved’ and ‘radical’ variants of social democracy do not call for a decisive break with the austerity agenda, much less constitute a systemic or revolutionary challenge to the dictates of monopoly capital.* While many cling to the hope that this time around, such parties won’t ‘sell out’ or betray their interests as previous reformist, social democratic formations have done, it is far more likely that they will become yet another sad reminder of what Karl Marx warned against: “*History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce*”.

Many people in Greece and around the world were elated by the news of Syriza’s victory, but that early enthusiasm has quickly dissipated. Immediately following the election, Syriza struck a deal with the Party of Independent Greeks (ANEL), as its junior partner in a ruling coalition. ANEL includes extreme right-wingers,

with some members having made explicitly anti-Semitic statements and expressed the wish for immigrants in Greece to “go back to their own countries”. Then the new Syriza government sent its finance minister off to Brussels to renegotiate the terms of Greece’s debt enslavement to the European bankers; then it reneged on its promise to rehire sacked government workers; then it offered NATO a new naval base on its soil; etc. One commentator summed up the conflicted sentiments of many Greeks with this comment: “We’re all hoping for the best but Syriza’s proclaimed goal is not to overthrow the status quo. Instead, it wants to bargain for a kinder, gentler form of impalement.”

The point here is not to slander these ‘new left’ formations, but rather to point out that their structural and programmatic limitations, aimed at seeking accommodation and an ‘historic compromise’ with EU Capital will invariably lead to defeat, absorption and betrayal of their radical-sounding promises. In our view, *genuine working class advance must be based on a complete ‘rupture’ with the logic of capitalist state rule, and a determined revolutionary struggle to supplant its power with working class power, with socialism.*

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We must also take serious note of the dangerous growth of electoral support for parties of the extreme right in several countries across Europe. Advancing populist, nationalist and anti-EU slogans, trading on people’s fear and insecurity, and blaming the scourge of high unemployment on immigrant communities and trade unions, a number of far right parties have made alarming headway in local, national and EU-wide elections in France, Norway, Switzerland, Austria, Britain, Belgium, Finland, Hungary and elsewhere. They have extended their base well beyond the petit-bourgeoisie to substantial sections of the working class. They have even gained political control of a number of municipal and regional governments. Many of these extremist parties not only put forward anti-immigrant, racist and ultra-nationalist slogans and demands; they also openly advance fascist and neo-Nazi positions. Their increased media presence and sophisticated use of social media is turning public discourse sharply to the right.

As the recently issued “European Anti-fascist Manifesto” warned, the far-right, neo-fascist forces:

“are gaining mass influence in the poorer layers of society turning this influence systematically against traditional and newer scapegoats (immigrants, Muslims, Jews, LGBT, disabled people,...) as well as against left wing



organizations and trade unions... the general implementation of sweeping austerity measures is already making the rise of the extreme right an almost general phenomenon... The impetuous rise of the extreme right and the emergence of an ultra-violent mass neo-fascism are no longer an exception to the European rule. In fact, the neo-fascist threat in many European countries is already so direct and immediate it has transformed the antifascist struggle into the first priority, a battle of life and death..."

While ultra-right and neo-fascist groups have much less visible presence or support in Canada at the present time, it would be incorrect to dismiss or underestimate this danger. Indeed, the threat of fascism is growing here as well, and must be combated now and stopped dead in its tracks. *This adds heightened importance to the struggle against all manifestations of right-wing populism, anti-immigrant attacks, racism and fascism, and our Party must raise its own activity in this field and encourage the broad trade union movement and democratic forces to be vigilant and united in exposing and countering this threat.*

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Meanwhile, the looming environmental calamity of global warming draws ever nearer; indeed, many of its effects are already being felt in terms of changing weather patterns, soil erosion, endangered species, etc. The latest Assessment Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) notes with alarm that earlier forecasts had grossly underestimated the pace of climate change. Based on new data and better assessment techniques, the IPCC now projects that warming is expected to go up between 1.4 and 5.8°C between 1990 and 2100. This is far more than the 1995 projection of a 1 to 3.5°C temperature rise. Furthermore, warming in the northern regions of North America, and northern and central Asia will be 40% more than the global average. Snow cover has already dropped by about 10% since the 1960s, and there is a widespread retreat of mountain glaciers outside the polar regions. Precipitation in the northern hemisphere is rising by 0.5 to 1% every decade, while in parts of Asia and Africa, the frequency and intensity of droughts have increased in recent years.

Many scientists now predict that the world's environment has already passed the 'tipping point', and that the catastrophic impact of global warming is no longer avoidable, even if new carbon emissions are significantly reduced (beyond those targets set in Kyoto). Indeed, climate change impacts in this hemisphere are already significant

and likely to become more intense in the near future, a new report released by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has warned. The organization said that effects are already being seen in agricultural activity, water availability, forests and biodiversity, sea level changes, tourism and people's health.

And yet the leading imperialist powers continue to doddle while Rome burns, or worse. Some governments – especially the despicable role played by the Harper Conservatives in Ottawa – are actively obstructing any new international agreement requiring mandatory emission reductions in order to protect the profit interests of the large fossil fuel monopolies. This was played out again at the recent G7 meeting, where Canada managed to water down the final communiqué on 'de-carbonization', pushing back to target date until the end of the 21st century.

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Finally, our Party notes that this year also marks the 70th anniversary of the murderous U.S. bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing or injuring over 225,000 people, mostly civilians. It is also 35 years since the signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), in which countries with nuclear arsenals pledged to negotiate general and complete nuclear disarmament. And yet there is still no progress to eliminate the nuclear threat to humanity. Instead, the highly profitable 'war machine' marches on and proliferation continues, but under new technological conditions which are giving rise to new generations of 'conventional' weapons which blur the lines between conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Imperialist-driven local and regional wars flare in several parts of the world, and the threat of a generalized, global conflagration draws nearer.

This stark reality brings into sharp focus *the need for our Party to do everything to strengthen the broad peace movement across the country, and in particular to continue to support efforts to build and expand the Canadian Peace Congress as its most conscious, anti-imperialist contingent.*



On the Domestic Situation, the Fightback, and the Coming Elections

Let's now turn our attention to the Canadian economy, the struggle against capitalist austerity and reaction, and the significance of the coming federal elections.

First however, let us address the tremendous significance of the *Truth and Reconciliation Report* issued earlier this week. The Commission's report condemned Canada's longstanding Aboriginal policy to eliminate Aboriginal governments, to ignore Aboriginal rights and terminate Treaties, and, through a process of assimilation, to cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. "The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as 'cultural genocide'." Our Party welcomes this historic report, and calls on the Canadian government to implement all of its 94 recommendations as a necessary first step to rectify the historic crimes committed against Canada's indigenous peoples, and the complete recognition of their national rights.

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As we are well aware, the global economic crisis impacted the Canadian economy to a lesser extent than most other domestic economies in the leading capitalist states, not to mention the lesser developed economies in Africa, Asia, or Latin America. In large measure, this was due to Canada's bountiful fossil fuels and other natural resources which helped to buffer the decline, and also because Canada's megabanks were somewhat less exposed to the collapse in value of leveraged (re-packaged) debt. Nevertheless, Canadian finance capital – the largest corporations and banks – have taken full advantage of the crisis to consolidate their holdings, to downsize production (destroying excess capacity), and to raise labour productivity while attacking the wages, benefits and living standards of workers.

Likewise, governments at all three levels have implemented austerity policies, have eroded and/or privatized social services, and have shifted the tax burden more and more onto the backs of working people, primarily by cutting corporate and wealth taxes on the rich.

This capitalist offensive has resulted in ever-widening social disparity between rich and poor. Recent figures from the OECD show that Canada is among the worst of the advanced capitalist

countries in terms of the widening income gap between top earners and others in society. The top 1% of Canadian pre-tax income earners now capture 37% of the overall income growth, and swallow up 12.2 per cent of the country's income pie, ranking Canada only behind the U.S., Great Britain, and Germany in terms of income disparity among the 18 relatively rich countries compared. On the other hand, *real incomes* for working people have been declining steadily for decades, but particularly since the onset of the current crisis.

While the official unemployment figures remain steady (at 6.8%), these statistics belie the fact that the pattern of job loss/job creation is shifting dramatically. Part-time jobs accounted for 80% of net job creation over the past year and the share of workers in part-time positions now stands at 19.3%. By comparison, in 1976 that figure stood at only 12.5 per cent. Furthermore, temporary contract positions have increased the most, and now stand at 1.1 million workers, up 83% since 1997. Temp workers tend to have lower pay, fewer benefits and less on-the-job training than permanent, full-time workers.

The other side of the equation is of course the loss of full-time and well-paying jobs. In March 2015 alone, some 28,000 full-time positions



disappeared, mostly in manufacturing (e.g., Bombardier, Blackberry, Kelloggs), construction, mining (Iron Ore Co. in Labrador City) and in the tar sands development (owing to the collapse of world oil prices, but also because of growing mobilizations by Aboriginal peoples and environmental activists opposing this expansion). In B.C., some 17,000 full-time jobs were lost this spring. There has also been a raft of layoffs in the service and retail sector. In addition to the 17,500 jobs lost at Target, there have been large layoffs announced at CIBC, Future Shop, Tim Hortons, Black's Photography, Mexx and Jacob stores, among others. Job losses in these sectors, combined with the lack of job creation (especially for new entrants in the labour market) in the economy in general has driven youth unemployment through the roof, often two to three



times higher than the general rate of unemployment.

Wage reductions, and the loss of full-time work, have cut into the incomes and purchasing power of working people across the country. The drop in the Canadian dollar (from near-parity to roughly 80 cents US) has also driven prices for food and other imported goods up dramatically, further reducing purchasing power. Because of the gradual decimation of the secondary manufacturing sector of the Canadian economy over the past two decades or more, there is little countervailing benefit derived from the weaker national currency (compared to the U.S. dollar), except perhaps in the tourism industry. Not surprisingly, millions of working people and those on fixed incomes are finding themselves in an increasingly precarious financial position, often a pay cheque or two away from homelessness. Savings rates are at an historic low, and by the end of the last quarter of 2014, the ratio of household debt to 'disposable' income hit an all-time high of 163.3%!

Dwindling real incomes are driving more and more Canadians into poverty. 4.8 million are now below the poverty line (i.e., 1 in every 7 people). More than 200,000 experience homelessness each year, and almost 1 in every 5 households have serious 'housing affordability issues' (spending over 50% of their income on rent). The housing crisis in the largest cities is growing ever more acute, especially in Toronto and Vancouver, where rents and housing prices have been artificially inflated by rampant real estate speculation. Housing in Vancouver, for instance, is now rated as the second-most unaffordable in the entire world!

Furthermore, the pay gap between men and women for work of equal value is once again widening, forcing more women into the ranks of the working poor. While the scourge of growing poverty affects every major urban centre (as well as in the countryside) and cuts across every community and demographic group, indigenous peoples, working women, seniors on modest pensions, racialized and immigrant communities, and youth and students are hardest hit. But nowhere is the scourge of poverty more entrenched and institutionalized than among Aboriginal peoples. As the May 2014 report of James Anaya, the UN Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, pointed out, the "abysmal" social conditions in First Nations are reflected in the fact that out of the poorest 100 communities in Canada, 96 are indigenous.

Shrinking pay cheques and higher prices on food, housing and other essentials only tell part of the story. Add to this the impact of increased user fees and diminished public services, ravaged by

government austerity, dwindling access to Employment Insurance (now denied to more than 60% of the unemployed), and the corporate attack on defined-benefit pension plans, and the socio-economic reality for millions of working people becomes ever more precarious and stark.

This decline in living standards for the vast majority of working people is coupled with a corresponding spike in profits, especially for the banks, oil & resource monopolies, and other large corporations. For instance, Canada's top three telecommunications giants Rogers Communications, Bell and Telus averaged profit margins of 45.9% in the last fiscal year, well above the international average. In the manufacturing sector, an average of four percent of jobs have disappeared every year since the recession hit, but during that same period, manufacturing profits soared a stunning 24.3%. It should come as no surprise then that despite stagnant re-investment of capital and virtually no overall GDP growth in the domestic economy, stock prices (a measure of current and projected profits) on the TSX are near historic highs.

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The political situation in the country is unfolding in this socio-economic context of ever-widening social disparities. Growing job insecurity, increased household debt levels, deteriorating social services due to government 'restraint' measures, and a tightening squeeze on the real incomes and living standards of working people and their families on one hand; and rapidly accumulating wealth in the coffers of the banks, corporations and the super-rich, on the other. This is the net result of the anti-working class offensive of monopoly interests at the workplace, around the bargaining table, and through the austerity policies of governments, especially the Harper Conservatives in Ottawa. Indeed, this is the true face of Harper's "economic action plan", to enhance corporate profitability and the concentration of capital through a wholesale transfer of wealth from the working class, small farmers and primary producers, Aboriginal peoples, women, new immigrant communities and migrant workers, youth and the elderly.

Part of this strategy is to transform the functions of the state, downsizing and privatizing its social distributive role. In particular, there is a sharpened attack on the principle of universality in the public healthcare system, on direct forms of income support such as EI and pensions, and on social transfers for education and social welfare. These attacks come together with efforts to further 'deregulate' the economy by attacking labour laws, equity programs, and environmental protections to



promote corporate interests. Finally, there is a concerted drive to strengthen the repressive apparatus of the state through more militarization and foreign aggression, more covert surveillance of its citizens, longer sentences, and more police and prisons, etc.

Another key aspect of this agenda is to facilitate the corporate re-structuring of the economy itself by sponsoring pro-corporate trade deals like the *Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)* with the EU, and the *Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)* deal. The most immediate battleground is around stopping the CETA pact which, in order to take effect, must be approved by provincial governments, meaning that the struggle to stop this disastrous sell-out agreement has now moved to another stage.

This corporate restructuring also takes the form of permitting massive de-industrialization and capital flight from the country, in changing immigration policy to provide cheap and vulnerable labour through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and other reactionary changes to immigration law (C-43 followed by C-24), and in accelerating the exploitation and export of Canada's natural resources regardless of its social and environmental impact.

Permeating virtually every aspect of this strategy is the sharp attack on democratic rights and processes. The rights of labour to organize, to collective bargaining and to strike are being curtailed through restrictive legislation and back-to-work orders. Deportations (including Canadian-born citizens) are being authorized without legal redress. The rights of environmental and other concerned groups to intervene against large and destructive development projects are being attacked. Progressive charities that speak out against government policy are being targeted for forensic audits. The rights of women and other affected workers to challenge employer violations of equity standards are being diminished. Government scientists are being gagged. The electoral system itself has also come under attack through the passage of the misnamed "*Fair Elections Act*" which actually weakens the ability of Elections Canada to prevent and/or punish electoral fraud (like the "robo-calls" scandal), which disenfranchises hundreds of thousands of voters, especially among national minorities, and which allows the ruling Tories to evade campaign spending restrictions. And the list goes on.

This attack on democratic rights is also reflected in the daily lives of the people, and on the streets of our communities through the increasingly authoritarian and repressive behaviour of the police. The brutal attacks on student protestors in

Montreal, the racist use of "carding" (whereby police can demand civilians to present their identification without any reason or justification) in Toronto and other centres across Canada, and the increasing violation of personal privacy by the State and corporations, are being met by growing resistance.

Particularly significant in this regard is the Harper government's new "anti-terrorism" legislation (Bill C-51), and the diverse and growing opposition which has sprung up against it across the country. The Ontario wing of our Party has summed up the main character of this dangerous legislation in the draft documents for their 28th Convention:

"Bill C-51 has effectively created the conditions for the emergence of a state within a state: a police state... This is the very grave danger our country faces, and is the biggest threat to labour, democratic, and civil rights today. ...Bill C-51 is also one of the most important connectors between the war at home and the war abroad, and the corporate agenda which binds them together. In the frantic effort to salvage the economy from a deepening crisis, through the twin policies of austerity and war, capital is demanding unfettered power and mobility."

That dangerous bill has now been passed in the Commons and Senate, and proclaimed into law, but this should not stop our resistance to this anti-democratic, police-state legislation. Initial steps have been taken to call another anti-C51 day of action in September, and many groups are pressuring the Liberals and NDP for commitments to repeal (not just amend) C-51 if they are elected on October 19th.

The state-led assault on democratic rights is augmented by the spread of racist and fascist ideas by far-right groups in civil society. For example, a new fascist outfit, the New Constitution Party of Canada, has recently been formed. This group claims to be based on "Christian Libertarian values" which plans to "reverse the damage caused by cultural and economic Marxism". It advances the slogan "Expel the Parasites", and features a Hitler salute on its party logo. In Quebec, branches of the PEGIDA, a German-based racist, anti-immigrant and Islamophobic group, have surfaced. And supporters of the Greek fascist Golden Dawn have begun distributing leaflets on the streets of Toronto. *As noted earlier, this means struggling to combat all manifestations racism and fascism. Our Party must raise its own activity in this field and encourage the broad trade union movement and democratic forces to be vigilant and united in*



exposing and countering this threat.

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Despite these adverse conditions however, there is a strong and growing mood among workers and the broader democratic movements to resist the combined onslaught of the corporate bosses and their governments. This is reflected not only in the workplaces, around the negotiating table and on picket lines, but also on the streets in the form of mass extra-parliamentary actions – among Aboriginal Peoples carrying forward the spirit of the Idle No More movement to struggle for their just national rights; around critical environmental issues such as opposition to the Keystone, Northern Gateway, Kinder Morgan and Line 9 pipelines, and fracking; among youth and students, especially in Québec, against tuition increases, police violence and austerity; the “Fight for \$15” labour/community battle to raise the minimum wage; the struggle against Bill 1 in Nova Scotia; and against reaction and in defense of democratic rights, such as the recent mass mobilizations against the Tories’ C-51 legislation, etc.

There are a number of common features in these diverse struggles and mobilizations: their multi-class character, but primarily composed of working class and working people in general; the increasing involvement of people relatively new to mass action; the increasingly youthful character of participants, not only in student struggles, but also environmental, Aboriginal and pro-democracy mobilizations; and finally, the growing tendency to seek broader allies in these various struggles, and to draw connections between specific issues and the larger fight against austerity policies and reactionary governments and business interests. These are very important and positive features, which contradicts the view of cynics that the will to protest is receding.

At the same time, many of these mobilizations still suffer from a relative lack of coordination, too often tend to be localized and spontaneous in character, and short on a clear program of action and articulated alternatives. *The greater involvement of Party activists in these movements, and our efforts to help these movements overcome those deficiencies in particular, is the best way for us to contribute to building the overall fightback.*

This mood to struggle can also be seen in a number of militant strikes and labour actions over the recent period – the courageous battle by BC teachers last fall; the labour/community struggle to reverse plans to end home mail delivery by Canada Post, and in solidarity with CUPW (postal workers), one of the most progressive unions in the



country; the militant struggle mounted by CUPE locals of TAs and sessional professors at York and the University of Toronto earlier this year; and in the spirited strike actions by secondary teachers at the Durham, Rainbow and Peel District School Boards in Ontario before being legislated back to work by the Wynne Liberals, to highlight just a few. Some other strike actions were also thwarted by government intervention, such as the strike of 3,300 locomotive engineers, conductors and other railway workers at Canadian Pacific back in February which lasted just 24 hours before federal Labour Minister Kellie Leitch threatened them with back-to-work legislation for “undermining” the Canadian economy. It is noteworthy here that according to the C-51 – which redefines terrorism as any threat to “the economic or financial stability of Canada” – this and other job actions by Canadian workers could be deemed a form of “terrorism”.

Major labour confrontations are also on the horizon this coming fall, involving provincial public sector workers in both Ontario and Québec. In both cases, the ruling (Liberal) governments claim that the cupboard is bare, and that in the interests of ‘prudent fiscal management’, they must impose wage freezes and wring other concessions such as pensions, seniority rights, workplace safety protections, and other benefits from their collective agreements.

In Québec, the three main labour centrals (FTQ, CSN and CSQ) have come together to form a ‘*front commun*’ for negotiating collective agreements for 450,000 provincial public sector employees, whose contracts ended this March. They are preparing to strike possibly as early as this fall unless the government removes its concessionary demands. Late last year, a broader coalition of trade unions, feminists, popular and environmental groups and student associations was also formed to fight against the austerity program of the Couillard government. The idea of the necessity of a “political strike” against the austerity program is growing despite resistance from the leaders of the labour centrals. This situation leads



more and more activists to criticize the class collaboration practiced by the union leadership for years, and to demand a more combative trade unionism.

The new mood in the labour movement – the mood to resist – was certainly evident at last May’s Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Convention, where a groundswell among delegates narrowly defeated former president Ken Georgetti in favour of Hassan Yussuff once he publicly endorsed the action program of the “Take Back the CLC” movement calling for labour unity and militant action. In the 13 months since that Convention, we note some positive changes in the CLC’s political approach, although the new leadership has yet to prove itself by breaking the pattern of passivity that informed the entirety of the Georgetti years, by bringing forward a militant program against austerity around which the entire labour movement and its democratic allies can unite and fight. The ‘jury is still out’ on the new leadership, and the deep divide so evident on the convention floor between the class collaborationist, business unionism forces, on one hand, and the more activist, “social unionism” current on the other, still remain.

The clash between these two main currents within the trade union movement is also being played out within the largest provincial federation, the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) under President Sid Ryan. The progressive OFL leadership has played an important role in building labour coordination and solidarity around major trade union battles in the province, and in forging the Ontario Common Front with social allies in the communities. At the same time, the OFL Executive has been under constant siege by right-wing, collaborationist union affiliates, which have tried to stymie the extra-parliamentary mobilization of the labour movement. They have launched personal slander campaigns, and gone on a per capita dues strike to weaken and possibly derail to top leadership of the Federation and defeat the trend it represents within the labour movement.

This conflict was also evident at last November’s BC Fed of Labour convention. In describing that convention, the BC Labour Committee noted the “differing approaches to the question of the political role of the BC Fed. Should the main organization of labour activism in the province have an independent political voice for the working class, or simply concern itself with trade union issues and leave political affairs to the New Democratic Party?” [*People’s Voice*, Feb. 1, 2015]

Independent labour political action vs. ‘contracting out’ to a ‘labour friendly’ NDP. Labour unity and struggle, vs. trying to resurrect the ‘social contract’ between labour, business and

government. In essence, these fundamental *strategic* choices constitute fault lines lying beneath the surface of the most urgent and important debates in the trade union movement today. But there is yet another layer, a most basic, fundamental divide which can be summed up by answering the following: “Which way forward for labour – class struggle or class collaboration?”

While these fundamental questions or choices may seem obscure to some, more and more active and committed trade unionists (and for that matter, many democratic activists as well) understand intuitively that these are the hard questions that must be asked and answered. There are still illusions, even among many sincere and committed trade union activists, about the possibility of returning to the days of the social contract between capital and labour. But more and more have come to realize that the social contract which prevailed (at least in words) through much of the post-WWII period of the last century, is today all but dead.

The ‘social contract’ was the ideological construct for Keynesian economics and the welfare state. It fostered the illusion that capitalists and workers had common interests in promoting the expansion of production, rising labour productivity and profitability; it counselled social peace between the two main classes in capitalist society; and it fostered a false confidence in the neutral role of the capitalist state in mediating disputes when they arose on the shop floor, at the negotiating table, and more broadly in the social and political life of the country.

The reality of course was quite different. The ‘welfare state’ was a conscious policy of ruling capitalist elites to grant limited concessions and social reforms to the working people in order to counter rising communist and revolutionary impulses within the working class, and to cultivate a strata of ‘labour aristocrats’ within the institutionalized trade union movement who stood to benefit by promoting policies of accommodation and compromise with the employers and the State, rather than the route of class confrontation and struggle. And it went hand in hand with the ‘cold war’ and the promotion of anti-communism in order to isolate, marginalize and expel Communists and other radicals from the labour movement.

All that changed with the counter-revolutionary overthrow of socialism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, and the resulting change in the balance of class forces in favour of monopoly capital. Driven by the need to reverse the decline in the rate of profit, and confident that the socialist alternative no longer posed a threat to their class rule, the ruling 1% were now in a strong position to take back



most of the economic gains and social reforms they were forced to concede in order to maintain social peace at home.

And over the past two decades or more, the ruling capitalist class (whether in corporate boardrooms or government offices) have been doing precisely that. Whatever concessions they have wanted to extract from labour, they have taken – where necessary, with the help of government legislation, court injunctions and police repression. And they will continue taking back until there is virtually nothing left to give. Unless and until, that is, they are confronted by a united and militant fightback; especially one that sets its sights higher than just holding the line in one defensive battle after another, but rather one that aims to go onto a *counter-offensive* against capitalist domination and state oppression, and challenges the exploitative system itself.

As the systemic crisis of capitalism deepens, and its contradictions continue to mature, the answers to the above questions become increasingly self-evident: namely, that *there is no other way forward for our working class and its organized section, the trade union movement, except to 'unite and fight' against the offensive being waged by monopoly capital and its governments, and to advance a real alternative and line of struggle to achieve this goal.* Any other route leads to defeat after defeat, and ultimately to abject surrender.

This very simple truth helps to explain the crisis that social reformism and class collaboration in the labour movement finds itself in today, as well as the closely related political crisis facing traditional social democracy, the main expression of (and conduit for) reformist ideology within the working class movement.

The sharpening debates within the labour movement over "which way forward" underlines the crucial need to grow the Communist/left presence and influence everywhere possible from the union local and labour council level to the national affiliates, federation and CLC leaderships. Our efforts to build (or rebuild) left caucuses will be key in this regard. Our work to popularize the activities of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and to promote links with this militant, anti-capitalist labour organization should also be strengthened. And most of all, we must win more labour militants to our ranks. These tasks must be a central priority for our Party at the present time.

The Coming Federal Election

After nine years of Tory rule, the coming federal elections on October 19th will provide a crucial opportunity to finally remove the reactionary government of PM Stephen Harper and the Conservatives from office, to reject their political agenda, and to create better conditions for democratic and progressive advance in the post-election period.

After finally securing a parliamentary majority in 2011, the most recent term of the Harper government has been particularly disastrous for the working class, for Canada's indigenous peoples, for the cause of peace, and for our environment. As we predicted at the time, "The Harper Conservatives' full-blown program will quickly [now] 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."

The Conservatives won that election 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. But they are now the 'party of choice' for virtually all sections of big business in Canada – the party upon which finance capital can rely to carry through its class offensive ruthlessly and without hesitation. As such, the *Harper Conservatives remain the main enemy of the working class and its allies, and their defeat on October 19th must be the most immediate and pressing priority for all of the labour and democratic forces across the country.*

But defeating the Conservatives implies much more than simply preventing their re-election; to be meaningful, it must also include rejecting their economic and political agenda and creating the best conditions for advancing the struggle *after the election* to win a new direction for the country and its peoples. *For this reason, we reject the notion of 'strategic voting' because it is based entirely on the expedient of defeating what we are against, with virtually no consideration of what we are fighting for.*

The Harper Tories enter this pre-election period once again flush with corporate money which they are already using to flood the airwaves with attack ads targeting the inexperience of Justin Trudeau. Once again, they are making extensive use of government funds to buy votes with large project grants, and with targeted tax breaks. Once again, they will present themselves as the best



financial managers to deal with Canada's fragile economy, and urge voters to 'stay the course'. And once again, they will use various so-called wedge issues, appeal to their social conservative base around 'family values', and play to backward racist and homophobic views among sections of the populace.

But it is becoming increasingly apparent that the main weapon in Harper's re-election bid will be the Conservatives' willingness to "wage war on terrorism" and to defend Canada's national security from threats, both foreign and domestic. Harper will play on people's fear and insecurities, hype up the danger emanating from the "Russian menace", ISIS and Islamic extremism, glorify the military, CSIS and C-51 as true guardians of freedom dedicated to "protecting Canadians", and chastise the opposition parties for their vacillations and faintness of heart in the face of the 'terrorist threat'. It will be a hawkish, cold war-style campaign theme which will be drummed out at every opportunity.

It is highly questionable however whether this strategy will succeed. The Harper government record is vulnerable on a large number of fronts, including, among others:

- on bread-and-butter issues such as its failure to create full-time, well-paying employment or prevent job losses and plant closures; growing poverty and widening social disparity;
- over Canada's no-growth domestic economy, the weak dollar, and slide in investment;
- over its tax policies which benefit the corporations and the wealthy, but provide little relief to working people;
- over its actions to undermine universal healthcare, public pensions and other social programs and services;
- over its attacks on labour and democratic rights (the attack on the right to strike, C-51, internet spying);
- over its shameful treatment of Aboriginal Peoples, its refusal to launch an independent public inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women, its muted response to the damning Truth & Reconciliation Report on residential schools, etc.;
- over its pro-war foreign policy, one-sided support for Zionist Israel, etc.;
- over its abysmal record on protecting the environment, fighting climate change, etc.;
- over its repeated attacks on culture and

science;

- over the Duffy trial and related Senate scandals, and its involvement in cover-up operations.

As for the main opposition parties, the Liberal Party under Justin Trudeau – the other party of big business – is but a pale reflection of the Tories and constitutes no real alternative for working people. The full Liberal platform is still concealed from view, but from what is already public, it is clear that there is little to demarcate the two parties, except on the important issue of women's reproductive rights, and the populist call to legalize marijuana. On most economic, security and foreign policy issues however, the Liberals have lent their support to the ruling Conservatives (e.g., Ukraine, C-51). That is why, after an initial jump in the polls following Trudeau's election as party leader, electoral support for the Liberals has gradually receded. That is one of the reasons why our Party rejects appeals to support 'strategic voting' in the hope of defeating a Conservative in a given riding.

The electoral fortunes of the federal New Democrats, on the other hand, have improved markedly in recent months, especially after the stunning upset victory of Rachel Notley and the NDP in the Alberta provincial election. After decades of unbroken Tory hegemony at the provincial level, voters finally decided they had had enough, and turfed Jim Prentice from the premier's office. Albertans were also attracted to NDP promises to increase the minimum wage, and to 'review' resource royalties on the oil and mining monopolies. In reality however, the NDP offered up a limited, tepid alternative, and positioned itself as the centrist choice. They avoided any mention of public ownership, reiterated over and over that the oil and gas sector are the engines of the Alberta economy, and that they wanted to cooperate with business.

Nevertheless, the Alberta victory has buoyed hopes across the country that the federal NDP led by Thomas Mulcair can carry off a similar upset in October. As a result, polling numbers for the federal NDP have climbed to the point that there is a virtual dead heat between the three main parties. While there are still several months to the actual vote, this shift could well result in another minority government after the October vote.

In our view, it is necessary to assess the Mulcair NDP on its own merits. It is abundantly clear that the right opportunist slide of the federal NDP, which dates back decades, has continued and even accelerated under the current leadership. Under Mulcair, the party expunged the "s" word from its constitution at the 2013 convention; it has



shifted its Middle East policy in an overtly pro-Israeli position; it now supports increased defense spending; it no longer favours cancelling NAFTA, and has refused to clearly oppose the CETA pact; it has called for cuts to the small-business tax rate and juicy tax breaks for manufacturers; it no longer speaks of nationalization or public ownership, but rather worships at the altar of the ‘market’; and it has given its blessing to the “Monument to the Victims of Communism” monstrosity in Ottawa. The list could go on...

This rightward tilt of the Mulcair NDP toward the murky centre of the bourgeois political spectrum must be sharply criticized. The right opportunist reorientation of the NDP is hardly unique, but in fact tracts the further degeneration of the social democratic parties throughout most of the so-called advanced capitalist countries. For the most part, these social democratic parties have abandoned and betrayed the labour and mass democratic movements which had historically been their social and electoral base. Instead, they have adopted bourgeois ‘free market’ neoliberal policy, and given servile support to the imperialist drive for militarization, aggression and war. In ‘opposition’ these parties advocate tepid social reforms at best, but support the main pillars of the bourgeois system of values and government policy; when in office, they too often renege on prior commitments and instead dutifully implement neoliberal policies, maintaining the capitalist order of domination. This sharp swing to the right by social democracy has created anger and confusion even among its own rank-and-file supporters, and has sown divisions within the ranks in the labour and popular movements, weakening and often undermining the people’s fightback.

While reformism, narrow electoralism and class collaboration are hardly new features of social democracy, the deepening of the systemic crisis of capitalism today brings the abject failure of the social democratic ‘option’ into much sharper relief. Historically, social democratic illusions about incremental change to ‘reform capitalism’, about the neutrality of the state, and so on, have been one of the main agents blunting the development of revolutionary class consciousness. Today, it is the main subjective factor holding back mass united, militant action needed to confront the capitalist offensive head-on, to move onto the counter-offensive against finance capital and its governments and to win socialism.

As for the Greens, they continue to be all over the map, depending on which candidate or spokesperson is speaking. Elizabeth May has taken some reasonably good positions on certain issues, and the party’s clear opposition to C-51 was welcome. That said, in the main the Greens

continue to situate themselves between the Liberals and the NDP in the mainstream bourgeois political spectrum, and certainly do not constitute a viable alternative to prevailing neoliberal economic dogma.

Our Party plans to launch an ambitious electoral campaign in its own right, with a hard-hitting platform and message that targets the Harper Conservatives, and the ruling class interests they represent, as the main danger to working people and Canadian sovereignty, and to call for their defeat. We will also be putting forward a *fighting program for a new, progressive direction for Canada, one that prioritises “people’s needs, not corporate greed!”*, and will work to secure every possible vote for our candidates in the field, and to win wider influence and support among left- and progressive-minded people elsewhere across the country.

Concerning Party Work

Let us now turn to developments within our own Party since our last full plenum. It has been a very active and engaging period, highlighted by the party-building campaign in the fall/winter, and then the C-51 campaign over the recent period. Detailed reports on both these major campaigns have been prepared for our consideration. We have also been working on election preparations, engaged in International Women’s Day and May Day activities, and a number of other activities at the Canada-wide, regional and local levels.

Given the crucial importance of party growth, our party-building efforts deserve particular attention. The special recruitment campaign launched last fall and carried forward into this year has borne very positive results. The campaign’s success can be seen not only by the overall modest net increase in membership with over seventy new members who have rallied to our ranks in the past year and a half. More importantly, two new Party Clubs were formed in areas where we previously had a limited or no presence, and many of our existing Clubs have become re-energized and engaged. The public profile of our Party was raised during this period as well, thanks in no small part to the extensive touring by our new central organizer cde. Boyden and by many other leading members such as, in British Columbia, the party’s new provincial organizer cde Hassan Azimikor.

The Young Communist League also benefitted as a result of this campaign which, in unison with its own recruitment efforts, has helped the YCL to grow its ranks as well, especially in B.C. where it has established several new clubs. YCL general



secretary Drew Garvie will update us about the League's encouraging progress later this weekend.

While some specific observations are presented in the final report on the campaign, our whole party should draw certain general conclusions from our recent experiences in party-building. First, that the prevailing socio-economic and political conditions in the country are objectively driving more and more people – especially marginalized and precarious workers and sections of the youth – to abandon illusions about the capacity of capitalism to address their needs and interests, and to instead seek out systemic alternatives. Many of these have come to champion the cause of socialism as the only the revolutionary alternative to the prevailing order, and are finding a new 'political home' in the ranks of our Party. More and more are coming our way, so to speak. We base this conclusion not only on the impressive results of our party-building campaign, but also on the increased traffic on our websites, on the growing number of 'likes' on our Facebook pages, and on the significant increase in membership applications, coming from both on-line sources and through direct contact and party activity, and renewed interest in the public campaigns of our party like our recent C-51 campaign.



Party leader Miguel Figueroa speaking at anti-C51 rally in Winnipeg on March 14

The second main conclusion is that we must continue to strengthen our ongoing approach to party-building, making it a conscious and central aspect of our party work, week in and week out, and at every level from the Party Club to the highest Committee. Party organizations which are more active and visible also show the best results in recruitment. We welcome the fact that many of our new contacts and members take the initial steps to search us out and contact us. But we must not simply rely on new applicants spontaneously appearing on our doorstep and make an organized, coordinated approach to party-building more consistent throughout the party. This campaign effort has demonstrated the effectiveness of

special recruitment drives, and should be regularized in the future. Some sister Communist parties, for instance, bookmark a *specific month each and every year* for a concentrated recruitment drive. As part of our efforts to grasp the new conditions which are creating opportunities for growth we should consider such efforts. We should also pay special attention to maximizing the impact of our coming federal election campaign as a platform for party building, including the leader's tour by cde Figueroa.

At the same time, we must strive to make party recruitment, and the retention of new members (including educational work, development of cadres, and mentorship) a central priority of our ongoing work and the next step after this campaign; Party and press building should be on every club and committee agenda when we meet to plan, carry out and evaluate our Communist activity.

Our press remains our most important weapon in reaching out to our class, influencing events and building the broad fightback, and in drawing activists closer to our movement and into our ranks. The quality of our press continues at a high level; however the circulation – particularly among paid subscribers of our print media – leaves much to be desired. Needless to say, the level of paid subscriptions is decisive in maintaining our press in print form, to which we remain wholeheartedly committed. But this is not only a financial question; our paid readership is the clearest indication of political/ideological support among our supporters. It is therefore imperative that we intensify our efforts to build readership, both within Québec and elsewhere across the country. An associated challenge, linked with party building, is that of fostering new writers for our press. The CEC will be tabling a number of proposals to address this task during our session, including an update on progress to build a new site for our press in English-speaking Canada.

Overall, our political organizational work has improved significantly over the recent period. The timely decision of our last plenum to bring on cde. Boyden as central organizer has led to marked advances on many fronts. Having an organizer in the field, especially during the party-building and C-51 campaigns, has made a substantial difference. Ongoing communications between the Centre and Provincial and Club leaderships have also improved, thanks to the quarterly production of *Vanguard/L'avant-garde*, and more frequent telephone, email and in-person contact. We have also started an e-bulletin providing our email contacts across the country with links to new party statements and campaigns from our central website. That said, there are still aspects of party



organization which continue to require improvement, such as information management and electronic outreach through social media, but some progress has been registered in these areas as well.

We must continue to strengthen party collectivity in all aspects of our work, to increase our public profile and the level of our mass and independent public activity, and ensure the proper functioning of party structures at all levels, including our efforts to improve and regularize the work of our central commissions.

Improved organizational work must be combined with greater attention to our educational and ideological work as well. After some delay, the CC's Educational Commission is now functioning regularly, and preparations for this summer's Central School are underway. Provincial schools, new members' classes, and educational forums are also taking place on a more frequent basis in many centres of party activity. A special study guide for our Party program, "*Canada's Future is Socialism*", is being prepared, and a new issue of *Spark!* is now off the presses.



With respect to the Party Program, our 37th Convention mandated the Central Committee to conduct a thorough review of this basic document. In our view, this necessary review should be preceded by an organized, comprehensive study of our existing program by the entire membership, paying particular attention to the following critical questions (among others): (1) on the changing structure and character of capitalism/imperialism in Canada; (2) on the national question; (3) on the rise of state authoritarianism and repression, and the danger of fascism; (4) on the nature of social democracy today; (5) on women and gender-related matters; (6) on the relationship between material production and the preservation of our environment; (7) on the dialectical relationship

between the struggle for immediate reforms and the revolutionary transformation of society; and (8) the transition to, and the building of socialism in Canada. Therefore, the CEC proposes that a comprehensive party-wide study of our current program be organized and undertaken after our 38th Convention next spring, and on that basis that the incoming CC prepare proposals for updating our program for the consideration of the whole party in the period leading up to our following (39th) Central Convention.

* * * * *

While we rightly focus much of our work in building up the ranks of our own Party, we do not do so in a narrow sectarian manner. Indeed, through the bulk of our history, the CPC has striven to cooperate and seek unity-in-action with other labour, left and progressive forces, where such efforts contribute in a positive way to promoting militant unity within the broader labour and democratic movements in the struggle against monopoly capital and its governments. For the most part, these initiatives have had an extra-parliamentary focus, such as in the Greater Toronto Workers Assembly. In Québec, we have supported and participated within electoral formations on the left, including the *Union des forces progressistes* (UFP), and subsequently in *Québec Solidaire*, even though we continue to express our distinct position on the struggle for Québec's national sovereignty, for recognition of its right to self-determination, and in favour of a Constituent Assembly and for a new constitution guaranteeing an equal and voluntary partnership of all nations.

Last weekend, our Party participated in a "Conference of the Anti-Capitalist Left" convened by Solidarity Halifax. We welcomed the invitation, and a number of Party and YCL militants attended. It would be premature at this point to draw any definitive conclusions about the prospect of this particular initiative. Clearly, some of the participants hope to fashion a united party of the anti-capitalist left, along the lines of *Québec Solidaire*. Others have more modest and realistic expectations, aimed at seeking greater cooperation and unity-in-action among left and progressive forces.

It is useful here to review our *general approach and orientation* to building forms of unity in the present conditions. At the 34th Convention in 2004, we articulated our strategic view on this question, and it continues to inform our approach today:

"First, that we stand for unity, and recognize that only through the forging of unity will the struggle advance. In broad terms of relative importance, we attach greatest importance to



the unity of the working class itself; secondly, to the forging of unity of the working class with its closest allies and movements among broader base of working people; and third, to building unity where possible with more distant class forces, provided such unity is in the interests of the working class.

“Second, our Marxist-Leninist understanding of the dialectical nature or character of building unity – that in any given form of united action, there is always also a struggle component, a battle of ideas. Communists must always take such a two-sided approach – if most or all of our emphasis is placed on unity, then the Communists become submerged, and end up tailing events and other forces. If most or all of our emphasis is placed on struggle, then we will end up an isolated sect.

Third, our recognition of the need for the Communists to *always* defend the independent role and character of the Communist Party, and not to jeopardize the Party’s independent character under *any* circumstances. In life, this means striking the correct balance between our work in coalitions, etc., with the independent work of our Party.” [from the *Keynote Address to the 34th Central Convention, January 29 - February 1, 2004*]

* * * * *

We should also take this opportunity to note some of the valuable work undertaken by our comrades in different parts of the country. In particular, we congratulate our Party in Alberta for their participation in the recent provincial election. Comrades Bonnie Devine and Naomi Rankin did an excellent job carrying our flag in ridings in Calgary and Edmonton respectively.

We also wish to congratulate our comrades in Nova Scotia where we now have a new Party Club in Halifax, joining our Red Lobster Club in the Annapolis Valley, and the prospect of a third Club in the making in the New Glasgow area of the province. This marks a significant advance for our Party in that province. Our comrades are planning to hold their first province-wide meeting in July, and we wish them every success in their endeavours.

Finally, we must congratulate our comrades in Ontario, which is not only the largest section of our Party but also its fastest growing, with a new Club in London and excellent prospects elsewhere in the province as well. The Ontario Provincial Convention will be held early next month, and we are fully confident that it will succeed in consolidating and building on these advances.

The next several months will very demanding on our entire Party, but also chock full of potential

for further advances. The upcoming federal election, scheduled for October 19th, will be our first major challenge. We will go into this campaign armed with our updated platform, a comprehensive, fighting program for a “People’s Alternative”, that will sharply differentiate our line not only from the reactionary Harper Conservative agenda, but also from the tepid, neoliberal platforms offered up by the bourgeois and reformist ‘opposition’ parties. We expect to field at least 25 candidates in selected ridings across the country, including a dynamic mix of experienced and first-time and younger candidates. Building on our recent extra-parliamentary campaigns, this election will provide another excellent opportunity to raise our public profile, influence and win new friends and supporters, and recruit new members. Following up on our special CC teleconference this past January, the CEC has prepared an outline of campaign proposals for your consideration this weekend.

Following the federal election, we will quickly change gears to preparations for our 38th Convention next spring. The next meeting of the Central Committee will receive, amend, and approve draft documents for that Convention, and then the party-wide pre-convention discussion period will commence. Wherever possible, we should strive to bring our friends and supporters into that discussion, and to listen to their ideas and suggestions on the way forward in the developing conditions. We have every confidence that we will arrive at Convention with a larger, stronger and more militant ‘party of socialism’.

Finally, comrades, the 100th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution will soon be upon us. It is not too early to begin planning for this historic anniversary, an occasion to honour Lenin and the Bolsheviks, and the achievements of the Soviet people; to give a fitting rebuff to the purveyors of anti-communism and the falsifiers of history; and to proudly declare our continuing commitment to the revolutionary transformation of our country, our fidelity to the cause of socialism. To these ends, the Central Committee will prepare a detailed resolution of proposals to mark the GOSR for consideration at our 38th Convention.

Check us out!

For information about our Party, visit
www.comunist-party.ca

write info@cpc-pcc.ca, phone 416-469-2446 or write to us at 290A Danforth Ave., Toronto, Ont. M4K 1N6



Report on Party Building

The following is an abridged version of the Report submitted to the Central Committee by cde Johan Boyden on behalf of the Central Executive

The June 2013 CC plenum adopted a proposal for a party building campaign based on the plan of work adopted at Convention.¹ Most of the work has been achieved, and the main result of the campaign was overall modest net membership growth, albeit uneven. It ranges from recruitment in the context of re-launching and revitalizing Clubs, to augmenting well-functioning collectives, to establishing completely new Clubs. Overall, a new trend is emerging of recruitment right across the country.

As we embark on the next stage of this campaign, “retention,” a plan of membership and cadre development is needed, including education, continued strengthening of report and checkup, as well as developing mass and party assignments.

Recruitment campaign

The recruitment campaign began with a letter sent to all party clubs in June 2014, and began in earnest following the September 2014 Central Committee. The CC’s plan featured an appeal to the whole party to raise the bar for visibility recruitment, including some specific proposals; a tour of Clubs specifically on this question; and some initial evaluations of the health of clubs and the Party overall.²

In English-speaking Canada the central organizer visited the overwhelming majority of Party Clubs. In Québec, cde. Liz R addressed a general assembly of the party membership. What follows are highlights, and in discussion at the coming CC we have good expectations of hearing more reports and perspective of how committees and clubs are responding to the call for greater visibility which will deepen our assessment.

In Nova Scotia the Party has grown quickly, with a new Party Club in Halifax, a party group in the New Glasgow area, Red Lobster Club most likely to be reactivated soon, and some members-at-large brought back into the Party. A decisive contribution was made by cdes Barb M and Jim S who attended every meeting of the Halifax Club as it came together. There have been four visits to Nova Scotia during this time, including a delegation of YCLers and Party members to a recent “left unity” conference which was the occasion for a good

fraction meeting. In total ten new members have been recruited, and one has left.

The Ontario Committee reported the Party grew at least 25 new members during the spring 2014 provincial election and, in its latest convention documents, reports that the party has recruited about 60 members in the past three years, producing modest net growth. It seems the majority have been in the later half of that three year period. The Ontario Party’s 25th Provincial Convention documents made a detailed review of recruitment, which is worthy of consideration for the whole party, and states that almost all Clubs are recruiting. (The Ontario convention documents also look at who is being recruited, recruitment and Club life, and the normal phenomenon of turn-over among new recruits.)



A highlight of the campaign has been the chartering of the Forest City Club in London, where cde. Dave M ran as a candidate in the 2014 provincial election, new interest from northern Ontario, and the growth of the GTA West Club in Brampton where cde. Harinder H ran for school board in October 2014 along with three other municipal candidates in Ontario. The tour included club meetings as well as province-wide themed meetings (community clubs, youth and campus clubs, and labour movement work), and culminated in a successful two-day school for new members recruited in 2014-2015.

In Manitoba three visits have taken place since September, which also follows the direction of the CC. The Club continues to work through a variety of challenges and there is recruitment, but also some loss in membership for different reasons including death. There have been several new recruits in this period.



In Alberta, two visits have taken place to Calgary and three to Edmonton, with another trip by cde Kimball C planned soon. Significantly, the Punjabi People's Club is being re-activated with four new recruits from the work of cde Sohan M. Club Red and the Edmonton Club are on the cusp of recruitment. Although there has been some turnover in membership particularly as comrades move cities, the spring 2015 provincial election campaign increased party visibility and activity. There have been five recruits in this time frame.

In British Columbia, the Provincial Committee has reported 23 new members in the period from January through May 2015. This is again modest but significant net growth. The Committee's March 2015 organizational report, also worthy of consideration by Party leadership not just in BC but across the country, outlines how this growth has included meaningful steps towards revitalizing clubs such as the William Stuart Club in Kelowna and the Nanaimo Club.



Fernando González, one of the freed Cuban Five, and Vice-President of ICAP in Havana, visited our central office in June, and thanked our Party for its solidarity

The Elgin "Scotty" Neish Club in Victoria, of which cde. John S is the organizer, has doubled its membership. The Vancouver East Club has also grown significantly. One source of recruits is the newly rejuvenated YCL BC. After almost two years of life, there are now two active YCL Clubs and a number of these YCLers are also joining the Party. BC recruitment has taken place in the context of the *People's Voice* office manager, cde. Hassan A, taking on the additional assignment of provincial organizer which has been positive. It will likely be reflected in three young worker / student candidates carrying the Party banner for their first time in the upcoming federal election, one young woman and two young men.

The Parti Communiste du Québec has also made gains. Since recruitment material was not produced

in French, the emphasis was placed on the general assembly and one-on-one meetings. (A welcome idea of the National Committee producing a French-language leaflet more oriented on Québec political reality and the PCQ unfortunately proved beyond the committee's capacity.) Nevertheless, the French-language Che Evan's Club increased its membership with five recruits. The English-language Beloyannis Club was reactivated with a new organizer and is on the cusp of recruiting.

Total recruitment figures

The Central Executive estimates we have recruited a sum of at least 70 new members since Jan 1, 2014, as presented above. It is natural and to be expected that not all have stayed, but the majority has. In time we will have an evaluation of that turnover, which may be as low as one in ten. Although there are always challenges in drawing a perfect "baseline" measurement of our Party membership we can draw some initial conclusions.

Analysis and proposals

Observations

- The Central Committee's evaluation of the political climate was substantially correct in regard to recruitment potential;
- Given the uneven response to the campaign, the CC was correct not to set goals / targets, but clearly there are certain numbers of people in all communities who are interested in, and indeed looking for, a formation like our Party;
- We are recruiting not in large numbers but in the vast majority of places we see: (a) significant numbers relative to club size; (b) relatively good net growth;
- The recruits we are drawing to membership are mainly new members, not returning lapsed members;
- Although the female / male ratio is clearly uneven, women are joining the party;
- A noticeable proportion of recruits are young people under 35, many of whom come from the YCL including some graduates and also many current YCL members;
- We are recruiting from particular immigrant communities (especially people from Spanish-speaking Latin America, South Asia and, to a lesser extent, Iran and the Middle East);
- While in small numbers, Aboriginal people are joining the party;
- Many recruits have already made efforts, sometimes considerable efforts, to self-



educate themselves in Marxism and left politics although not necessarily with a comprehensive approach;

- Some recruits, albeit a minority, are coming from mass movements;
- Working class people are drawn to our party, including some recruits in the crucial battleground of the labour movement;
- A significant number, if not most, of the recruits are inexperienced with mass struggle, collectivity, and political parties at least in Canada;
- Relatively few of our recruits are former NDP members although they may have sympathized and identified with that party in the past;
- We are beginning to develop a sort of loose constellation of at-large members, geographically isolated, which brings with it certain challenges as well as openings;
- In a very few places we are recruiting: (a) insignificant numbers relative to club size; or (b) losing members; and/or (c) experiencing net subtraction of membership;
- As they say, talk is cheap, and simply calling for more theoretical conversations is limited and too slow as a method of recruitment alone. The clubs doing the most recruiting are active, taking initiatives such as mass mobilization into the streets, mobilizing in their communities, winning the attention of media, and developing spokespeople for the party;
- As it stands, new members account for between one in five members in some clubs to four in five members in other clubs;
- If estimated rates of net recruitment continue, in another three years about half (or close to a slim majority) of the party's membership will have joined after 2012.

Conclusion

The Communist Party has to be a party of action. Since the 37th central convention our Party has gone through two busy and, overall, quite positive years. In June 2013, when the CC met to develop a plan for recruitment The direction was optimistic – we need to seize upon the new prospects of the current political situation which gives real potential for party growth. Today we can say we are taking noticeably better advantage of that new situation.

At the same time, as the proposal noted, while mass protests, social criticism and anti-capitalist sentiments are growing across Canada, left-oriented people will not automatically gravitate to our Party. The continued influence of social democratic and reformist thinking, cynicism

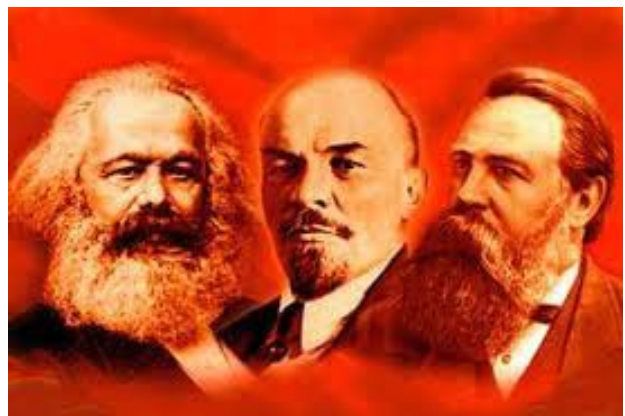
towards political parties and politics in general, and especially continued anti-communism, were all cited as political limits to growth.

Conscious movement by the Party is required to recruit, as our politics do not arise spontaneously. Our challenge is not just a question of visibility and activity but how we are visible and active. [...] There are of course irritants and contradictions to solve in everyday life but overall we are strengthening not just in size but also our activity and collectivity. We are still too small and we have many challenges ahead, but we are involved in solving problems of growth. That is the fundamental point.

The full list of recommendations of the report, omitted for length, will be printed in the coming issue of The Vanguard / L'avant-garde, the internal news bulletin of the CPC, and the full report is available to all members, clubs and committees on request to the central office c/o centre@cpc-pcc.ca.

Notes:

1. As reported to the CC, the roll-out of the campaign was actually somewhat delayed, and a subsequent meeting of the CC added some goals around building subscriptions and the press. The three parts of the campaign were: (1) preliminary measures, which are summarized at the end of this report; (2) a recruitment campaign launched at our September 2014 CC and; (3) later, longer-term considerations about retention. The overwhelming number of the preliminary measures were either fully or largely completed. The CEC is aware of the comprehensive picture and, where it is realistic, is aiming to complete all further tasks.
2. The specific proposals were: local clubs preparing a list of members; preparing a list of contacts and people to recruit; to arrange one-on-one meetings with recruits; identifying upcoming local events in a calendar to seek out tabling opportunities. This discussion was urged to be an all-club conversation and put on club agendas.



Special Resolutions

The Central Committee approved a number of special resolutions during the plenum, some of which are reproduced below. The entire set of resolutions are available on the central party website at www.comunist-party.ca

No New Cold War! Peace and solidarity, not militarism and war

As the global economic crisis continues and deepens, Western imperialist governments have escalated a comprehensive rhetorical campaign to create a new Cold War scenario in the world. The Communist Party of Canada condemns these efforts, which undermine international security and attempt to justify increasing imperialist aggression, provocation, militarism and war.

Over the past two years, the European Union and NATO intensified their ongoing eastward push, right up to Russia's borders. This acceleration is largely in response to Russia's emergence as a capitalist world power that rivals Western imperialism's interests in some areas of the world. During the resulting crisis in Ukraine, the EU and NATO governments also ramped up their anti-communist rhetoric, their warnings about threats to Western values and their demonization of the Russian government. This rhetoric and related conjecture are connected to the drive for sanctions against Russia. For example, during discussions in June 2015 about renewing and expanding sanctions against Russia, a senior EU diplomat noted that the "suggestions there were troops and equipment coming across the border from Russia ... all that in fact was quite useful in getting European nations collectively to grasp that now is not the time to start softening the position we are taking on sanctions."

In Canada, Stephen Harper has repeatedly referred to Russia as "a menace to peace in Europe and elsewhere" and projected carefully crafted propaganda to justify this. During their June 2015 visit to a Canadian warship in the Baltic Sea, Harper and Defence Minister Jason Kenney repeatedly claimed that the ship had been "buzzed" by Russian fighter jets who came within 165 metres of the warship. In fact, these stories were largely fabricated and even NATO, when pressed by reporters, indicated that Russian jet flights occurred at altitudes above 500 metres and denied that any confrontation with the Canadian warship had taken place.

Millions of people in Canada and around the world are familiar with this scenario, in which events are distorted, manipulated and invented for political purposes. For 50 years after the end of World War 2, Western governments demonized the USSR and other socialist states, national liberation movements throughout the world, and communists and left activists within their own borders. This was the rhetoric of the

Cold War, an intensive ideological assault that was used to justify massive military build-up, aggressive foreign policies, sanctions and intervention against peaceful countries, and attacks on labour, democratic and civil rights.

The Cold War was a disastrous period, in which imperialist states squandered public resources, weakened global security, murdered millions of people, and imperilled the very survival of humanity and the planet.

The emerging New Cold War is no less dangerous. Already, it is being used to justify increased military spending, expanded arms trade, new and larger imperialist military alliances, and outright intervention and war. It has become a large part of the ideological barrage that justifies and promotes the expansion of imperialist institutions like NATO and the EU. Part of the New Cold War is the ideological poison that depicts communism and fascism as identical totalitarian ideologies. It is the cover for anti-communist rhetoric and measures, including bans on Communist parties in some European countries, and efforts to rewrite history and erase the fact that millions of Soviet people and communists gave their lives fighting the same fascist enemy that killed 50,000 Canadians in WW2. In Canada, the Harper government's monument to "victims of Communism" is a grotesque expression of this poison. Overall, the effect is to create a chill on anti-imperialist, revolutionary and working class political movements in Canada and around the world.

As the New Cold War rhetoric continues, the countries of the world are being pressured to align with Western imperialism against Russia. NATO is recruiting new members and forming new strategic alliances, strengthening its character as a multinational military expression of Western imperialism's aggressive objectives.

The Communist Party of Canada calls on all people in Canada to reject the New Cold War. It is a path that leads to more arms spending, more weapons trade, more military build-up and more war. It is a path that ends with weakened global security, reduced democratic and civil rights, increased austerity and a reduced standard of living for the working class.

The people of Canada need to demand a new, independent foreign policy for Canada. This includes withdrawing from NATO, NORAD and other military alliances. Canada needs to shift away from imperialist intervention, aggression and war, toward a policy based on peace, sovereignty of states, international cooperation and solidarity.



On the Truth and Reconciliation Report:

Reconciliation means acknowledging genocide and taking action to end colonialism

The report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission chaired by Justice Murray Sinclair is an important milestone in the struggle to achieve reconciliation and to overcome the legacy of racist colonial policies imposed upon Aboriginal peoples by the European imperialist powers and later by the Canadian capitalist state. The Communist Party of Canada welcomes the TRC report and pledges our support for its 94 recommendations, which would be a significant step towards full equality, and social justice for Aboriginal peoples. We also express full support for demands to extend the truth and reconciliation process to include the impact of the “day schools” attended by thousands of Métis and First Nations children.

As the summary report of the TRC states:

For over a century, the central goals of Canada's Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as “cultural genocide.”

This conclusion is firmly based on the facts and on international law, which recognizes several categories of genocide, including the mass killing of members of a targeted group (physical genocide); and destruction of structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group (cultural genocide).

During the TRC's six year journey across the country, thousands of courageous witnesses came forward, including many Indian residential school survivors, whose legal and political struggles forced the federal government to establish the Commission. Their testimonies and other findings showed that the residential school system, operated by the churches and funded by the government, was a major element of the colonialist strategy to create a “white man's country” by eliminating and/or forcibly assimilating indigenous peoples. Of the 150,000 students who were forced to attend these schools, an estimated 6,000 (and probably more) died from disease, malnutrition, appalling housing conditions and violence. Thousands of students were the victims of physical and sexual abuse, and they were prevented from speaking indigenous languages or practising their cultural and spiritual traditions.

To be truly meaningful, the reconciliation process must include acknowledgement by the federal government of the core findings of the TRC, and concerted action to implement its recommendations. Instead, the Harper Conservative government has showed its lack of respect for Aboriginal peoples by ignoring the TRC's conclusions regarding cultural genocide, and by dismissing key recommendations, such as unqualified acceptance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and a national inquiry into the 1200-plus murdered and missing Aboriginal women and girls. The federal government's true priorities are shown by its treatment of indigenous land defenders and opponents of corporate energy and resource extraction projects as potential terrorist threats to Canada's economic security. This is one of the many reasons why the Harper Conservatives – the most viciously anti-working class and racist party of big business – must be defeated in the October 2015 federal election.

The Communist Party of Canada was the first political party in this country to condemn the genocidal racist oppression of Aboriginal peoples, and to fight for their full rights of self-determination, including just and prompt settlement of land claims. We give unconditional support for the TRC's condemnation of cultural genocide, and for its calls to adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to establish a national inquiry into the tragedy of murdered and missing Aboriginal women and girls. We will continue to advocate for an equal and voluntary partnership of Aboriginal peoples, Quebec and English-speaking Canada, including a new constitutional arrangement which guarantees the full participation of Aboriginal peoples, protecting and extending their inherent national rights. We demand immediate action to close the gap in education, employment, housing, access to clean drinking water, and other indicators of living standards. Not least, we express full solidarity with all Aboriginal peoples engaged in resistance against the expansion of fracking, extraction and export of the tar sands, and other forms of corporate exploitation of natural resources.

Finally, we note that the TRC report is not the first expression of the need for fundamental change to overcome the racist legacy of colonialism within Canada. The historic 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples made many significant recommendations, only to be largely ignored by Liberal and Conservative governments over the past two decades. This must not be the fate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We welcome the expressions of support for the TRC report and recommendations coming from many labour and people's movements, and we will continue to call for a powerful movement to place this issue at the centre of the federal election and beyond.



Save Canada Post

The Harper Government's unilateral decision to eliminate home postal delivery, escalate postal rates and eliminate up to 8000 jobs is a major part of the agenda of privatization which targets all social services, publicly owned resources, energy, Medicare, education and transportation.

In order to expedite negotiation and implementation of the CETA agreement with the European Union the federal government early in the process made a commitment to the European negotiators to comply with the conditions of the Lisbon Agreement (the *de facto* constitution of the EU) which calls for the privatization and expropriation of all public services and resources. Privatization to comply with trade agreements is a method to bypass parliament and the Canadian public.

Although Canada stands alone in the world in the elimination of home mail delivery, privatization is steadily being implemented across the European Union where postal outlets are being replaced by outlets in grocery stores and gas stations with reduced services supplied by precarious jobs.

The elimination of remaining door-to-door mail delivery and escalation of user fees will narrow down services, eliminate jobs, weaken CUPW, take millions out of municipal economies and introduce a whole range of private for-profit delivery and postal services.

In order to justify the elimination of home delivery a study was engineered by the so-called "independent" right wing think-tank, The Conference Board of Canada.

Canada Post CEO Deepak Chopra is on the board of this "independent" think-tank which conjured a report of future major financial losses at Canada Post to justify the elimination of door-to-door mail delivery. This was despite the fact that in 2014 Canada Post reported profits of \$62 million dollars and has reported profits in the last 17 of 19 years.

Typically, as in the pension funding crisis, the raising of eligibility for GIS to 67 years, cuts to Medicare, Employment Insurance and a whole range of services, the elimination of home mail delivery strikes directly at the most fragile and vulnerable sections of society.

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers has provided examples, existing in other countries, of how expansion into financial services, like savings, money orders etc. could generate revenues and provide a valuable service to the Canadian public.

The Communist Party of Canada joins with Postal Workers, the entire labour movement and Community allies in condemning the cessation of home delivery. We reiterate our support for the demand to repeal this devastating decision and also demand of the opposition parties that they pledge restoration of home delivery and expand public services if elected. The Communist Party joins the call for the widest mobilization and mass pressure to force the Harper government to restore home mail delivery and save Canada Post as a public service.

Expand the Canada Pension Plan! Raise Benefits! Lower the Voluntary Pension Age to 60 with full benefits!

Mass pressure is building across Canada to expand the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), which is the universal public pension plan fought for and won by labour and its allies, and enacted by government in 1965. For millions of Canadians, it is the only pension plan they have.

Contrary to the misleading propaganda of right-wing think tanks, the Canada Pension Plan is stable, well-funded, and the best way to provide good pensions and retirement with dignity to Canadians working in both the public and private sectors. It is the pension plan that Canadians want to build on, not to undermine or destroy.

The current problems with the CPP are all made in Parliament. Firstly, successive governments have deliberately allowed pension benefits to fall, to the point where the average benefit today is \$500 per month, with a maximum benefit of \$1,000. This benefit plus the

inadequate Old Age Security forces large numbers of pensioners across Canada to either live in abject poverty on an average income of \$1200 a month, or to stay in the workforce well into old age.

Second, the government's decision to raise the pension age to 67 for the very poorest pensioners who need the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) to survive is a policy deliberately made by the Harper Tories to provide cheap labour while penalizing the poorest seniors.

Further, by refusing to allow seniors to draw a full pension if they choose to retire at age 60, the government is forcing all those dependent on the CPP for their retirement, to stay in the work force at a time when young workers are facing real levels of unemployment as high as 50% in some areas.

We note that the rise of productivity over the last 40 years has created huge profits for the large national and trans-national corporations operating in Canada, and hardship for workers who should have benefited with a shorter work life, with an earlier voluntary pension age at 60, with full and substantially increased benefits.



And finally, the government's proposal to address the pension crisis by "allowing" workers to make voluntary contributions to their CPP, while exempting employers and the federal government from contributing, is no solution. Nor are the government's musings of future reliance on PPRP 'pensions' which are nothing more than jumped up RRSP plans which could be wiped out by a bump in the stock market. These proposals are nothing short of an effort to erode a vital universal social program that Canadians from coast to coast hold dear.

The CC of the CPC demands:

- Preserve and expand the CPP, which is a universal, public, portable, defined benefit pension plan
- Substantially increase benefits to a livable level
- Make the CPP non-contributory, guaranteeing everyone a livable pension at age 60
- Lower the pension age to 60, with full benefits, including access to the OAS and GIS

For a new Federal-Provincial Health Accord

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Canada supports the calls raised this spring for a new Federal-Provincial Health Accord. Broad health coalitions, the labour movement, health care workers, doctors and patients, are all sounding the alarm that health care is under renewed and dangerous attack by the Harper Conservative government who have rejected a future health accord.

Until the previous accord expired in 2014, Medicare in Canada received federal funding through a 10-year, legally binding accord negotiated by the provinces and the federal government, providing them with a six per cent increase every year. Now, the funding is greatly reduced and the principles of the *Canada Health Act* are being shredded. The fight for a new Health Accord is an important battleground in the struggle to defend and expand Medicare and public health care across the country.

Capitalist globalization has had a devastating impact on the health sector, as transnational corporations have raided the most profitable aspects in health care to reap even bigger profits. The 2004 Health accord was born of public pressure which arose against the aggressive neo-liberal reforms to health care that took place in the 1990s under successive Chretien Liberal governments.

Powerful, broad public opposition helped force a Royal Commission into healthcare. The labour and people's movements never accepted the 2002 Romanow Commission's concession that privatization be allowed to occur in ancillary services. However, the extensive report directly confronted the agenda of vested interests in primary health care delivery. It rightly concluded that health care was a social right, deeply cherished by the people, and not a business opportunity.

Romanow also contradicted the claim the public health care was unsustainable. It pointed to the deep changes caused by cuts in public funding and privatization as the root cause of the serious challenges faced by the health care system. Hospital care used to be for the very sick. Home care was for the frail. But the

closure of thousands of hospital beds forced the burden of serious care onto the backs of working class families. It greatly intensified gender inequalities. Already at the time of Romanow no less than one in five women were involved in home care. Of those women, half were trying to hold down a job at the same time. This process of privatization of care has accelerated since that time.

The Commission proposed that Medicare and public health care include more services, and address the crisis of Aboriginal health. While the subsequent 2004 Health Accord ultimately only paid lip service to protecting the *Canada Health Act* and excluded Aboriginal people from the table, it did provide some stop-gap measures for funding – such as important increased federal funds, stabilizing health funding and leading to some initial reductions in wait times for diagnostic tests and surgeries. It opened discussions about expanded public services.

Public sentiment has continued to strongly support the principles of the *Canada Health Act*: public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability, and accessibility. Having again clearly lost the public debate, however, big business and their reactionary political parties have resorted to the tactic of stealth to implement the corporate agenda. The New Democratic Party, abandoning its heritage as a fighter for socialized medicine, has also willingly embraced the dangerous mantras of the market in provincial health reform. Public health care thus everywhere faces further de-listing of services and privatization including two-tier private clinics and P3 hospitals. Court challenges like the Chaoulli ruling in Quebec and the current dangerous court case by Dr. Brian Day in BC seek to legally negate the principles of the *Canada Health Act* behind the misleading slogans of "patient choice."

In fact, many of the gains of the 2004 Health Accord have now been negated by further cuts. Plans to create a pan-Canadian home and continuing care strategy have been abandoned, leaving huge numbers of people with heavy expenses for post-hospital prescriptions and rehabilitation. The Accord's welcome National Pharmaceutical Strategy, aimed at cutting overall drug costs through bulk buying and better coordination, was likewise effectively killed by the Harper government.



Instead, the Tories' CETA agreement with Europe opens the door to more profiteering by Big Pharma including blocking generic drugs. They Tories have also extended patent protection on drugs.

Harper's abandonment of the long-standing formulas of equalization payments will cut \$36 billion from health care over ten years – and they have empowered future federal governments to make further unilateral cuts at any moment to health funding which previously would have been illegal. The Conservatives have even scrapped the Canada Health Council, which oversaw the Health Accord. By dismantling the old accord and refusing to renegotiate a new agreement with the provinces, the Harper Conservatives are seeking to deliberately accentuate the existing crisis in public health care, furthering the drive to privatization.

In line with the above, the Central Committee of the Communist Party calls for the immediate commencement of new negotiations between the provinces and the federal government for a Health Accord. Such negotiations must include Aboriginal peoples as equal and voluntary partners, with meaningful participation at the First Ministers table. Likewise negotiations must respect the right to assert control and administration of these programmes by Quebec.

Further, in the view of our party, such negotiations must achieve:

- Full federal protection of the principles of the *Canada Health Act* including recognition of our Charter right to prompt service and strict laws and penalties on provinces which violate the *Act* and create a parallel private system; Elimination of privatization and profiteering in health delivery, including two-tier private clinics and P3 Hospitals, as the market is in complete opposition to the principles of the *Canada Health Act*;
- Restore and expand federal funding to healthcare to a minimum of 50 per cent and restore the principle of funding being legally binding as well as equalization in all federal funding;
- Address the crisis of Aboriginal health and northern health including re-opening closed

hospitals and health facilities;

- Protect health care for refugees including dropping the current federal court challenge against these rights;
- Reverse the de-listing of medical procedures at the provincial level;
- Eliminate all health care premiums, and direct and 'indirect' user fees such as bed and ambulance charges;
- Eliminate the 'fee-for-service' system, and its replacement with a mandatory wage and salary structure for all doctors, including specialists;
- Scrap the *Drug Patent Act*, withdrawal from all trade-related clauses protecting monopoly pricing by pharmaceuticals, and the development of a publicly-owned generic drug sector in Canada by nationalizing the pharmaceutical industry under democratic control;
- Switch from the current fee-for-service system to a system of salaries for doctors, adopt faster recognition of the credentials of foreign-trained doctors, nurses and other health professionals, and expand the number of medical school positions;
- Introduce universal eye-, pharma- and denti-care;
- Develop a public home care, long-term / continuing / respite care, and palliative care strategy as well as a mental health strategy;
- Ensure quality, well paid working standards and labour rights for all health workers as an essential principle;

It's time to put the heat on the politicians through mass struggle, including strike action. Eighty years ago, Dr. Norman Bethune, a member of the Communist Party, led Canada's first public campaign for free, universal health care. Today, the battle for Medicare is far from over. The Communist Party urges all Canadians to stand up for our rights and force governments to preserve and improve the public health care system and demand a new Canada Health Accord!

