

MRC Concludes Conference to Celebrate the 35th Anniversary of CPC(M-L)

The Manitoba Regional Committee (MRC) of CPC(M-L) organized a conference from April 2 to 10 to mark the 35th anniversary of the founding of CPC(M-L). The conference concluded on April 10 at a meeting of the MRC with pro-communist activists, friends and supporters.

The MRC presented a speech which referred to the current national and international situation and the historic experience of the working class to draw the conclusion that a Communist Party based on Marxism-Leninism and the principles of proletarian internationalism is absolutely indispensable for preparing the subjective conditions for revolution. The speaker presented a brief outline of the struggle to build such a party in Canada since the time of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia and the

continuous bourgeois-revisionist pressure that has been exerted since 1921 on the question of whether the party is necessary. Various examples from the life of CPC(M-L) were used to illustrate this pressure against communism and the Communist Party.

The spokesperson for the MRC then dealt with the Marxist-Leninist principle of organization – democratic centralism – and gave examples from the experience of CPC(M-L) to illustrate that this is another key arena of class struggle. It was pointed out that once the issue of the Party's existence was settled, one of the main forms taken by the bourgeois-revisionist pressure within the Party was opposition to democratic centralism. This pressure was exerted in two ways: opposition by secretaries at various levels

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Commentary

Canada's Hate Laws and the Right to Conscience

The former Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, David Ahenakew, is currently before the courts, charged under Canada's hate laws for various anti-Semitic statements he made two years ago. At a public meeting and in a subsequent interview with a newspaper reporter, Ahenakew expressed sympathy for the Nazi policies of genocide towards Jews. However, he stopped short of advocating that Canada adopt similar policies.

In the course of Mr. Ahenakew's trial, a furor also erupted over the remarks of another Aboriginal leader to the effect that "Jewish newspaper owners" are not so quick to condemn hateful comments about Aboriginal peoples or to expose their genocidal treatment at the hands of the Canadian state and various religious institutions. The B'nai Brith

demanding that this individual be fired from his position of Band Chief and that criminal charges should also be considered against him.

The filing of criminal charges against Ahenakew raises serious questions about the purpose of Canada's hate laws and their application in such a way as to infringe on the right to conscience of Canadians. Mr. Ahenakew's comments reflect an underlying ignorance and bigotry for which he is well known; he has been making racist comments about various communities in Canada during his entire career as an Aboriginal "leader". However, regardless of how ignorant and distasteful Mr. Ahenakew's opinions may be, he has a right to his

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Pot Calls Kettle Black: Rumsfeld Muses on Venezuelan Military Purchases

During a visit to Brazil last month, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld challenged a recent Venezuelan announcement of pending military purchases, stating that they would destabilize Latin America. He questioned Venezuela's decision to purchase 100,000 Russian-made rifles. "I can't imagine why Venezuela needs 100,000 AK-47s," Rumsfeld said during a news conference in Brasilia on March 23. "I just personally hope that it doesn't happen ... I can't image that if it did happen, that it would be good for the hemisphere," he told reporters.

Responding to Rumsfeld's comments, Venezuelan Vice President Jose Vicente Rangel noted that Venezuela is acquiring military equipment of a defensive nature; he also expressed his concern about the burgeoning U.S. defence budget. "Military

spending by the United States stands at around \$450 billion," Vicente pointed out in a statement. "What do they fear to justify such high military spending? The whole world is worried." Vicente's statement also pointed out that the U.S. is responsible for 36 per cent of military spending in the world.

The U.S. has been implicated in three separate attempts to remove the democratically-elected president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, from power. An April 2002 coup attempt was backed by the Americans, as was a strike in the country's oil industry in December 2002. The U.S. also funded anti-Chavez groups participating in last year's referendum with the aim of removing the president from power. Chavez won the referendum with a decisive majority.

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opinions. By the same token, anyone who disagrees with Mr. Ahenakew's views also has a right to express his or her opinions about those views and their author.

At issue is what is the source of racist opinions and how best to eradicate them. When Mr. Ahenakew's views were first reported they were condemned almost universally by Canadians. The Aboriginal organizations to which Mr. Ahenakew was affiliated distanced themselves from him and expressed their opposition to racism in general and anti-Semitism in particular. He was publicly disgraced and humiliated. At the same time, a broad and generally positive public discussion ensued on the issues of racism and anti-Semitism. However, the pressing of criminal charges against Mr. Ahenakew and the intense lobbying which went on to pressure the Crown into filing those charges has had the opposite effect. It has provided Mr. Ahenakew and those with similar views

an opportunity to present themselves as "victims of a Jewish conspiracy", thus reinforcing racist and anti-Semitic attitudes amongst a section of the population.

At issue is also where to draw the line on the expression of opinions. For some time now various Zionist organizations have been labelling any opposition to the genocidal policies of the state of Israel as anti-Semitism and hate propaganda. These same organizations have vocally demanded the firing of university professors who express opinions against Israel's continuing illegal occupation of Palestinian territories. Where does protection of a minority end and the suppression of political debate begin? The use of hate laws and criminal charges should be reserved for actual acts of racial violence, while the expression of racist views should be dealt with through discussion, education and, if necessary, the social isolation of those expounding such views. Only in this way can the right to conscience of individuals be harmonized with the right of minorities to be protected against violence.

The Gomery Inquiry and the Corruption of the Monopoly Capitalist System

The Gomery inquiry's continuing revelations of deep-seated corruption in the Liberal Party have given rise to speculation about a spring election. The Conservatives, Bloc Quebecois and NDP are currently conducting polls to determine whether or not their political fortunes would be best enhanced by an early election or by waiting until the fall when Justice Gomery has released his full report. As the various parties jockey for position, Canadians are subjected to a daily barrage of politicians, including high-ranking Liberals, expressing their utter shock and horror that such scandalous behaviour could occur in Canada.

Of course, as every Canadian knows, political corruption is not a new phenomenon. In fact, it has been a constant feature of the Canadian political system at least since the time of the Family Compact, which is to say from Canada's colonial days. Canada's first prime minister, John A. MacDonald, was brought down by a corruption scandal involving millions of dollars handed over to the railway barons. Louis St. Laurent's government was similarly defeated by a corruption scandal involving contracts for construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Corruption within the Mulroney government was so extensive that it almost destroyed the Conservative Party in 1993. At the provincial level corruption abounds and every parliamentary party has been implicated in it at one time or another. To suggest that any of these parties would behave any differently if they replaced the federal Liberals is to deny the experience of the Canadian people.

The indignant calls for an election so that Canadians can "have their say" about Liberal corruption are merely an attempt to manipulate the moral outrage of Canadians in a self-serving manner. The Conservatives are hoping to win enough seats in Ontario to form a minority government and establish themselves as a viable governing party. The NDP is hoping to win enough Liberal seats to establish itself as a viable opposition party. The Bloc Quebecois is

hoping to decimate the Liberals and emerge as the sole voice for Quebec within Canadian confederation. None of them is really interested in Canadians "having their say".

It is impossible for Canadians to have their say within the present electoral system. This is due to the fact that the most pernicious corruption in Canada's political system is not the current scandal in Quebec, but rather the fact that it is a system designed to keep political power out of the hands of the people and in the hands of the monopoly capitalist elite. It is a system in which the illusion of democracy is used to hide the real dictatorship of monopoly capital. Those who are calling for the electorate to "teach the Liberals a lesson" are actually trying to strengthen that dictatorship of monopoly capital over every aspect of Canadian life. Whether they are Conservatives, NDPers or members of the Bloc Quebecois, they are actually calling for the Conservatives to be elected in place of the Liberals, just as those who gave the call to dump the Harris government in Ontario were actually calling for the election of the McGinty Liberals. Then, within a few years when the federal Conservatives have disgraced themselves the same people will be calling for the people to "teach the Conservatives a lesson" by electing the Liberals again. This is one of the ways in which the political and economic elite keeps the Canadian people marginalized and politically disarmed.

Regardless of whether it is held in the spring or in the fall, another federal election will not solve the problem of political corruption, nor will it permit Canadians to "have a say" on the matter. There is an alternative to Liberal corruption, but it is not to replace it with Conservative corruption, NDP corruption or Bloc corruption. The alternative is to replace the entire political system with one controlled directly by the electorate and not by one or another political party. Only when the Canadian people are sovereign in their own country will this kind of political corruption become a thing of the past.

United May Day Banquet 2005

Saturday, April 30
Kismat Banquet Hall
280 Smith St.

Doors open at 6:00 p.m.
Dinner at 7:00 p.m.

A buffet of East Indian food will be followed by
a cultural program of music and spoken word.

Tickets: \$20.00

For reservations call: 479-8089

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to coming under the discipline of the collective, coupled with passivity on the part of members in arriving at decisions and implementing them. CPC(M-L)'s history of opposing both passivity and leaders who placed themselves above the collective was related.

The speech concluded with the presentation of the program of work adopted by the MRC.

Following the speech a vigorous discussion ensued on these questions and a consensus emerged that it was important to continue these discussions on a regular basis. All too often activists are so involved in the day-to-day problems of the movements they are working in that they do not make the time to discuss the problems confronting the communist movement.

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