

An Unforgettable Weekend in Winnipeg

Something happened in Winnipeg this past weekend around the celebration of May Day. There was a reunion, a banquet, a conference, a demonstration and a march. If you participated in even one of these events, it would leave you with fond memories of May Day 2006 in Winnipeg. It was the time, the place, the circumstances - the perfect mix of young and old, workers and youth, revolutionary theory and action, old acquaintances and new friends, high spirits and sober reflection.

It all began on Friday night with a celebration to mark 37 years of continuous political work by the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) in Winnipeg. It was organized by the Manitoba Regional Committee of CPC(M-L). This celebration was different than all previous ones. It was an evening to honour all of the people who had contributed to the work of the Winnipeg Branch of the Party from its formative days in 1969. Old friendships were renewed, amusing stories were swapped, favourite songs were sung, and some historic events and the lives of the participants were remembered in a digital slide display prepared for the occasion. The evening was special.

On Saturday evening the United May Day Committee held its annual banquet. More than 300 activists attended, the highest attendance in the 27 year history of the banquet. The “masters of ceremony” for the evening were two spirited youth. They welcomed the crowd with their fists high in the air and their voices ringing out the words “Happy May Day!” They read out announcements of ongoing or upcoming activities planned by some of the 17 organizations sponsoring the banquet. After dinner, several musicians, singers and spoken word poets entertained the audience. The music included old revolutionary songs from around the world, contemporary revolutionary music by the British

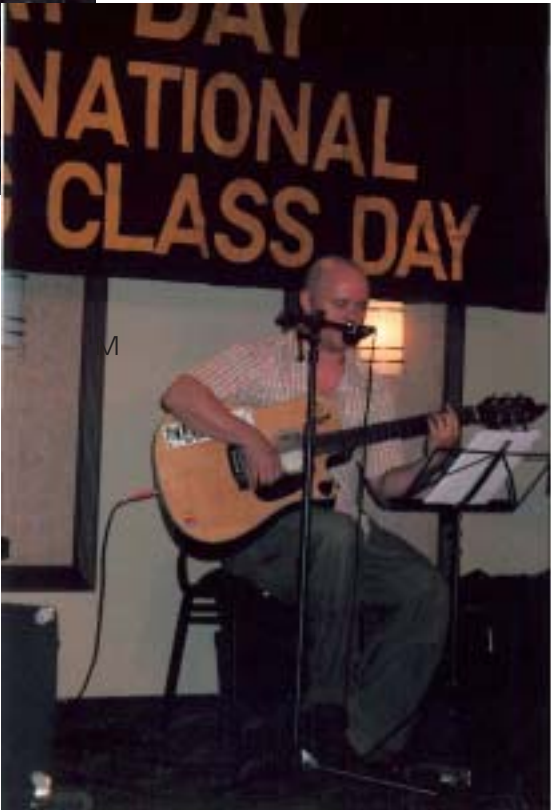
composer, Cornelius Cardew, folk songs from the 1960’s, and new revolutionary songs and spoken word written and performed by local artists. The formal part of banquet concluded with the singing of The Internationale and was followed by a dance.

One sentence in the spoken word poetry, composed and performed by a young woman at the banquet, said it all. “We are the last class in history, so grab the world and give it a spin, ‘cuz you have nothing to lose and a world to win”. It brought to mind the words of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* who said that “All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation.” It brought to mind the call of Marx and Engels that has stirred one generation of workers after another around the world: “The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workers of all countries, unite!”

On Sunday afternoon, the Manitoba Regional Committee of CPC(M-L) held its First Consultative Conference. A representative of the MRC read out the conference report entitled “Standing up for Communism”. It began by explaining that the MRC looked upon the convening of the consultative conference as the inauguration of a permanent institution of the MRC and an important means for members and supporters to participate in discussions on how to further develop the communist movement.

The report pointed out that: “At our regional conferences in 2000 and 2004, the MRC re-affirmed its conviction that we are still living in the period

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Banquet

May Day 2006

Charging Bison



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characterized by V. I. Lenin as the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution. This leads to the inescapable conclusion that the working class must be both the leading and main force in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism. All of the struggles of the working class are therefore bound to suffer if the working class is not playing its role.”

The report also discussed the intense ideological assault against the working class, the object of which is to deprive the working class of its revolutionary theory and its revolutionary leadership. It concluded that what is most urgently needed at this time is not a programme *for* the working class, but rather a programme *of* the working class, and in order to achieve this the broadest possible discussion must be organized within the heart of the working class on the problems facing society and solutions to those problems. The report pointed out that the most correct programme will be meaningless if it is not adopted by the working class as its own.

An important feature of the conference was that it brought together a cross-section of political activists who came to hear the opinions of the MRC and to share their opinions on the report. The report certainly did generate a lot of discussion and it is clear that discussion of the report and its practical implications will continue. To this end, the MRC invited all of the participants to come together again at the Revolutionary Chautauqua in July to continue this work..

On Monday afternoon, hundreds of people took

to the streets of Winnipeg. The youth were demonstrating their opposition to the Canadian armed forces’ “Charging Bison” war games underway in the city. Shouting slogans and carrying signs and banners condemning the Canadian government’s participation in the U.S.-led aggressions in Afghanistan and Haiti, they marched from Memorial Park, down Broadway, and on to the Rendez-Vous, where the armed forces were headquartered for their war games. Here the two paths open to the youth were face to face. Along the rooftop of the Rendez-Vous were several young Canadian soldiers wearing their combat gear, with weapons slung over their shoulders. They have been recruited by the Canadian government as cannon fodder in imperialist wars of aggression and to attack the Canadian working class. On the ground, facing the building, were other youth who have rejected this path and who are presenting another path with their slogan – “One Solution – Revolution!”

If that was not enough for a May Day, the traditional May Day march was held later the same day in downtown Winnipeg starting from City Hall. This year’s theme was ending poverty and “A Better World is Possible”. The youth were out in force for this march too. From year to year the participation of the youth in the May Day march has been increasing, and this year was no exception. This is good news for for the revolutionary movement.

On the occasion of May Day, *Modern Communism* takes this opportunity to salute everyone who contributed to making May Day 2006 in Winnipeg an unforgettable event.

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