

MRC Holds First Meeting of 2007

The Manitoba Regional Committee (MRC) of CPC(M-L) met recently to discuss its work. It assessed the work of 2006 and began discussions on the work planned for 2007. One of the decisions

taken was to release for publication the MRC's New Year's message sent out earlier to friends and supporters of the MRC. The statement is reprinted below.

New Year's Message to Friends and Supporters from the MRC of CPC(M-L)

Dear friends,

The arrival of a New Year is traditionally a time for reflection and assessment. Historically, we have also followed this tradition but we have generally focused on the global situation and not taken stock of our own accomplishments over the previous year. Since, strictly speaking, our own work is the only area of the world over which we have any control, we end up discussing those things over which we have no control while ignoring those over which we do. So, this time we would like to take the opportunity to share with all of our comrades and friends our assessment of our collective accomplishments over the past year.

The first accomplishment was that for the seventh straight year the Manitoba Regional Committee published *Modern Communism* on a regular basis. It would be a mistake to underestimate this achievement. In 2000, when the MRC decided that it was absolutely necessary to publish its regional organ, none of us had the slightest idea how we were going to accomplish this. In the past we had never been able to sustain a regional publication for more than a few months at best. Part of the reason for our success this time is that the MRC has a clear understanding of the role and importance of such a publication.

Since even before its founding in 1970, the Party always pointed out that a Party organ is the scaffold around which an organization is built. That has indeed been our experience in publishing *Modern Communism*. Without *Modern Communism* it would have been impossible to defend and strengthen the MRC. It has played a crucial role in forcing comrades to think for themselves, to analyze the concrete world around us and to dare to give our views on a myriad of issues. This, in turn, has assisted us in intervening in the practical movements and providing leadership where we have had the opportunity to do so.

Action without understanding is unbefitting of any human being. At the same time, demanding perfect understanding before doing anything reflects a fundamental opposition to ever applying knowledge in the service of the working class and people. For a materialist there is never such a thing as perfect understanding. We believe that all human understanding is, necessarily, an imperfect reflection of reality. Therefore, understanding can be improved but never perfected. The issue is that the "truth" does not exist somewhere in the abstract waiting for individuals to find it. Rather, there is a real world with its own laws of motion and development and human

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beings, from the time they are born until the time they die, are engaged in a struggle to understand those laws of motion and development.

With this in mind, seven years ago, when the MRC decided to publish a regular communist organ, it did not approach the problem from the perspective that we had all the answers while the working class was waiting passively for us to illuminate it with our "truths". Nor did we approach it from the perspective that we knew nothing and had to find the "truth" somewhere ourselves. As long-time activists of CPC(M-L) we had also learned a few things about applying our understanding to change the real world, which in the final analysis is the only useful purpose of understanding. Therefore, *Modern Communism* has been and continues to be published neither for the purpose of illuminating the minds of the communists nor for the purpose of illuminating the minds of the working class and people. It is neither an internal organ, nor a propaganda organ. It is an organizing tool in the real sense of the word; it assists the organizers to clarify their thinking and understanding of the world so that they become better organizers.

In this regard, it is extremely important that *Modern Communism* not be just an internal organ. The fact that it is a public document means that, regardless of how many or how few people read it, the MRC must be accountable for its views and positions to the working class and people, as well as to the entire communist movement. An internal publication does not carry that same onus, while a propaganda organ puts itself above the working class and, in that way, is also unaccountable.

There are those who say that the role of the communists is to inform the working class and people about the reality of Canada and the world. This is presenting religiosity in the name of communism and science. If the working class and people are not aware of the reality around them, then they are lost beyond redemption. We reject such a view of the Canadian working class and people. They, just as we, are conscious participants in society. They have an enormous amount of experience and they also

have a deep understanding of the reality around them. What they lack is organization and an understanding of how to change this reality for a better reality. So the role of the communists must be not the role of preachers and teachers, but the role of organizers who work to bring unity and coherence to the movement.

This is the role that the MRC accepted for itself in 2000 and the role that it has continued to uphold over the past seven years. It is the role that informs all of its work. During the past year the MRC has made a number of advances in this regard. As already discussed, it continued the regular publication of *Modern Communism* which plays a key role in providing coherence to the work. But *Modern Communism* is not everything and cannot fulfill every aspect of organizing. Accordingly, the MRC has carried out various other activities over the past year.

At the end of April and beginning of May the MRC organized a number of special activities. The first, on April 28, was a reunion of the Manitoba Branch to which we invited all of the comrades and friends who have worked in this Branch over the years, as well as many other friends of the Branch. We were pleasantly surprised by the enthusiasm with which our invitation was greeted. The main purpose of the reunion was to rectify an error which had plagued our movement in the past - a tendency to take comrades and friends for granted and fail to fully appreciate the hard work and many sacrifices of so many people over the years, without which there never would have been a Manitoba Branch or a communist party. All too often, credit for advances goes to the leaders of organizations and the numerous contributions of many, many other people are ignored. The reunion was, therefore, more than just a gathering of old and dear friends. It was both an expression of the new political culture that the MRC is attempting to build and a coming to terms with a past political culture which did not fully appreciate the human factor. This was an important advance in the work of the MRC which was a success precisely

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because of the participation of so many comrades and friends of the Branch. This includes many comrades and friends around the world who could not attend the reunion in person but participated by sending messages and greetings.

On April 29 the MRC played an important role in organizing the annual United May Day Banquet, as it has for the past 29 years. The work that the MRC has carried out around May Day for the past seven years in conjunction with the other progressive and revolutionary forces has contributed greatly to building the unity of these forces in Winnipeg and has also inspired people in other areas to use the occasion of May Day to begin the process of organizing similar activities. In this way, May Day is once again becoming an important institution of the Canadian working class in its struggle to establish itself as the leading class in society. The success of the 2006 May Day banquet in Winnipeg reflected the work amongst the youth and the work on the cultural front to meld the most positive and revolutionary new culture with the revolutionary culture of the past. The work on the cultural front continued the following week when the MRC sent a delegation to London, England to contribute to the May 5 celebration of the life and work of Cornelius Cardew.

On April 30 the MRC hosted its First Annual Consultative Conference at which it presented a report on the work in the working class. This conference was attended by a large number of people, representing a broad segment of the movement, with whom the MRC carries out ongoing political discussion. This is another institution that the MRC is developing which not only offers an opportunity for serious political discussion but also for the MRC to render account to the movement, something which is indispensable for it to maintain its bearings. The success of this Consultative Conference was two-fold. Firstly, the MRC was able to present a position on how the work to organize the working class should proceed and what attitude the communists should take towards that work.

Secondly, success was ensured by the participants in the conference, especially by the fruitful discussions that they gave rise to and which would have been impossible without their participation.

In July, the MRC hosted the third annual Chautauqua at Clear Lake in Riding Mountain National Park. The first Chautauqua, held in July 2004, was organized with the specific purpose of solving various problems on the cultural front and ensuring a larger participation of youth in the May Day Banquet. As a result of this work, the May Day banquets in 2005 and 2006 not only featured performances by youth and the participation of large numbers of young people, but that participation also changed the very character of the May Day Banquet, infusing it with a renewed vitality, enthusiasm and revolutionary spirit.

The Chautauqua held in July 2006 took up the problem of building a new political culture and sowed the seeds of a very important public discussion on what kind of political culture a revolutionary party must have. This is a crucial issue facing the entire revolutionary movement and this discussion and its resolution will determine how far the revolutionary movement will advance in the coming period.

In addition, over the past year the MRC has continued to strengthen and expand another political institution – the printing establishment. The quantity and quality of the printing has improved on a continuous basis and 2006 was no exception. This institution was established to serve the needs of the movement and this was the basis of its expansion over the past year. The strength of this work and the guarantee of its success is the political mobilization around the institution and the assistance of our comrades and friends.

From the time of our Regional Conference in 2000, the objective of the MRC has been to create a space for communism within the movement. Whether it is the anti-capitalist movement, the workers movement, the anti-war movement, the movement in support of Palestinian people, the movement in solidarity with Cuba or various other movements, the

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MRC does not approach these movements from the perspective of using them to recruit for communism. Rather, it approaches these movements from the perspective of assisting them to achieve their own aims, because the achievement of those aims will assist the working class and people in the struggle for revolution and socialism. If some individuals in those movements decide that they would like to become communists, that is also a good thing. However, those who see the movements of the people as vote banks or as recruiting grounds for their own organizations are guilty of the rankest form of sectarianism. They invariably paralyze and disorganize the movement, while attracting only the most backward elements to their own organizations. The MRC is opposed to such activities.

Today, one of the most important fronts of work in Canada is the development of a movement to build a new revolutionary organization of the working class. It is absolutely essential that the communists play an active role in building and developing such a movement. The MRC has made this work a priority by assisting this issue to come to the fore and to ensure that it becomes a nation-wide discussion.

Some friends have asked us why we insist on calling ourselves communists and why we insist on the importance of communists being at the centre of the movement. In our view, communism is more than just a name. It is an entire historical movement with its origins in the struggles of the English working class in the seventeenth century and its conclusion will be the achievement of a classless, communist society. We have chosen to associate ourselves with, and position ourselves within, this great historical movement. At this time the communists may be isolated and marginalized within mainstream Canadian society but this will not be the case forever.

Other friends have asked us where we think all of this work is headed and to this question we have to answer that we honestly do not know. However, one thing that history teaches us is that a relatively small number of people who are determined to solve the concrete problems confronting them can make a huge

difference and overcome enormous odds. History also teaches us that it is movements and not individuals who change the world and that in order for individuals to play their role in an effective manner they must be part of a collective. And that is not just any collective, but a collective which is capable of providing leadership to the broad movement of the working class and people. This is why the MRC considers the problem of building a new revolutionary organization of the Canadian working class to be the most important problem of our day.

The MRC wants to take this opportunity to wish all of our comrades and friends health and success in your work during the upcoming year.

Revolutionary greetings,
Manitoba Regional Committee
Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist)

Modern Communism

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(Marxist-Leninist)**

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