

- Guarantee the right to strike, picket and organize in a Labour Bill of Rights.
- Defend the equality rights of women, immigrants, Aboriginal peoples, and the LGBT community.

To quote the *Program of the Communist Party*, “The trade union movement must become sovereign, united and independent, with the highest level of coordinated strategy and action. It must be governed by the principle ‘an injury to one is an injury to all,’ at all times placing the interests of the movement as a whole above the sectional interests of individual affiliates. It must oppose raiding, and resolve jurisdictional disputes in the interests of affected workers... It must also cement the class unity between the workers in Quebec and workers in the rest of Canada and between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal workers...”

The Communist Party salutes the history and militancy of Canadian workers and their most organized section, Canadian labour.

In unity and in solidarity with workers everywhere in the world, the struggle continues, for peace, socialism and justice.

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Unity and Militancy, Not Raiding and Turf Wars!



Labour Day 2004 message from the Communist Party of Canada

IN THE TWELVE months since last Labour Day Canadian working people have seen an escalation of an already dangerous corporate drive towards capitalist globalization, privatization, union-busting, and de-industrialization.

U.S. Imperialism, using their so-called war on terrorism as a pretext, threatens to pull our country deeper into the attack on civil liberties, involvement in Star Wars Missile Programs, control of our borders, and U.S. global military dominance.

By the end of 2004 there will be no appliance manufacturing left in Canada. The last Quebec auto plant has already closed, and three plants have closed and 20% of autoworkers have been laid off in Ontario. Basic Steel is threatened by vulture capitalists who will integrate it with corporate global plans. The west-coast shipbuilding industry is threatened by the decision to build new ferries offshore. NAFTA denies us the tariffs and duties we need to protect jobs, standards and Canadian sovereignty, denies us the right to be masters in our own house, and demands the right to make our culture, including our social programs, healthcare, and education, into commodities to be marketed to those who can afford to purchase it. The FTAA, described as “NAFTA on steroids”, aims to make these deals irreversible, although the timetable for this deal has been dealt severe blows by opposition across the Americas.

As work becomes more precarious, and as wages stand still or even fall, workers’ living standards and purchasing power are declining at a rapid rate. Life is becoming harder, not better for working class families, the unemployed, and the poor. The Ontario government will shortly abolish retirement age so that exploitation of workers can continue longer into old age. This will mean that the 80% of the workforce unorganized in English-speaking Canada and the 60% in Quebec can be squeezed even more by the “Mc-Jobs” employers and the contracting out vultures, who seek to use workers longer into their old age while denying youth the jobs they need to survive.

The past year has witnessed a rise in militancy, dissatisfaction and unrest in the labour movement. Many workers have expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of leadership and mass action by labour, by challenging the influence of right wing business unionism and by attempting to restore membership control and class struggle policies to their unions.

Last spring the Canadian section of the OPEIU became the latest group of workers to leave their US-based union, and seek membership in a militant, Canadian union which they expect to oppose concessions and fight for strong collective agreements and progressive social policies. Changes made at the 2002 CLC convention, which anticipate Constitutional changes in 2005 to democratize the restrictive structure of the central labour body, especially in English-speaking Canada will strengthen membership control of unions in Canada - national and international. Workers must have the right to belong to the union of their choice and not be held as chattels by organizations which have not represented them properly.

At ground level the militancy and determination of organized workers has

been impressive, from the seizure and operation of a plant in Quebec, to the massive resistance of public sector workers in Newfoundland, the refusal of workers to concede to blackmail and extortion at Stelco in Hamilton Ontario, and the unprecedented spontaneous unity around the healthcare workers in British Columbia.

Generally the right-wing leadership of the CLC and in most provincial federations of labour have vacillated and acted as arbitrators at best, or been completely absent like the OFL in Ontario, or engineered a sellout like the BC Federation. Raiding and turf wars have generally taken the place of united, militant struggle and organizing the unorganized at the leadership level. Labour in Quebec has been much more militant and united, and the fightback is much better organized and has had a greater impact as a result.

Organized workers in the coming year must fight to win the inter-related objectives/goals of re-creating a dedicated class struggle leadership, defeat raiding and organize the unorganized, implement a drive for more inner democracy and reach out into the entire population for alliances to fight for policies on behalf of all the people.

These policies include:

- An independent Canadian foreign policy of peace and disarmament - No to Ballistic Missile Defence.
- A multi-lateral trade policy - Fair Trade, Not Free Trade! Out of NAFTA! No to FTAA!
- Protect civil and democratic rights - rescind anti-democratic “anti-terrorism” laws
- Rescind the Clarity Act and fight for Constitutional recognition of the right to self-determination for Quebec and Aboriginal peoples.
- Create jobs! Introduce a 32 hour work week with no loss in take home pay; build affordable social housing now; rebuild secondary industry and manufacturing; restore Canada’s ship-building, machine tool, and agricultural implement industries; save auto and steel jobs and pensions; nationalize energy and natural resources; make exports value added by processing raw materials at home;
- Restore provincial and municipal infrastructure - build a national child care program, and expand social programs - invest in public health care and public and post-secondary education
- Raise the minimum wage to \$12/ hour.
- Lower the retirement age to 60 and substantially increase and index pensions.
- Make UI cover all unemployed at 90% of previous earnings, for the duration of unemployment.