



COMMUNIST PARTY  
OF CANADA  
CENTRAL COMMITTEE

PARTI COMMUNISTE  
DU CANADA  
COMITÉ CENTRAL

290A Danforth Ave., Toronto, Ontario M4K 1N6 Tel: 416-469-2446  
e-mail: <info@cpc-pcc.ca> website: www.comunist-party.ca

January 7, 2010

For Immediate Release

## **Communist Party Condemns Proroguing of Parliament... Harper out of office now!**

The decision of Stephen Harper's minority Tory government to prorogue Parliament for the second time in twelve months demonstrates profound contempt and loathing for both Parliament and the millions of Canadians who are demanding genuine action to end the economic crisis and the occupation of Afghanistan. Harper is escalating his attack on democracy to a new and dangerous level.

The Communist Party of Canada condemns this action, and urges all Canadians to take part in the January 23 protest rallies across the country. With the strong participation of the labour movement and all progressive forces, this movement to "get Parliament back to work" can help spark a powerful campaign to block and defeat the Harper Tories. Such a movement can lead the fight policies to defend the interests of working people and move Canada in a fundamentally new direction.

Imposed during the holiday season, the prorogation of Parliament until March is a machination to escape further public scrutiny of Canada's complicity in the torture of Afghan detainees, and more broadly the disastrous failure of the imperialist war and occupation in Afghanistan. The fabricated pretext of a "breathing space" to craft updated economic and social policies is absurd; the Conservatives intend to slash social spending, leaving millions of Canadian workers and their families facing another desperate year during the worst capitalist crisis in decades. Instead of "working," the Tories will be posing for the cameras at the Vancouver Winter Olympics, which have taken over \$6 billion from people's needs to host this massive party for the rich on stolen native land.

Carried out by a far-right government – one rejected by nearly two-thirds of voters – the prorogation is a direct attack on Parliament itself, wiping out the work of an entire session and halting the work of parliamentary committees.

Even more significant, this is not an isolated step. It is part of a deliberate, conscious strategy by the Harper Tories to impose the deeply unpopular corporate agenda by undemocratic means. Their goal is to transform the Canadian state, using every possible measure to wipe out the achievements of past struggles by working people, and instead to transfer ever more wealth into the coffers of the corporate rich and to strengthen the oppressive state apparatus: the military, prisons, police and spy agencies.

Democracy in Canada has already been gravely weakened by 'free trade', capitalist 'globalisation' and the erosion of Canadian sovereignty, by the tight corporate grip on the mass media, and by an electoral system which restricts any serious debate of progressive alternatives to the neoliberal agenda.

In pursuit of this agenda, the Harper Conservatives are using the levers of power to stack the Senate, the courts and public service with their supporters. They have stifled dissent within the civil service, violated laws, ignored resolutions adopted by the majority of MPs, gutted accountability laws and promises, and further concentrated power in the Prime Minister's office. At every stage, they hurl McCarthy-style accusations to vilify and terrorize critics. It is no exaggeration to warn that these demagogic, dictatorial tactics are designed to block any possibility of eventually reversing their right-wing policies.

Unless the Harper Tories are defeated by a powerful movement of opposition, they pose a real and present danger to the future of Canada. The duty of all Canadians who support civil rights, democratic liberties, universal social programs, equality, peace, sovereignty and environmental sustainability is to join the struggle to drive this government out of office, the sooner the better.

***All out on January 23rd! Bring the troops home from Afghanistan NOW! Drive out the pro-corporate Harper Conservatives, and step up the fight for a People's Alternative!***

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Issued by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada. For more information, contact Miguel Figueroa, Communist Party leader at 416-469-2446 or [Figueroa@cpc-pcc.ca](mailto:Figueroa@cpc-pcc.ca).