

Open Letter from the PCR-RCP Canada to the 2nd Conference of the Revolutionary Students and Youth Activists

Revolutionary greetings to all comrades in attendance!

On the occasion of this 2nd conference and on behalf of all the supporters of the Parti Communiste Révolutionnaire - Revolutionary Communist Party (PCR-RCP) in Canada, we extend a red salute to the work accomplished over the course of the last few months, especially in mobilizing new forces and forming, within the student milieu, a movement of a new type—a movement that aims to unify the revolutionary forces. We hope this movement will multiply from one end of the country to the other. We recognize that efforts to build such an organization are in the earliest of stages, yet it is already a great achievement to begin tackling this task!

In this spirit and on this occasion of the 2nd Conference of the Revolutionary Youth and Students, comrades of the PCR-RCP submit the following analyses—however summary!—to the attention of all participants. We hope these analyses will enrich the discussions in the different workshops and unify comrades on a common understanding of the political context in which this conference undertakes its work.

A New Class Struggle is in the Making

In Canada, as in most imperialist countries, the bourgeoisie and its supposedly democratic institutions are in the process of degenerating. Capitalism is undergoing a series of major crises—which are in fact part and parcel of a single great crisis. This is not breaking news. Each and every day, we see the big capitalists—today in Europe, tomorrow in the United States and here in Canada—imposing the most drastic measures on the population: factory closures and relocations, dramatic increases in fees and services charge, that result in generalized impoverishment, increasing rates of unemployment and indebtedness, etc.

Parliamentary democracy, with its electoral circus and its interchangeable parties, have reached the limit of their possibilities. Day after day, it becomes increasingly evident that this institution serves no other purpose than to protect the power of capitalists and of the bourgeoisie *against* the interest of the immense majority of the population.

In the face of these facts, the resistance in Canada, as elsewhere, is manifested at different degrees. More often than not, the resistance movements adopt in the first instance, new forms of struggle and opposition that lie outside the traditional frame of unionist and/or electoral struggle. They burst, without much preparation and to the surprise of all in the streets of Tunis, in Tahrir Square, in favour of the Arab Spring. They took the form of the “Occupy” movements, first initiated in Spain, before spreading and expressing the

indignation of a growing number of the “have-nots” across the world, thanks to the global economic crisis. Closer to home, we saw this expression more and more openly in the streets of Toronto during the G20 in 2010, in the May 1st demonstrations—above all, in Montréal—where the anti-capitalists and revolutionaries demonstrated and mobilized sometimes more people than the trade union movement. And shortly after, i.e. last spring, the students in Québec deployed raw forms of struggle and defied repression and the “special laws;” they led an historical mobilization without precedent. In sum, these were all outside the classical forms, i.e. bureaucratic “negotiations,” that we are generally accustomed to seeing, at least for the past 20 years...

In light of this reality—the growing crisis of capitalism on the one hand; the appearance of new forms of struggle on the other hand—we could draw several conclusions:

1) In the face of this quasi-permanent crisis of capitalism, **those organizations—“legal and recognized” by the bourgeoisie**—such as trade/labour unions, student associations and union, community, not-for-profits, and grass-roots organizations that claim to speak on behalf of the proletariat **are less and less capable of obtaining real gains whatsoever**, even in terms of winning the immediate and “realistic” demands. The forms of struggles these groups deploy are inadequate in opposing, as they ought to oppose, the power of the bourgeoisie.

2) **New forms of resistance therefore emerge to meet new realities** that result from the globalization of capitalism. In each historical period, the exploited masses spontaneously discover and invent new forms and tactics of struggle. They are not all equivalent, some withstand the test of time better than others...

3) At the same time, **these new spontaneous resistance struggles cannot, in and of themselves, overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie and defeat capitalism**. Some will always believe that capitalism will one day collapse on its own, and that the revolution or the great transformation, will surge forward spontaneously by taking advantage of a sharp social crisis. History shows that things don't exactly happen that way.

Hence, it is not the case that these crises were ‘lacking’ over the course of the previous two years. Indeed, different movements undermined the power of the bourgeoisie, in particular those movements in the Middle East. At best, however, the result was the replacement of an old, corrupt, and crooked party by another, preserving each and every time the old state apparatus, the old power of the rich against the immense majority of the poor.

On a different scale and in very different conditions (i.e. let's not forget it was first and foremost a struggle against rising tuition fees), the Québec student strike, dubbed the "Maple Spring" of 2012, for example, could not on its own transform and defeat the bourgeoisie, no matter how exemplary that struggle. In spite of its exemplary character, the struggle was unable to produce better results than the replacement of one bourgeois party by another.

It was, nevertheless, exemplary: by its **new forms** of struggle, its relentless daily actions that upset the "agreed upon" rules set by the unionist tradition; exemplary in its mass character and its new experiments in democracy; exemplary in its open defiance of the exceptional/"special laws." We saw the movement's refusal to bend under the diktats of the then incumbent Liberal Party, which further weakened and discredited that party, and at the same time, parliamentary and bourgeois democracy itself. Finally, the student struggle was exemplary because they showed that gains, however modest, could be wrested from the bourgeoisie; something we have not seen for a very long time.

This was an educational struggle because for many, the magnitude of the movement foreshadows a real social tidal wave to come and, who knows, the beginning of a revolution, perhaps... Ultimately, however, the counter-offensive of the bourgeoisie, which took the form of calling an election, quickly led a large part of the movement to abandon all perspectives other than that of defeating the Liberals in this election, and to recoup a large section of militant students into the electoral efforts of Québec Solidaire (another bourgeois political party). The social gains wrested as a result of this struggle were partly spoiled by this return to the ballot box, and thus restoring the "democratic" veneer of parliamentary democracy.

This quick abandonment of other forms of struggles to the benefit of electioneering, is explained by **the absence and or weakness of revolutionary activity by the extreme left (and we include ourselves here!) among the students and in the proletarian neighbourhoods —or, in any case, in the inability to harness and unify its forces and its ideas into a strong and visible movement.** It also revealed, despite the very clear anti-bourgeois demonstrations (i.e. the mass protests in support of the students, the neighbourhood 'casseroles' marches), that the "practical and political capacity" of the proletariat to act are very weak and that its own political organizations remain next to non-existent.

4) The most "revolutionary" of conditions could be met, but if the hundreds, thousands, millions of proletarians, victims of capitalist exploitation, do not accumulate the political and practical means to prepare for systemic change and to seize power, we can rest assured, as Lenin remarked, that the bourgeoisie, along with its apparatuses, will never fall unless we topple it. These political and practical means are notably the vanguard party and strong mass organizations with a true proletarian spirit, radically anti-bourgeois in nature, and led by the perspective of waging the general struggle against capitalism. In the last two years, we witnessed too many missed opportunities by revolutionary forces the world over, forces that neglected to build such organizations. In forging ahead, we must not miss any more of these opportunities!

A New Class Struggle is in the Making, But it Needs New Organizations, New Movements.

This was the sentiment of the 2nd Canadian Revolutionary Congress, initiated by the PCR-RCP and held in Toronto in December 2010. We issued a call to all militants across the country to organize, to debate Maoist ideas that are, in our view, the most appropriate at the strategic level for advancing the revolutionary struggle in Canada.

Our Party considers that it is **our responsibility to provoke and initiate the political and practical capacities of the proletariat.** The very existence of our Party is inscribed in this objective. Additionally, the initiative to call for a first revolutionary student conference last December 2012 responded to that very same imperative, much like the project of similar conferences yet to be held in the worker's milieu and among proletarian women.

For above and beyond the party, movements that gather masses (students, workers, proletarian feminists, etc.) must exist, and must develop in all areas the greatest capacities to fight, to confront the bourgeois state and to educate while engaging in political battles. These perspectives are the ones that enable us to demarcate the work of revolutionary movements, notably in the student milieu.

It is more necessary than ever for the proletariat to act as a single class and to form an organized opposition against the bourgeoisie, not only to resist the current attacks but to prepare for the coming struggles, to link and unify these struggles, to provide the political means to overturn the power of the bourgeoisie and to build new forms of people's power. This organized class opposition must be built in all the proletarian milieus, whether they be immigrants, youth, women, the First Nations, Inuit and Metis, and among the proletarianized student milieus.

Youth in the Student Sector Must Bring Together All the Conditions and Accelerate the Pace in Creating Diverse Revolutionary Movements

We must surpass reformist practices in order to develop the organizations and movements that will squarely and resolutely situate themselves beyond the imposed framework of the bourgeoisie. To surpass these traditional forms, militants who call themselves anti-capitalist and who want to revolutionize the existing society have one ambitious task: **to create and devise, in all the milieus (women, workers, Native nations, students and youth) new organizations that refuse the legal framework imposed by the bourgeoisie, and that will inscribe their struggles inside the general struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and build a new People's Power.** Some organizations will certainly be deeply involved in the immediate struggles, which are just and which serve the most exploited masses. However, at the same time, these organizations must devise long term perspectives, by providing education on revolutionary ideas (Maoist ideas), by participating in the general political struggle to wrest the proletariat from the domination of bourgeois ideas in all spheres of their lives (from the sham democracy, from the commodification and privatization of the most basic needs, etc.), and by contributing new ideas of democracy and people's power yet to be established.

The proletarian and revolutionary movements we want to initiate will inscribe themselves in this perspective, both in their form and in their political activities. A *movement* is much more than just a basic *organization* of individuals in a defined grouping: it is the constant, non-stop, political activity, an educational practice, and action among the masses, that aims to multiply its forces, to be constantly expanding. It is the development of a political practice that is independent from the official unions (student unions, workers unions, and other state funded not-for-profit or community groups). While actively engaging in all these struggles —especially those that are just and non-bureaucratic— revolutionary activists must organize themselves with their own flyers, materials, proposals and demands. They seek to use these demands in order to introduce broader perspectives that are linked to the interests of the proletariat as a whole.

Given that individuals in the student milieu have a fair amount of disposable time, along with youthful energy, are generally open-minded toward new ideas, and are concentrated in a centralized place (i.e. school), they meet the all the necessary conditions to create, as soon and as quickly as possible, the very revolutionary student movement we need on as many campuses as possible. Indeed, the student milieu facilitates a rapid circulation of revolutionary ideas and discussions. However, because students are in transitory stages from one educational institution to another, a lot of work needs to be done... and in a short period of time!

Students, activists and revolutionaries must seize upon these new forms of struggle, supporting and participating in them, without reservations. But unlike the traditional student unions, these revolutionary activists must develop among the student masses, the political and practical capacities to serve the general political struggle against the bourgeoisie and its widespread bourgeois ideas. They must accumulate revolutionary forces in a real movement (*student and revolutionary*) that will go beyond the limited scope of the immediate struggles, to ensure that these immediate struggles will pave the way for a more general struggle against capitalism and for its overthrow.

This will always be the question. In the activity and watchwords of such a movement, how could we ensure that a struggle develops revolutionary capacities among the student masses, instead of their submission to the bourgeois order? In any struggle, whatever its kind, what is the correct call to make in order to reinforce our camp against that of the capitalist and reactionary state? Which demands allow us to unite with the most exploited elements? To negotiate with the State and its apparatuses, or to refuse and reject their trap? To remain disorganized in the face of increasing repression or to be better prepared and deal with this repression out in the streets? To participate in their elections or to boycott them? Etc.

In a nutshell, what are the activities that will advance communist and revolutionary ideas, rather than the dominant ideas of the bourgeoisie?

When it comes to linking theory to strategy and action, the mass line in the student milieu means, among other things, the need to join with proletarian students wherever their numbers are greatest.

The university teaches us, first and foremost, the ideas of the bourgeoisie. *University student circles are not proletarian circles, far from it.* In fact, the number of students from proletarian origins continuously declines the higher up the education ladder, i.e. at the university level, they form a minority. Yet it is at the universities where we often find the most articulate elements, where we find many potential allies of the revolution. The petty-bourgeois origin of the vast majority of university students, however, could be found in the following attributes: a real ignorance of the everyday life of working class and poor people, a tendency to intellectualize and to develop theory without linking it to actual practice, a tendency toward individualism and their own ideas, disdain for the opinions or views coming from the masses.

Social investigations and political activity at high schools and technical schools are essential for learning from proletarian youth about their own reality, their problems, their needs and aspirations. It is in this work that we discover the demands of the people and affirm their righteousness. There are thus many challenges in linking theory and practice: To bring about, in all schools, the revolutionary points of view by manifesting them in actual practice; to make these sites an education center for communist ideas, for Maoist ideas; to turn them into workshops where new forms of struggle are grasped, to make them places where we learn to “serve the people” and to develop a mass line, i.e. in the service of the most exploited, to turn these schools into sites of intense political activity, unification, consolidation and mobilization.

Based on a solid practice of investigation and in the service of the broad masses, there is no reason why these movements need to be or become bureaucratic.

The expansion of revolutionary student work (distribution of common flyers, common posters, and common campaigns) **in as many educational institutions as possible is a key objective.** Instead of allocating too much time to creating these structures on each campus, it is best to start with what already exists. In other words: let's unite on common principles! Sometimes, it is only one individual in a CEGEP or at a High School, who posters, who flyers, who speaks at an assembly, or who organizes small meetings. Questions concerning structures will necessarily arise, but they will necessarily be resolved once our movements are sufficiently developed.

**Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win!
It is Right to Rebel!**

Each time we dare to rise up and defy the bourgeoisie and its diktats, the bourgeoisie responds with its police, its justice and all its repressive arsenal. In Canada, the mobilization around the G20 held in Toronto marked a shift in the intensification of police repression and the right to protest. In the context of the most recent student strike in Québec, the police processed more than 3,500 arrests across the province; more than 2,000 of the above cited number took place in Montréal alone.

More recently, by-law P-6 in Montréal rendered illegal all demonstration for which a route plan had not been submitted to the police in advance. This by-law resulted in the mass arrests of hundreds of protesters since its adoption (e.g. at the most recent May 1st demonstration in Montréal, which saw 447 arrests by police for “unlawful assembly”). Even before the student strike, we have seen in Canada the emergence of a new *Integrated National Security Enforcement Team*. This team is comprised of elements from various police forces, with offices in Montréal, Québec City, Ottawa and Toronto. It is composed of police officers from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the SQ (the Québec Provincial Police), the SPVM (Montréal City Police) and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), and they are all actively seeking to accumulate intelligence on various “radical” activist networks. Through intimidation and threats, this organ of repression already interpellated dozens of activists across the province of Québec, inviting everyone to snitch on each other. It sought to infiltrate movements with police infiltrators and informers. It conducted raids on several activists, even raiding the office of a student union (a CEGEP student association office in Sainte-Thérèse)! We note that the PCR-RCP was particularly targeted in these operations.

The police and the bourgeois justice system treat all its political opposition by criminalizing them, especially when this opposition comes from young people and from revolutionary activists.

We really must not be surprised! We want to undermine the power of the bourgeoisie. We want to transform the state of things. This surveillance and this repression, for at least 150 years, is the lot of all revolutionaries, in every country, and across all epochs. We must not fear the repression, but we must, however, be better prepared to use all our arsenal in the political struggle. In the future, we will bring on more offensive campaigns to expose the tactics of the police against the militants, and we will continue to denounce this sham democracy. We must not concede to their intimidation or to their harassment. We must, on the contrary, understand that the bourgeoisie is afraid! It fears for its power. The bourgeoisie already believes us, more than our fellow proletarians believe us! In seeking to muzzle our forces, the bourgeoisie only encourages a stronger resistance to its power, and thus further encourage the spread of our revolutionary ideas. It is on us to use these tactics of intimidation to our advantage and to expose the role of the police state in maintaining this rotting bourgeois power.

In this context, we must denounce and call upon all militants in all sectors to refuse any invitation to testify, to participate in any way whatsoever, in this investigative police work and informing on activists. On that subject, the “Special Commission on the Maple Spring Protests” recently implemented by the Parti Québécois government in Québec, serves no other purpose than to isolate the most radical elements of the struggle, to criminalize them, and to place blame on “a few rioters.” With their mandate to “analyze the circumstances of disruptive events and actions”, this Special Commission wants to understand how any future “deterioration/disturbance of the social climate” can be avoided. For us, it is the contrary: we want to do everything to make this deterioration of the social order happen again!

In Conclusion...

There is an urgency for all militants who critique and denounce this system to clarify our perspectives on struggle and to unify our forces around the best ideas to advance the revolution in Canada. For the PCR-RCP, this perspective is the socialist revolution. We intend to share and publish, in the near future, the theses of our organization on the strategy we advance in order to arrive at socialism, which will then be discussed with all the radical and revolutionary forces across the country. However, the conditions of the struggle and the current climate demand from us, and from the thousands of activists who want to fight this system, to immediately develop a new political practice capable of responding to the increasing attacks of the capitalists and their bourgeois state.

On the occasion of this second conference of revolutionary students and youth, we could already underline the important achievements. Since the first meeting in December, preliminary analyses were discussed and the proposals —while modest— were all adopted. These constitute a base of important principles on which the different RSMs are called to further develop and implement.

We are confident that the ideas and discussions that follow over the course of this weekend will further enrich the debate and above all, lay the practical foundations of revolutionary student movements so that they may multiply in the largest possible numbers across all schools and campuses. More importantly, however, the conference expresses a common will and enthusiasm to struggle, not only for the youth, but on the side of all our proletarian brothers and sisters, so that that we could transform this rotten system and organize the new society we dream of building.

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