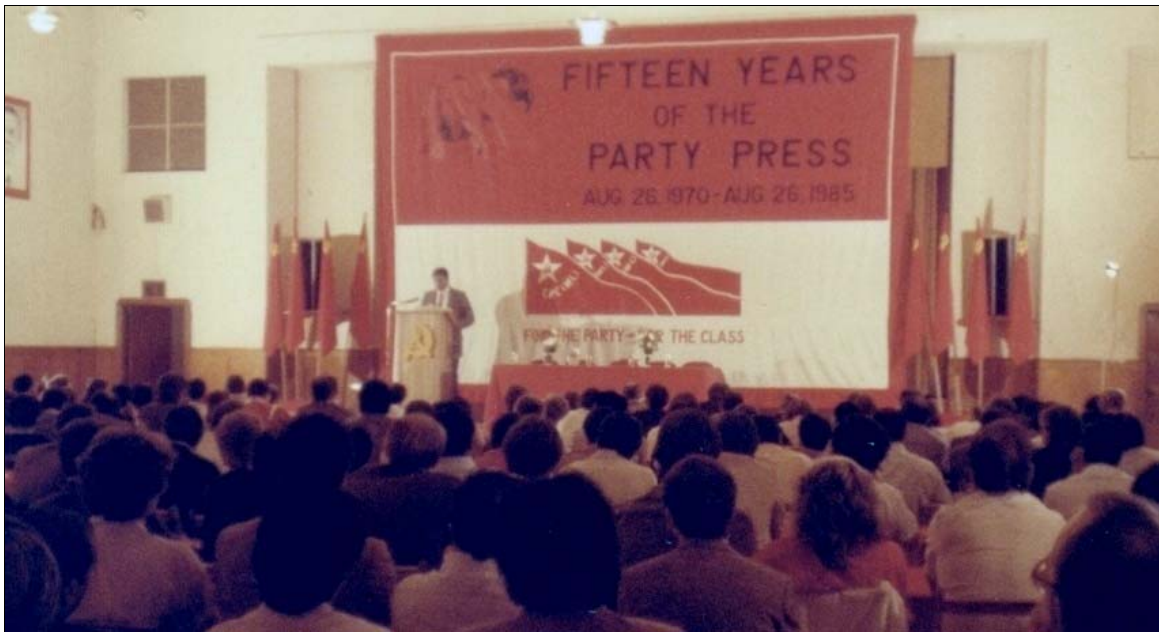




September 1, 2022 - No. 10

**Anniversary of the Mass Party Press
September 1, 1985**

A Turning Point in History and CPC(M-L)'s Decision to Build the Mass Party Press



Celebration of the Party's decision to build the Mass Party Press, September 1, 1985.

On September 1, the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) marks the anniversary of the historic decision it took in 1985 to build the Mass Party Press. It was a momentous decision which the Party continues to implement to this day. To appreciate the significance of that decision, the text of the speech delivered by Comrade Hardial Bains at the Party's 13th Consultative Conference held in Toronto on April 28-29, 1991, is reprinted below.

What was the decision we took on September 1, 1985? The analysis was that this is a turning point, and that no force can act in the old way. What should we do under the present circumstances? What should the Party do in response to its own analysis that it must act in the new way?

The Party gave the call to build the Mass Party Press. The decision to build a movement for enlightenment was part of this work. We had to throw away all encumbrances, all things which stopped us from realizing this aim. One such thing was to throw away the psychology of fear that the Party cannot do big things. For 15 years before the decision to build the Mass Party Press was taken, we had done many small things, but to continue in that way would have degenerated the Party. We had accumulated strength during those 15 years, and now we were in a position to

utilize what had been achieved in order to go forward.

The Communist Party is a very complex institution. It cannot be described in simplistic terms. Its features of being the most organized and most advanced contingent of the working class and its general staff have to be developed in real life. In 1985 we wanted to make sure that those features were further developed and did not remain phrases, but the Party was not yet prepared to completely overcome the pressures which distorted the development of these features.

When our Party began its work to implement the decisions of September 1, 1985, its first act was to build the non-Party Press, which would show how the Party leads on such a broad basis. Thus when we say that we are the most advanced and most organized, one of the proofs is the building of the non-Party Press. The Fifth Congress in 1987 again affirmed our Party's method that before names are given to things, they must first have a quality. It does not make sense to call somebody a human being before actually seeing the human qualities which identify the person as a human being. The same holds true for a party. Its constituents, its organizations, have to be most advanced, the most organized and possess the qualities of a vanguard, before you can call it a vanguard party.

In the 1960s when we were arousing the advanced elements to take up the task of building such a party, it was necessary to repeat the features the Party must have. A picture in the form of a broad outline can be created even before it actually comes into being, but if we just keep on speaking about this picture without actually creating it in life, this would mean that we are asserting something which does not exist in reality. Not only will such a thing not exist in reality, but the assertions made about its features in ideal form would severely distort reality. This would be tantamount to not paying attention to ensuring that the Party actually is the most advanced and the vanguard of the class. It would actually destroy such a party.

If in Canada and internationally public opinion does not think of us as advanced, then what is the purpose of asserting that we are advanced? What is the repetition that our Party is the most advanced, the vanguard, going to do in real life? With the work of the non-Party Press, at least a few workers, a few intellectuals got to know that we have the most advanced positions, that we are the vanguard, the most organized, that we are not fanatical or dogmatic. The proof of the decision of September 1, 1985, can be found not only in this work alone, but it can be seen in all the other work of the Party as well.



Celebration of the successes in building the Mass Party Press, Toronto, August 31, 1986.

We can give many examples, but we will begin with just one. As all of you know, this year and last year, 1990 and 1991, have been very crucial years for us, during which all of us have discussed various matters, especially the question of the Party and the role of the member in the Party. What role does the member play in the Party? What qualities should a member have? Why

is it necessary to work in a Party basic organization? Why is it necessary to strengthen the regional committees? What is the relationship between these organizations and the Central Committee? We may think good work has been done, but will a worker in a factory say it was good work? Will an intellectual respond and say yes, you have done very good work? Or will they say they do not know?

We must work in such a way that they do know. If we don't make the necessary turn, we will see what various other people who are lined up behind us will do to us. Imagine yourself in a car at the turning lane of an intersection and you refuse to turn; all the cars lined up behind you will be honking their horns. Such voices are coming up. They are demanding to know why we are not turning. The war in the Gulf region tested quite a number of people. It is very interesting that they wanted to turn, but backwards. That is not called turning. Turning back means to turn away from dealing with the crucial problems at any stage in the development of our movement. We are not talking about this kind of turning point.

Our participation in the struggle against the use of force in the Persian Gulf was honourable. It was a good, necessary intervention. The Party won friends, and most importantly, people considered the Party's positions to be just positions. But when the decision was made in 1985 to build the Mass Party Press, was the issue that we should get a favourable response and a medal of praise from the people on this or that matter? Unfortunately, comrades, some people were satisfied with this sort of thing. Not only were they satisfied, they were even theorizing and making speeches about it. They delivered lectures to us when we saw them but they had forgotten the decision of September 1, 1985, reaffirmed by the Fifth Congress of the Party.

It is not possible to talk about participation in this or that front of work without assessing the implementation of the key decision. What was that decision of 1985, besides the analysis that this is a turning point in which no force could act in the old way, and that it was necessary to build the Mass Party Press? In essence, it can be described in one sentence: that the Party should be in the van of society. Can we say that this has been achieved? Can we say that everywhere our Party is in the van? There are still comrades who would ask us to define what we mean by van. For them, it ends with a clear definition of a thing, because they still consider the Party an idea, a place for the clarification of various opinions, an association in which individuals get together to talk about things.

I would like to raise the issue of our work in one of the cities. Our organization has existed in this city in one form or another for a very long time. We have over 20 years of continuous work there. This city has certain progressive and revolutionary traditions, even though some of these were under the influence of anarcho-syndicalism. Nonetheless, in terms of some important democratic questions, in terms of the mass response to the situation, this city is second to none. However, I was there on April 14, and I found that the Party is not doing very well. How is it possible that the Party is not doing very well there when we took the decision to have the movement for enlightenment five-and-a-half years ago? Many times we have asked the organization there how the work is going? What is being done on such and such a question, especially on democratic questions such as the struggle against the visits of American and Soviet warships, the struggle against racism, and so on? They will not answer. They say the Party knows. Where is that party which knows? We do not find that party because when we demand answers, they say they are thinking about it. Is this a relevant thing to say -- that we are thinking about such matters? Is this an example of the hard work of the last five-and-a-half years to implement the decisions which we took and which were ratified by the Congress in 1987? Has the organization in that city mobilized the members of our Party there to realize the task?

Thinking is a very good thing, but it is even better if the thinking is done in the course of implementing a decision. They should at least have that kind of consciousness. Unfortunately, I have to say that they do not have that. But when we discuss these matters with the comrades there,

they are very content with what they are doing. In the 1960s we used to call those who engaged in this kind of activity navel-gazers. In other words, when somebody asks them what is going on, they look at their navels. We have to look outside. We have to make use of all our resources to analyze our situation, to draw warranted conclusions, to establish objectively what our actions are doing to the class, to the people, to the movement there. Then a summation can be made: What results have been achieved by an action taken? What further actions should be taken?

In 1968 our organization decided that the most important task within the conditions of the times was to create the Party, and that the first step towards establishing such a Party was, besides other things, the creation of the instruments of working class propaganda. Creating the instruments of working class propaganda did not mean that we did not participate in economic struggle; it did not mean that we did not participate in political struggle. It did not mean that we did not deal with the questions of theory and wage stern ideological struggle against revisionism and opportunism of all hues. What it meant was that this point had become a crucial one upon which everything else hinged.



April 12, 1970 issue of *Mass Line* announces the founding of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) on March 31, 1970, with this bold headline.

Our Party was founded in 1970 after successful work carried on this front, whereby comrades came forward for the cause of the working class, for the cause of communism. Right at that time we were faced with a dual attack -- one by the state and the other by the revisionists and opportunists. Of course, it is hard to convince anyone who was not in this reality that in Canada hundreds of people were arrested for their ideological and political convictions, that they were jailed, that the revisionists and opportunists openly collaborated with the state to ensure that this happened, that the leader of the Party and his family faced all sorts of dastardly attacks. What should the Party have done under those circumstances? Besides taking up the task of clearing the way on organizational and ideological questions, especially the political question of Quebec and other related questions, the Party spearheaded a heroic campaign which was called the resistance movement, in which nobody cowered in front of the attacks of the state. We were all inexperienced at that time in this form of struggle.

I remember the first day when a comrade was arrested in Montreal. We did not know what was going to happen to him. There was kind of a premonition that the person will be cut into pieces or burned alive. It was anybody's guess. Our tally is that during the 1970-73 period, close to 3,000 different arrests of comrades took place. All our main cadres and activists spent an average of six to nine months in jail. The Party came out of this struggle strengthened and more united. While we were waging this struggle, another struggle was imposed on us, an intrigue from a swaggering party in power in a foreign country. It did not want the Party that we Canadians established for our own political aims, on the basis of our own ideological convictions, on the basis of organizational forms which we worked out ourselves. On the contrary, this party and those aligned with it wanted to bless the whole world and turn various parties into their agencies. They created a situation in which either a party was recognized by them as "genuine," which meant it was willing to be their agent, or it should drop dead. That was the message. In December 1973, a man from Vancouver announced that he had internal information that this foreign party no longer recognized us. This was supposed to be a big weapon against us, a weapon that they were using everywhere to disorient, divert and disintegrate the progressive forces.

In 1971, an effort had already been made by this foreign party to split and disintegrate our Party. Far from splitting, we went through a vigorous development of unity amongst the communists and progressive forces. Virtually everyone who called themselves progressive and communist joined the Party. Many of these faces are present today, just as we are. This party could not achieve what it wanted to achieve, and the struggle began.

After it became clear that the Party could not be smashed through the state attacks, or through the secret service and the opportunist provocateurs, it was said that CPC(M-L) was not a serious party and that it was necessary to build a new one. That struggle went on for 10 long years. Every kind of thing was written against us, and many dastardly actions were organized in order to destroy the Party. But in 1982 they all declared that Marxism-Leninism does not work. In other words, they wanted Marxism-Leninism to be wiped off the face of Canada. Finally they admitted that much themselves.

During this period of attacks by the opportunists, we waged a struggle for the Party on two fronts. First, we carried on our principled position for the unity of the Party and still called upon everyone to unite in one party. If they could not do that, then they could unite by participating in unity in action. We opened various paths so that a much broader unity could be established.

Secondly, we took the measures to strengthen ourselves theoretically and ideologically. We established our ideological institute, which carried out this vigorous work. By 1977, we declared that we had won.

Of course, they all laughed. They claimed the Party was not so big, that the Party was just "six or seven" people. But they were not even one. Why? Because when they got together, a "whole lot" of them, they would say, "We do not know what is going on." Nobody would even defend their own organization. In other words, they had no members at all. The facts are verifiable.

In March 1977, the Third Congress took place. While it will go down in history as a great victory, on the one hand, it is also an example of the infamy of the state, whereby they arrested 17 of us just prior to the Congress and tried to frame us and in this manner sabotage our work. At the same time, hundreds of people from Montreal came forward to unite under the banner of the Party, giving rise to one of the largest political rallies, which was held in Montreal at the end of the Congress.



Demonstration against the political persecution of CPC(M-L) following the arrest of 17 Party activists immediately prior to the Third Congress, Toronto, March 1977.

The task of the Party changed to one of overcoming the detrimental consequences of Maoism. This work, which started in 1976-77, was further developed in our Special Congress held in April 1978, and went further. It was our Party which had the honesty and sincerity to recognize that some of the things which we had done were not correct and needed to be corrected. They needed to be corrected because we were not born infallible. We never had criticism that we were infants when we were born. This would have been silly. But there were aspects which needed to be criticized and eliminated before our Party could advance further. For example, the subjective attitude to revolution that a few activities or a few militant actions will spontaneously arouse the masses of the people was discarded. The thinking that there is no need to go through a whole period of political process was given up, and so on. In the sphere of inner-Party organization, there still persists a lot of pressure that either there is no democratic centralism, or there is all centralism. In other words, we have people who say, "We are not going to do anything until the centre tells us." Or conversely, "Why is the centre deciding this?" These positions come up when in the local areas an apolitical atmosphere prevails and decisions are not taken. Our Party has not agreed with either of these positions. It considers both positions to be diversionary. Neither makes an attempt to go into the heart of a decision-making process which puts people in a position of defending the decisions they take.

In the 1982 Congress, when the recession was setting in, when all the struggles waged had finally eliminated the Maoist groups, the Party took up the question of further implementing the slogan which was given by the Third Congress: namely, to bolshevize the Party, that is, to increase the mass influence and the mass character of the Party and to develop its leading role. It is within this framework of building the mass character of the Party, as fully and legally sanctioned by the Fourth Congress and re-sanctioned on September 1, 1985, that the question of the Mass Party Press was taken up.

In a nutshell, we can see our conscious history. Can the branch we were speaking about tell us their history? What tasks did they take up? Do they think that they can be called the most organized, the most advanced, the vanguard of the class? If they don't even know what they did and what the results were, how is it possible for a branch to know its history? What is it doing there? Why does it exist? Is it just for the sake of an idea?

Our working class needs regional committees which should be almost like parties, because Canada is a big country with conditions which are different in some ways from one region to another. One cannot operate in the same way in all conditions in all the parts of Canada. But to have a situation where a branch which has a history of over 20 years and has produced the main leaders of our Party and its main activists -- those who come from the 1960s -- to not know its history is not acceptable! If they could not do anything else, at least they could take up the well-known positions of the Party.

They want an organization that gets together without an aim, where everybody gives opinions about what the aim of their organization should be. The Party cannot accept that. We have an aim. If we are not clear about something today, we work hard and become clear tomorrow, but we do not take ages to carry out a program to become clear. This cannot be, because clarity is a relative term. One day we are clear about the problem we face today, and the next day when the situation changes, we again have to become clear. It is as if we are dealing with this starting point all over again.

Comrades, since 1985 when the banner of enlightenment was put forward, polarization has taken place on this question. Some cover up their opposition by saying, "Well, we just don't have time. If we had time, we would do all the things you say." And the Party responds to them: "It's very good that you don't have time. We can just imagine if you had time, how many other things you would have messed up! Because lack of time does not mean that you should be dishonest and insincere, that you should be a trickster." If someone does not like something we have done, then

speak -- tell us! Maybe we were wrong. But we must not let go to waste the fine work which people appreciate and love. We have a responsibility.

When we look back at the year 1985, then this question arises: what did this decision mean? Was it some peculiar decision, relevant only for those few days and only for the scheme of creating a magazine -- or did it have a greater meaning? It had a greater meaning. It did not have that limited meaning. If that decision did not have a greater meaning, why would we have spent all this time carrying it out?

Comrades have come from all across the country to join the work of the Mass Party Press, with their fists high. Comrades from all over Ontario still come to volunteer to work in that place whenever they have free time. Even from outside this area and from across the country, comrades take holidays -- even long holidays -- to assist this work. They are not fools to have done it if it has no greater meaning. That it is just to establish a technical base, just to establish a press? Far from it. This greater meaning has its immediate practical consequences, which we will talk about as we go along. But the general greater meaning, the general practical consequence is that we must appeal to the people and respond to their demand to have a press which deals with their interests, which concerns itself with their interests profoundly and not in a mechanical way. All the organizations of the Party, all the comrades, must do their own work with the same spirit. The tasks should be implemented according to what people want, what they need, not just what we want.

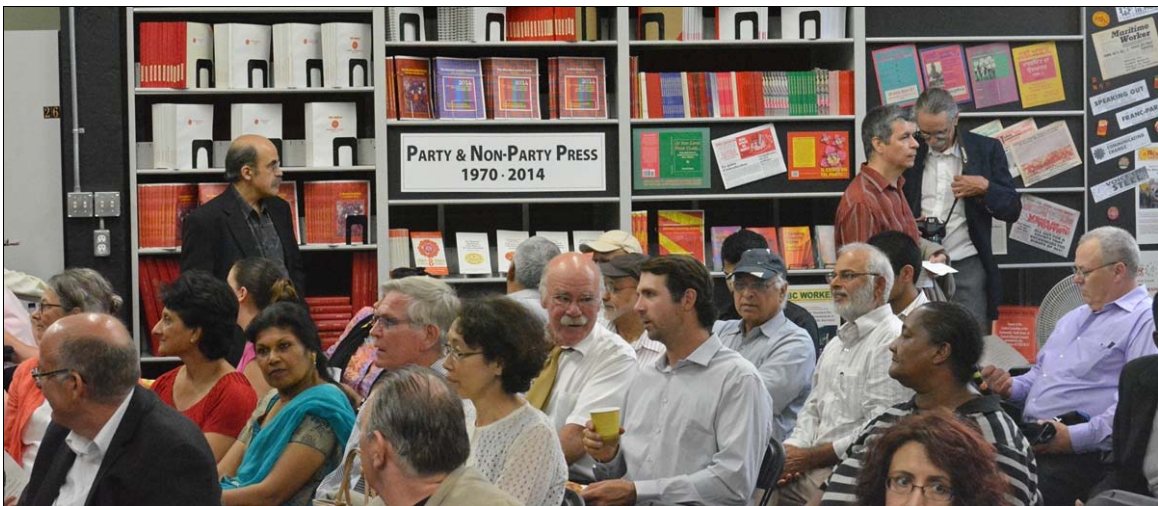
If the decision of September 1, 1985, was based on merely what we wanted, we would have said we are not going to worry, we already have a press, why go to all this trouble? We can even dismiss this conference, join with others who say Marxism was wrong on such and such questions. We too could take a critical attitude, liquidate everything and go home. We were never so inclined. This work, in terms of Party work, has a profound meaning. This work for enlightenment, like any other work, does not have the aim of just recruiting members. It is for the purpose of arousing various people about their concerns, whether they join with us or not. In other words, its aim is not limited. It has a very broad and very profound aim.

In the same way, the basic organizations and the regional committees -- as we have discussed now and have been discussing over this period -- must work with confidence for the same politics -- that is, to respond to the concerns of the people, to present the analysis of their concerns, to assist the people in organizing themselves, and to be in the forefront of this organization. The Party should be at the head. The Party should be the leader, not in a banal or sentimental way, but by showing that we are not making these proposals just in words and are willing to carry them out in deeds. On this basis, all Party organizations will become one with the working class, one with the people, and not remain separated. There is no activity which can be described as an activity just of the Party. There is no such thing. All this work, all of our activities, are activities for the class, for the people. What we do has great significance for the fate of the class and people.

We have only one truth, but our attitude towards this truth is not mechanical. It is not that because this is truth we forget the concerns of the people or forget about the tactics, the forms of organization, the slogans necessary to get results. Such a thing which they call truth is not truth, but dogmatism and fanaticism. If someone goes on repeating that we stand for democracy, that we want all these things, but develops no tactics and does nothing to realize these aims, then it will not be truth, but a falsehood of the calibre of the obsolescent forces in denial. [...] It is very easy to have phrases, to have them writ large and to pontificate about them, but what are the results? The results are nothing.

We don't agree with this kind of truth. The decisions of September 1, 1985, had a profound meaning for our work, not only the work of the Mass Party Press, but the entire work. For example, we don't organize the workers to follow our line as an aim divorced from the interests of

the workers. We organize the workers to defend their interests. We want the unity of the workers in their own interests, so that as they defend their interests and get experience in doing so, they also learn to organize, to make bigger, more advanced organizations, and finally rise up to end this system of wage slavery. That's what we want.



Celebration of 44 years of the Party press, August 23, 2014.

Everything has to be done to ensure that such a situation can be created and develop. If this aim is given up, then the decision of September 1, 1985 has no meaning. In the end, it will look like a minor complaint. Generally speaking, we do not want to have a situation in the Party where the key people, who are in one area, carry out the work, and everybody else watches them. We do not like this very much, because when the entire Party is working, when the entire Party is in step, we can get better results with a greater scope, and achieve the victory which is desired in this period.

This attitude -- that somebody else knows, somebody else is going to give the line -- is inconsistent with the decision of 1985. We are not like those who suggest that people can liberate themselves on their own in a spontaneous manner. We have a Party that has its organs, which function and make their decisions. But how is it possible that the organizations in other places do not know what the preoccupations of the Party are? They can only understand these preoccupations if they were one with us when the decision was taken in the first place. If an individual member does not become part of the work of the Party, then, given the situation, the person will cause trouble. There are times when the leadership at that level does not pay first-rate attention to the policy towards work and the training of members. In such a situation, a person could hang around for years, but would never become a communist. If we carry out our work

and are not prejudicial, if we are enthusiastic and welcome everyone with the same spirit to carry out the work, if we carry out criticism and self-criticism, then if somebody doesn't want to carry out the work, he or she will not be able to hang around. But if you have some other attitude, this will happen.

Comrades, let us not leave these questions of building the Mass Party Press just to ideological stances. Let us speak openly and carry concrete summation in the course of further developing this work. On this basis, let us respond to the situation which is a turning point. We have already made the turn. We are not behind the situation. We are ahead of it. We already have implemented various aspects of the decision taken on September 1, 1985. We already have done a lot of other work, which we are summing up.

Let us march on. Time is working for us. We have initiative in our hands.



(To access articles individually click on the black headline.)

[PDF](#)

[PREVIOUS ISSUES | HOME](#)

Website: www.cpcml.ca Email: office@cpcml.ca