

# BC MILITANT

BULLETIN OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST GROUP

**SOCIALISM WON  
THROUGH STRUGGLE  
NOT ELECTIONS!**



**ELECTION SPECIAL  
REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST GROUP**





## DECEMBER 11 SOLVES NOTHING

December 11 seems light years away from the summer of 1972. After 22 years of Sacred reaction there were high hopes for the newly elected government. One year's hopes became next year's bad joke. The NDP didn't wait long to vote in Bill 11. It was the sort of anti-labour legislation that could bring tears of joy to the eyes of a hardware store owner. Two years later the ultimate in their policy of 'labour peace' was enacted--40,000 brothers and sisters were forced back to work.

Women fared no better. Election promises and party policy were quickly forgotten.

Initial improvements brought social services out of the stone age, but never quite into the inflated markets of the 1970s. Education and welfare budget increases are now being severely limited.

Did the new government help natives realize their land and fishing rights? Ask the 53 Mt. Currie natives arrested on the NDP's orders.

How did the NDP get away with policies that would have brought the strongest outcries if the Sacred had attempted them? Because most workers continued to rely on the NDP. Somehow this party was going to change their lives and their society. So when Bill 146 came stinging down, the trade union leaders could do nothing more than moan. In their logic, the future electoral chances of the NDP were more important than the right to strike.

All this was the price of accepting the NDP's project of winning piecemeal reforms through cooperation between business, parliament and labour. Some reforms were possible so long as the economy was booming.

The economy is no longer booming.

Now the effects of the economic crisis are being shoved onto workers. Our wages are controlled, social services and all the great reforms become more pathetic with each jump in the consumer price index.

The depressing choice of this election follows from the choice made three years ago when trade unions hung up their gloves because 'socialism' had finally come to BC.

### THEIR SOCIALISM AND OURS

Thousands of people in BC want a socialist society, but the conceptions of this are many.

For the NDP, socialism is state auto insurance, medicare and things like that. Nothing essentially different than what exists throughout Canada.

Others paint the Soviet Union or China as their model. We don't agree. The tremendous social

and economic achievements in these countries are coupled with the complete exclusion of the masses from political and economic decision-making, the suppression of intellectual freedom, the continued oppression of minorities and of women (despite important reforms.) Total power rests in the hands of a bureaucracy, which uses its control of the state apparatus to skim off economic and social privileges for itself.

The North American working class will never discard its pro-capitalist perspectives in favour of such an 'alternative'.

Our socialist future will be a society where workers and farmers would directly and democratically control the factories and businesses they have taken over, as well as the society as a whole. Economic and social decisions will be based on people's needs, not to suit the needs of private corporations.

### PIE IN THE SKY...OR THE REAL FUTURE

For us, socialism is the only solution to the problems faced by people whose lives sometimes don't seem worth living. But without a means of achieving socialism it remains only a pleasant dream.

The NDP and many others on the left view elections and reforms as the way. Just like Chile, we suppose.

For the Revolutionary Marxist Group the fight for socialism will become a real alternative as more people begin to demand a life that doesn't go up and down with yearly economic fluctuations, a life where they have control.

Such demands form the program of struggle advanced in the articles in this election special of BC Militant. For the RMG such a program, based first and foremost on self-reliance and struggle, is the alternative to either blind faith in the power of reforms, or cynicism and despair.

Ours is an election program that sees the struggles of workers, women, natives, and students as different fronts of the same battle. None can be ignored. What we fight for now will determine the kind of socialist society that will be built.

This program of struggle is what our campaign is all about. In Vancouver-East and Burnaby-North we ask you to do more than just re-elect a non-solution.

We urge you to use your vote as an agreement with a perspective based on struggle, confidence and the future.



The CLC's initial response to Trudeau's wage controls was complete silence. Rank and file opposition began to grow across the country. The silence ended, replaced by a gutless CLC program of education and a slick ad campaign.

At this year's BC Federation of Labour convention the leadership refused to act on the demands of many delegates for a militant response.

In the United States, union leaders cooperated with the government and were under little pressure from the rank and file. The controls work-

Once Barrett tamed English Canada's most militant trade unions, Trudeau could introduce wage controls.

Union leaders are doing everything they can to avoid any major confrontation with the state. It would be too political for them to control, and a passive and cynical work force is more easily convinced politics is something that only happens in elections.

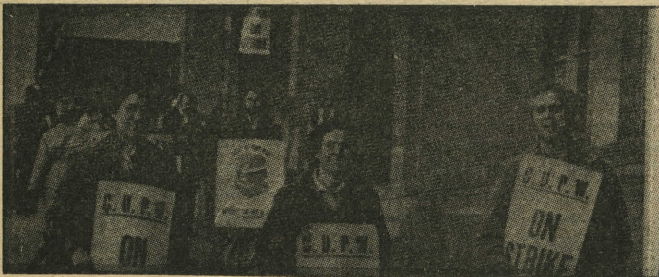
Wage controls will not be defeated overnight, but every strike will be a test case. Even one ma-

## MOBILIZE AGAINST THE ATTACK ON WAGES

ed: wages crumbled and profits climbed. Inflation ran on unchecked.

In Britain, the working class has the same reluctant union bureaucrats. But each attempt to sell a wage controls program to their members has failed. In the winter of 1974, thousands of workers, students, and others mobilized in support of the coal miners. As a result, the miners broke through the Tory wage controls and brought down the government.

The BC union brass will have to be pushed very hard to adequately respond to federal and provincial anti-labour policies. They have already allowed the NDP government to place shackles on the labour movement. In the interest of 'labour peace' unionists



Postal workers are the first in fighting the controls. Labour solidarity is crucial to victory.

have been sitting on government boards set up to prevent strikes and any outbursts of militancy. When the strikes occurred the NDP showed back-to-work legislation was part of their 'peace' policy.



job strike would help break through the dead end strategy of labour leaders and the cynicism of the rank and file.

National support for such challenges has to be built. Solidarity can be aided by support for CUPE's call for a nationally delegated conference on wage controls.

Unity must go beyond the unions. The defeat of wage controls still would not prevent the bosses from maintaining high unemployment and skyrocketing prices. A challenge to wage controls goes hand in hand with a working class alternative to the government's anti-inflation measures.

Organized and unorganized workers, welfare recipients, the unemployed, and pensioners must not bear the brunt of an economic crisis caused by the capitalist system. A \$5 minimum wage tied to a COLA clause has to cover all these people.

Unemployment can be stopped by reducing hours of work with no loss in pay creating jobs for all.

Show unorganized workers 'Big Labour' is not the cause of their problems. Organize the unorganized.

The strength of the unions' response will depend on the strength the unions themselves. Strikes and campaigns will be one step closer to success if they are not controlled from above, but directed by democratically elected committees of the rank and file responsible to regular mass meetings.

Whatever outcome of the election, the attacks on workers will continue. No vote will defeat this offensive. Success lies in the self organization and mobilization of the labour movement and its supporters around a militant class struggle program.





# vote NDP- but rely only on your own struggles

Like it or not, the NDP will probably be re-elected. In our campaign, the RMG is suggesting how this government should be viewed. We present the position that the trade unions and other social movements must fight for their complete independence from the NDP: to refuse to make any retreat from the economic or social struggles in favor of reliance on the NDP.

Socialists in BC with no faith in the NDP face a very difficult choice in this election. Should they call for a vote for the NDP, or only those party members opposed to Bill 146? The working class as a whole is not indifferent to the outcome of this election: what is at stake for socialists is the credibility of their electoral option in front of the labour movement as a whole.

We call for a vote for the NDP in areas where we are not running. Left open is the possibility other left-wing candidates may run on a clear class-struggle basis.

We do not believe the NDP can solve ANY of the fundamental problems of workers and other oppressed layers. In this sense, the NDP is not a 'lesser evil' which is preferable to the other parties from the standpoint of its program, its intentions or its record. It is still committed to the preservation of capitalism, but it is not a party like the Social Credit, Conservatives, or Liberals. It is not like these other parties because it is the party most working people see as their own--even after the recent anti-working class manoeuvres of Barrett. For this reason, it

is still a component of the working class movement. No other significant alternative exists.

The most class-conscious of all groups, the capitalists, know the NDP is part of this movement: even after the brutality of the NDP's attacks on the workers, they are abandoning their partisan differences and mounting a unified crusade through the Socreds to reinstate a big business party in Victoria.

Workers also recognize the differences. They will continue in their majority to support the NDP through a basic class reflex against the bosses parties. Things would be different if socialists had been able to build an alternative.

Many people continue to support the NDP because they have not yet broken from reformist politics. For instance, Barrett is running on the basis of support for Trudeau's wage controls, his own hard-line measures, and a bit of talk about price controls. Most workers are not yet convinced these policies are no help for their problems. They will not be convinced except on the basis of their own experience.

In BC, there is ample trade union militancy. This is not the problem. The real problem, and thus, the real question which confronts us in the elections, is what conditions are most favorable for a political break with social democracy and the development of socialist political consciousness.

These are the real stakes in this election. A victory for Social Credit will not improve the situation--it will take things back to square one. Once again, the focus of the class struggle

## for WOMEN'S LIBERATION



"You understand me? If Mary had heard of abortion, there'd never have been a Jesus."

Capitalism needs to oppress women to exist. In spite of all the reforms and tokenism of recent years, women are still exploited sexually through the traditional roles of wife, mother and sexual object.

Women remain a source of cheap labour. The women's movement of the sixties did not link up with the working class movement. Being a boom period for capitalism, a lull in the class struggle contributed to the movement limiting itself to single issue reforms.

The NDP's policy on women is in this reformist context. Sexism is not eliminated by the passing of human rights legislation. Capitalism needs sexism and the NDP wants capitalism.

But the sixties movement bring a generalized awareness of men's oppression now manifesting itself in the development of trade union women's caucuses. The changes are being made.

As class militancy increases, the mistakes of the sixties must be overcome. A program that connects these links must be formulated.

Any such program should demand for free twenty-four-hour day-care. More and better services are needed to ensure women have the time necessary to become more active in political and social movements.

The program must take up the question of equal opportunity in education, and demand equal pay for equal work. We must continue



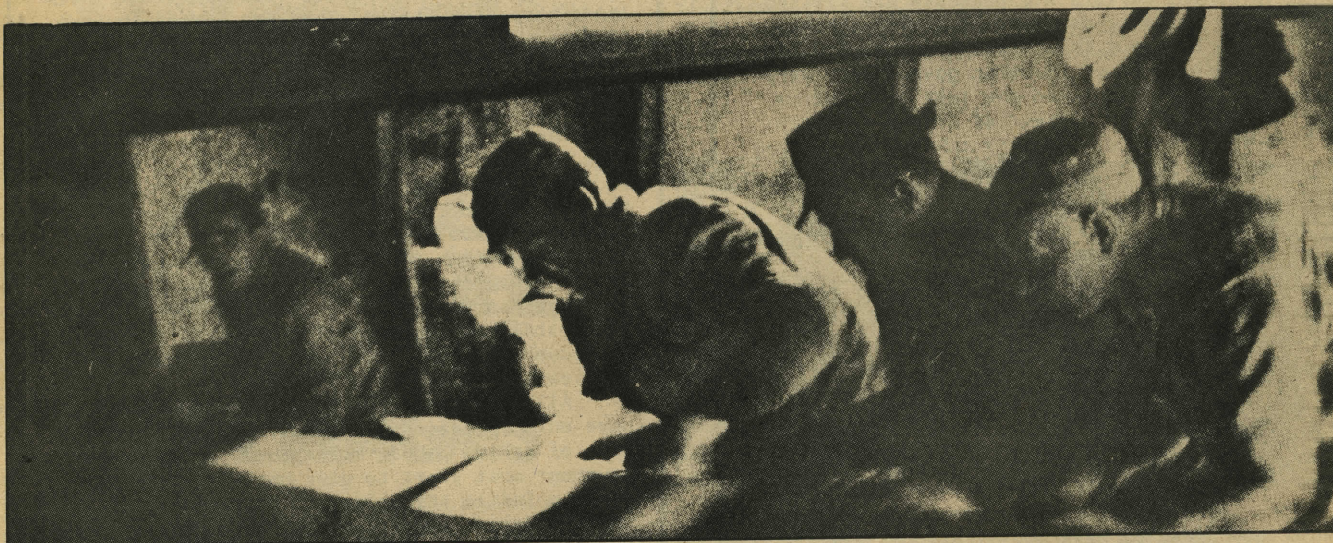
will be reduced to trying to oust the Socreds, and to return the NDP to power. This would only prolong illusions about the NDP.

An NDP victory will provide the experience of an NDP administration amidst a deepening economic crisis (conditions which were not present before, due to the boom in resource prices from 1972 to 1974). The basis will exist for revolutionary socialists to convince greater numbers of the bankruptcy of the NDP and its reformist project, and of the necessity of mass struggle for socialism.

for the NDP based on blind loyalty.

So the support by the RMG for an NDP vote is advanced without concessions. Our candidates will present our conviction that the NDP's 'anti-inflation' program is pure electoral opportunism, that it is just a cover for further attacks on trade union and civil liberties.

Elect them and hit back, we say. Hit back independently, not relying on the NDP to eventually come through. If attacks such as Bill 146 continue, there will be increasing numbers building a radical alternative to the NDP's politics.



Of course, the possibility of break from reformism is not guaranteed. It will require both political clarity and activity on the part of socialists. Without this intervention, demoralization and depoliticization await further betrayal of the NDP.

These are the reasons why we reject what is an honest, yet erroneous opposition to the NDP in this election. It is also why we reject support

Ultimately, we will see a democratically controlled workers government based on the mobilization of the working class and other oppressed people: a government which fights to break up the political and economic structures of capitalism, and builds a socialist society.

We are struggling for workers' power and for socialism. Within this framework we explain our struggle to build a new workers' party--a party of revolutionary marxism.

struggle for the full integration of women into the work force, and to combat the channelling of women into stereo-typed jobs, most of which which are unorganized and isolated.

As long as women remain on the periphery of organized labour our collective power will be limited. We must demand that the trade unions organize women workers and deal with the sexism within its ranks.

Abortion is still an issue. The battle has not been won. The recent government and church offensive against abortion is meant to keep us in our place. It is important to continue the defense of Dr. Morgentaler. We must demand universal contraception, an end to forced sterilization and free abortion on demand.

The Revolutionary Marxist Group is a nationwide organization of workers and students. Along with our sister organization in Quebec, the Groupe Marxiste Revolutionnaire, we belong to the Trotskyist Fourth International. Tens of thousands of revolutionary militants world-wide are grouped by the FI.

In BC we can be contacted (after the postal strike) at Box 35063 Vancouver.

And, since elections cost money, we'd love your donations.

### BC MILITANT

Regional bulletin of the Revolutionary Marxist Group  
\$1.60 6 issues SPECIAL INTRO. Old Mole plus BC Militant \$4  
MILITANT BOX 35063 VANCOUVER BC

### old mole

National newspaper of the Revolutionary Marxist Group  
One year (12 issues) \$4. Box 1183, Stn. Q Toronto



# Our struggle is international

We hear a lot about American investment in Canada. When was the last time you heard of the big Canadian rip-off in Brazil, Spain, South Africa or the Caribbean.

Every year millions of dollars are sucked out of these countries - from their tourist trade, and their nickel, bauxite and forests.

In Spain, workers and peasants are risking their lives to bring down the Francoist dictatorship, and boot out the corporations behind him.

A month ago most European governments were forced by trade unions and the left to withdraw their ambassadors in protest of Franco's policy of bloody repression. Canada's ambassadors stayed. The Canadian trade union movement was silent.

We in BC must follow the European example and concretely assist the Spanish people in their fight against imperialism.

Capitalist governments are aware of the immediate possibilities of socialist revolution in Spain and Portugal. The CIA pumps millions of dollars into Portugal, afraid of the spark for the entire European revolution.

The Trudeau government has clearly chosen its side by defending the reactionary role of NATO in Portugal. BC workers must choose its side by demanding Canada's withdrawal from NATO.

The victory of the Vietnamese revolution was concretely aided by mass mobilizations. Similar action will be needed in support of the workers and peasants of Spain and Portugal.

Our own struggles in Canada must reflect internationalism. When longshore workers go on strike in Vancouver, ships are unloaded in Seattle. It just doesn't make sense. Strikes will be more effective when unions collaborate with workers in other national operations of multinational corporations.



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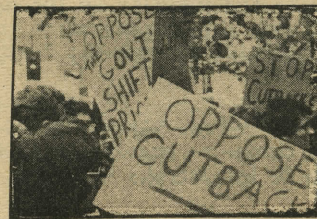
## Support natives

Ninety years after the defeat of the Riel Rebellion, native people are again uniting against centuries of oppression. Their lands have been stolen. They are forced to live on poverty-stricken reservations and urban slums. Their life expectancy is half the national average. They are subjected to the arbitrary rule of the department of Indian Affairs.

Highway blockades in BC, and the Anicinabe Park occupation in Ontario are dramatic examples of this rise in native militancy. The RCMP see the native people as "the number one threat" to national security. The reasons are clear: natives are demanding a return of their lands and their democratic rights.

Kept in isolation, the natives were no problem to capitalism. Their demands bring to the surface the economic and military repression suffered by natives for two hundred years.

All attempts to smash the renewed militancy have only increased its resolve. As the repression of native people strengthens, the workers movement must start to give unconditional support to Indian struggles, to provide material aid and to support any efforts of self defence against racist attacks.



School is bad enough. Students in High schools and public schools are fed a steady diet of boredom, authoritarianism, and competition, spiced with a sexual and racial bias.

But when drastic budget cuts hit the schools and colleges, things can only get worse.

The NDP is hitting the education institutions hard in its efforts to deal with capitalism's crisis. Hardest hit are the community colleges primarily serving the working class and immigrants. Thousands are on the waiting lists for language programs and job training as programs are cut back and even eliminated.

To ensure a more equal opportunity for a decent education it must be free, with a living wage, and decent housing for all students. Jobs for faculty and staff must be protected.

**Cutbacks make  
bad education worse**



# Fight racism

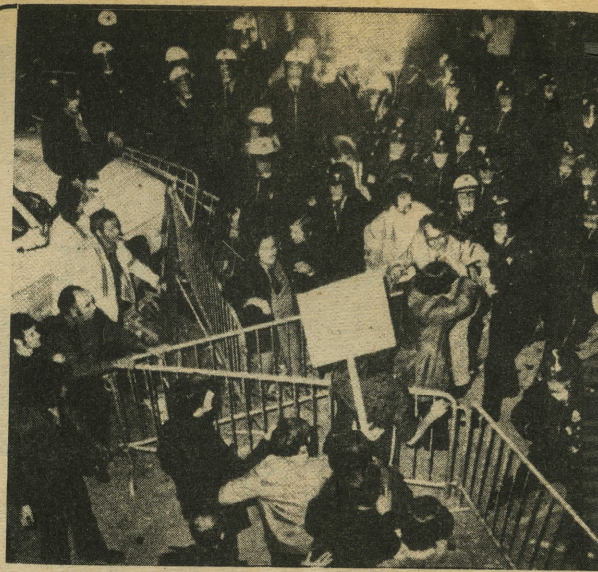
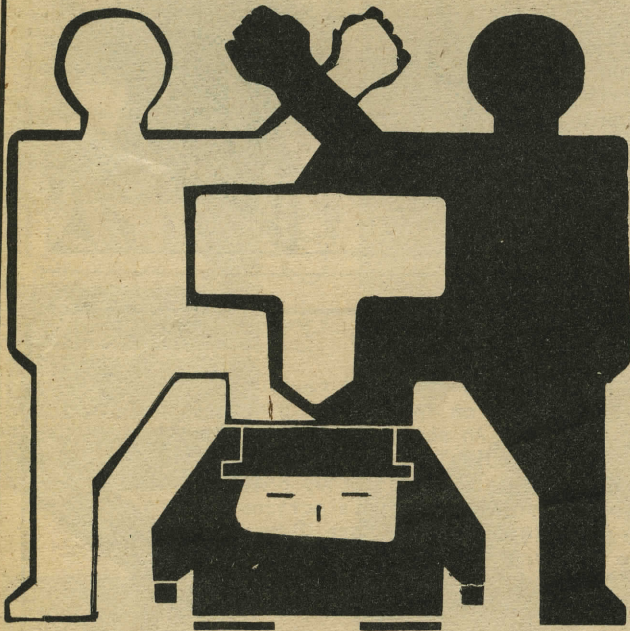
As the recession deepens, racism comes more and more into the open. Homes of East Indians are vandalized; Toronto blacks are harassed and beaten; racist immigration restrictions are tightened.

When profits are threatened, the bosses can be counted on to come up with one of their most successful tactics to divide and divert the working class. It is easier for them if workers are convinced it is not capitalism that is responsible for unemployment, housing shortages, and inadequate social services, but other workers.

Singled out for attacks are immigrants from impoverished countries seeking jobs to stay alive. Big business is free to roam the world reaping profits, but workers must respect national boundaries.

The 'Green Paper' hearings brought editorials and reports blaming immigrants for the economic crisis. It also brought the beginnings of a response to these attacks from racial and national minorities. An important example is Vancouver's East Indian community's organization for its self defense.

Further actions are required. The trade union movement will have to take up the question of racism in its own ranks and society as a whole. This means demanding an open immigration policy, defending leaders of anti-racist struggles, and building a mass organizing drive to include all workers in the trade union movement.



# Self-determination for Quebec

They call it "La Belle Province". Wages in Quebec are the lowest in the country. Last year wage gains averaged 9.3%, half the national figure. French speaking people are kept from the better paying jobs.

Quebecois workers are fighting back. The movement for self-determination of the Quebec nation has brought a degree of combativity and political awareness more advanced than anywhere in North America.

The movement has also brought the War Measures Act, the jailing of labour leaders, and a Cliche Commission recommending control of unions by the government.

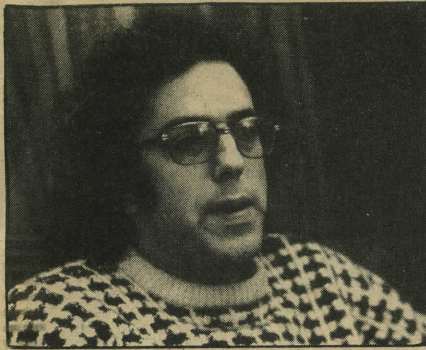
The ruling class in this country is quite conscious that the national and class struggle in Quebec are linked. The workers movement must recognize its class interests in the defense of the right of self-determination for the Quebec nation.

The workers movement in English Canada has failed miserably to respond to the attacks on its Quebec counterpart. But the imposition of wage controls provides the very real possibility of bridging the barriers between Canadian and Quebecois workers. Many of the key struggles against the controls will be fought in Quebec and the attacks on Quebec workers will be heavier than anywhere else.

The development of active trade union solidarity challenging the national barriers is essential to defeat the anti-working class offensive.



# Support the revolutionary candidates



**STEVE  
PENNER**  
vancouver-east

Steve Penner was almost an MPP in Ontario. Back in 1972 he was running in Toronto on an NDP ticket. At the time he was Ontario chairperson of the Waffle--the left wing of the NDP. His friends say that losing the election was one of the best things that ever happened to him. By the time his election committee discovered enough irregularities to contest his loss, Steve had already rejected parliamentary solutions and was participating in the discussions that founded the RMG. He is presently a strike shop steward for CUPW in Vancouver and one of the union's representatives on the Vancouver and District Labour Council.

Gary Cristall held a plane ticket to return to Chile Sept. 10, 1973, the day before a bloody coup destroyed Salvador Allende's peaceful road to socialism. He had been a journalist in Chile during the dramatic transformation of that society. Instead of taking the flight, he helped to form the Chile Solidarity Committee to build support for the revolutionary forces in Chile. He is currently studying at SFU.



**GARY  
CRISTALL**  
vancouver-east

Like many people in North America, Sara Diamond received her political baptism in the radicalization of the sixties, marked by the Viet Nam Solidarity movement. Becoming aware of her alienation from society, she joined the counter culture and the women's movement. Disillusioned by the reformism of these movements, she became a secretary and then a trade union militant, discovering Marxism in the process. Since then she has been organizing women workers, most recently in A.U.C.E. local 1.

**SARA  
DIAMOND**  
burnaby-north



Well-known British and Pakistani revolutionary Tariq Ali will be speaking on the current struggles in Spain and Portugal. An active Vietnam solidarity militant in the 1960's Tariq is now a leader of the British International Marxist Group and the Fourth International. Speaking on the elections and the class struggle in BC will be Sara Diamond, the RMG's candidate in Burnaby-North.

SFU RALLY: Thursday November 27 12:30pm A-Q9002

Fishermen's Hall 138 E. Cordova

Saturday 29 November 8pm

dancing and drinks to follow