

The Tribune

AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST WEEKLY
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Waving cut-out peace doves and flashing the peace sign, hundreds of students lead the annual Walk for Peace in Vancouver April 25 as marchers make their way up the hill from the Burrard Street Bridge. 30,000-40,000 people took part in the walk, which focused on the issue of military spending.

Discontent over NDP deficit-fixation growing

By Sean Griffin
VANCOUVER

For Premier Mike Harcourt's government in Victoria, holding the line on the deficit has become the catch phrase of fiscal policy.

Whether it's school boards and the province's 30,000 teachers seeking emergency funding to maintain educational services, or health care workers pressing for catch-up pay increases, the answer is the same: there's no more money available without pushing up the deficit and the government isn't prepared to do that.

But if it's a policy that wins praise from the business press, it's creating increasing unhappiness in a province already battered by years of government budget-cutting.

And, say some leading economists, a policy of curbing the deficit is totally misplaced at a time when vital social services are starved for money and the unemployment rate is high.

Among those registering a growing discontent over the "no increase in the deficit" position are school trustees, teachers and unionists — in many cases, key supporters of the government who are used to hearing the line from Tory and Social Credit governments and are dismayed to hear it from New Democrats.

"The government is fixated on the budget deficit," said B.C. Teachers Federation president Ken Novakowski whose organization has met repeatedly with cabinet ministers over the past few weeks, pressing the government to provide an additional \$80-

million in provincial funding to maintain educational services at last year's level.

"The government didn't promise a lot, but one thing they promised was stability in education. We haven't got that," Novakowski said.

As school boards across B.C. begin the process of filing local budgets with Victoria — most of them pared down through layoffs and other cuts because of the shortfall in provincial government funding — the message that the government should change its fiscal policies is beginning to become more articulate.

Earlier this month the 30,000-member BCTF lobbied MLAs and met with Finance Minister Glen Clark, Education Minister Anita Hagen and Premier Harcourt in an effort to get the government to provide the extra fund-

ing in order to avert the huge layoffs and service cuts that will be inevitable if boards are compelled to live by the cutback budgets now being submitted to Victoria.

But when those meetings failed to move the government, an emergency session of the BCTF executive voted last week to launch a \$200,000 public campaign outlining the effect that budget cuts will have on schools and urging people to write their MLAs expressing their concern.

Although last month's provincial budget did increase the funding for education, the increases didn't offset years of underfunding and the flawed allocation system set up by former Social Credit governments has meant that little new money is going into operating funds. As a result, boards across the province are being forced to lay off teachers and support staff and cut services.

BCTF representatives have spent much of the last month travelling to Victoria to urge the government to put an additional \$80-million into education on an emergency basis to ensure that services are maintained on at least last year's level.

The federation has also called a special representative assembly of the membership May 13 when it will be staging protest action to underline the campaign. The details of that protest haven't been worked out, said Novakowski "but we'll be taking some form of demonstrative action to get the government to take some action on this issue."

see NEED page 15

The BC government has accepted Ottawa's language and keeps moulding its actions to fit the same model. They're trying to beat the Tories at their own game and it's a serious mistake...

'Decency and respect'

What flight attendants seek

Paul Ogresko

An irony of our times is that one of the most recognized symbols of our modern age — airline travel — has, in many cases, labour practices reminiscent of the Victorian era.

A prime example is Nationair, Canada's third largest airline, which seems to operate under the logo "flying on the cheap" and which, last November, locked out 450 flight attendants in the middle of contract negotiations.

At the heart of the Nationair dispute is more than just salary which, at an average wage of \$15,600 (gross) a year, is bad enough. Among the locked out flight attendants, 80 per cent of whom are women, there is anger about the treatment they are receiving from management after the service and dedication they have shown the company. Added to that anger is the memory of the abysmal safety and work conditions they, as flight attendants, have had to deal with. Four of the locked out flight attendants spoke of their experiences with the Tribune.

"I was five months pregnant and I worked a bomb threat flight," recalled locked-out Nationair flight attendant Vivian Siman. "Then when I was in Aruba management called and said 'you will work over your duty day and will work the flight home' for a total of a 23 hour workday. If you don't you are fired and you can get your own way home from Aruba."

Siman says at the time she was not aware of her union rights and that, coupled with the fear of losing their jobs, led to her and a majority of her co-workers taking a vote and deciding to work the extra hours.

Anna Marie Knight, who was also on that flight, adds that they were only given five minutes to make their decision about whether or not they would work a full five hours above their maximum work day.

"It was totally unfair to us," she says.

For most of the general public who travel by air, the likely impression is that a flight attendant's work goes little beyond providing in-flight service and safety demonstrations — most would be surprised by the hours and work conditions Nationair flight attendants face.

Under the current Nationair collective agreement the flight attendants have a maximum 18 hour duty day whereas other airlines have a 14 hour duty day. Nationair is the only Canadian airline that does not guarantee its flight attendants a minimum pay for a day's work — important since currently Nationair flight attendants are paid only for time in the air — and there is no compensation for overtime, unlike other airlines.

Nationair also requires its flight attendants to be available 24 hours daily to operate other flights.

The Ministry of Transportation regulations require one flight attendant per 40 passengers and, as Knight relates, Nationair uses this bare minimum as its code of operation. The company utilizes management personnel on flights who do not provide in-flight service — unlike other airlines where flight directors help with service.

"If you have to look after 40 passengers, many of whom have never flown before, you are working your butt off," Siman says. "The working conditions can be quite gruelling and [the company] wonders why they get letters complaining about service."

"The reason is because [Nationair] is trying to maximize profits by jeopardizing service," she concluded.

Before talks were abruptly ended by the lock out, the union was seeking a minimum daily pay of four hours, an increase from an average of \$15,400 to \$18,000 a year,

• see NATIONAIR page 4

"I was five months pregnant and I worked a bomb threat flight... then when I was in Aruba, management called and said 'you will work over your duty day and will work the flight home' for a total of a 23-hour workday..."

REMEMBERING SPAIN 1936 1939

MAY 15, 16 & 17, 1992

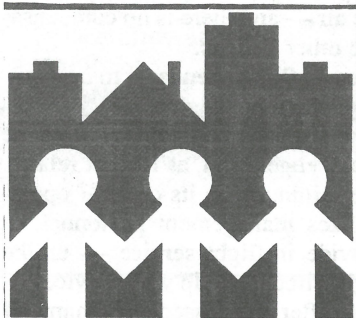


The Euclid Theatre is screening several films about the Spanish Civil War as a benefit for the Mackenzie-Papineau Memorial Fund. The film festival runs from May 15-17 at the Euclid Theatre, 394 Euclid Ave, Toronto. For more info call 925-8104.



MAY DAY GREETINGS

from the
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*DERA extends our
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to all our friends
and supporters*

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Fax: 669-5499

A new column on city politics

Welcome to the municipal politics column of the new and improved Tribune. We hope that it will appear each issue and that the columns will alternate between Toronto and Vancouver. Also, in the future, we hope to add municipal coverage from other cities in the country.

Municipal politics in Toronto in the 1990s will be the battle against the Tory corporate agenda as it is imposed on the local community. As at the federal level, deficit reduction and lowering taxes have been effectively portrayed by the right's majority on city council as the most urgent issue. This at a time when a lot of people are hurting due to the biggest economic depression since the 1930s.

In Toronto the right has been able to separate the interests of working people as rate-payers from their interests as service recipients to the extent that cutting daycare spaces, welfare benefits and services for disabled people, have been generally accepted by the media. Community groups organized well and delayed some cuts and blocked others but exhaustion took its toll as groups found themselves having to mobilize their members for the umpteenth emergency meeting and, at the same time, make plans to find means to survive without funds.

There is now a much better basis to form a Metro Toronto coalition to fight the cuts and organize around alternatives as the organizations now have more experience working with each other.

But there's also tensions between the constituencies that will have to be addressed in order for us to be effective in gaining ground against the right.

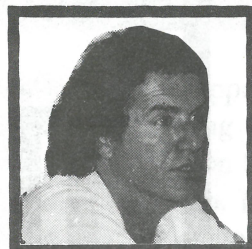
Tensions exist between the white community and communities of colour, between men and women, between able-bodied and disabled people and between other communities in terms of who determines what are priority issues and how to deal with chauvinism between and within communities. When cuts have led to job loss, withdrawal of services and the imposition of user fees, there is tension between the interests of public sector unions and service recipients.

Welfare will be one of the key issues of the 90s. As the Tories have abandoned Ontario, Alberta and B.C. to look after their own welfare recipients when they capped the Canadian Assistance Plan there's increased pressure from the provinces and municipalities to get people off the rolls. The Ontario NDP government has stated that it would like to implement welfare reform to sup-

port people in moving from welfare to the workforce but we'll see if this is not just a sophisticated form of welfare cutbacks.

A phone line was advertised in Toronto recently where you could phone in and charge a neighbour or somebody with welfare fraud. It was part of yet another scapegoat-people-on-welfare-with-causing-the-depression campaign. Of the 780 phone calls that were received, only 15 calls or 2 per cent were considered potential fraud cases. Eight of the 15 cases identified were people who received overpayments due to administrative errors.

I woke up this morning to hear the radio announcer discussing the extended drive for the food banks. He suggested at one point that maybe we were trying too hard when other communities in Europe didn't try to provide food for hungry people in their community. In the same item, he also mentioned the importance of passing new legislation to exempt food processors from liability in the case where food bank users got sick from their food when



DAVID
KIDD

food companies donated their rotten goods to the food banks instead of to landfill sites.

We are losing the battle of protecting industrial land and hence manufacturing jobs in the city. There's more money to be made selling the land to real estate interests than there is to redevelop the land for good paying jobs. Toronto's also finally dealing with environmental concerns around toxic industries located next to residential areas and there's some exciting new political work being done to promote the development of green industrial areas.

The police force is largely unaccountable to any public body whether it's monitoring their budget, establishing program priorities or relating to communities of colour. The police department's budget represents over 1/3 of Metro Toronto's overall budget and they were able to keep most of their budget intact while at the same time social services and public transit were cut back.

As well the police continue to declare that drug abuse prevention is their primary focus while the incidence of violence against women and children, and the numerous shooting of blacks by the police, continue.

There are some of the issues that this column will address from Toronto. I hope people will write to us with their comments and contributions. We need to keep each other warm with insight during these hard hard times.

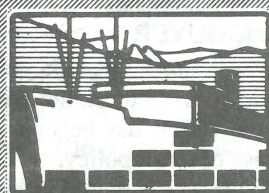
May Day Greetings from the executive and membership



Retail Wholesale Union
Local 580

May Day Greetings to all workers

International
Longshoremen's &
Warehousemen's
Union
Ship and Dock
Foremen, Local 514

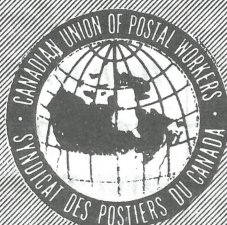


Canadian Union of Postal Workers Pacific Regional Office



MAY DAY
GREETINGS
& SOLIDARITY

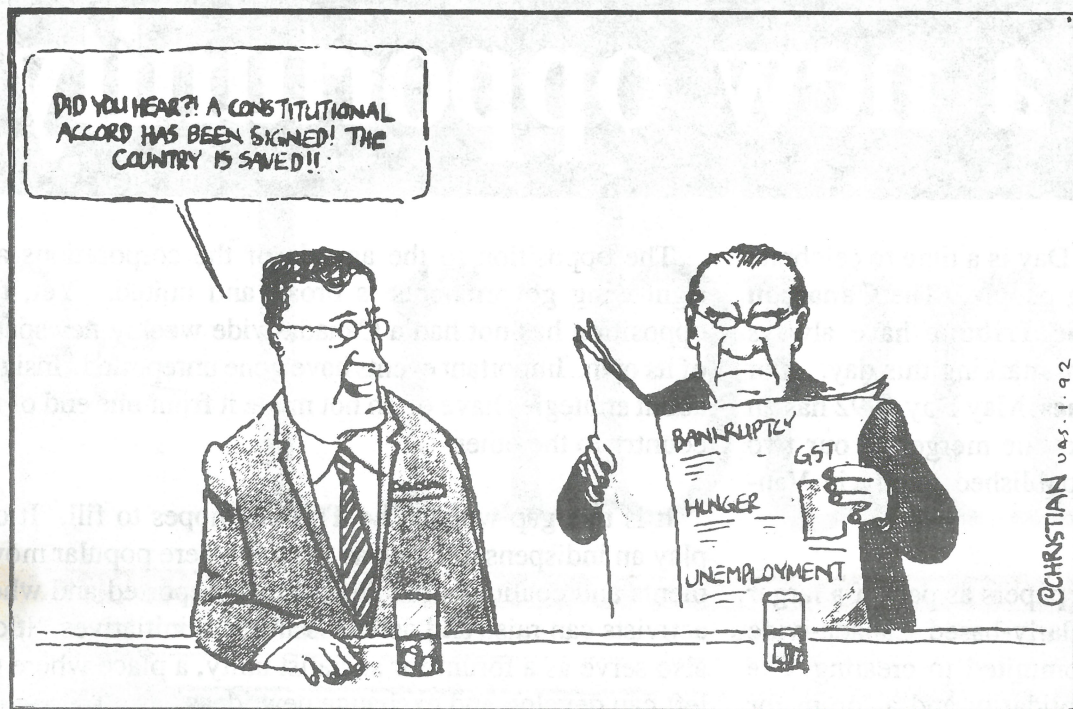
1992 May Day Greetings from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers - National



*"We are fighting for
dignity, jobs and
service to the public."*

May Day Greetings Bud Doucette

May Day Greetings from the Newfoundland Club Communist Party of Canada



feed BACK

POLL SHOWS MANY MEANINGS OF SOVEREIGNTY

I should like to make some comments responding to the editorial "A Message to Quebec", Tribune March 9, 1992.

You mentioned the sovereignty movement and its opposition to more protection of the language rights of Quebec's English-speaking minority, and you stated that the sovereignty movement is a popular movement embracing trade unions and social justice organizations in Quebec.

The word sovereignty has many strange, contradictory and confused meanings in the minds of many Quebecers. This is shown in the results of the most recent poll conducted for the Montreal French daily *La Presse* by the Centre de Recherches sur l'Opinion Publique.

According to the survey, 31 per cent of Quebecers believe that a sovereign Quebec would still be part of Canada. Twenty per cent believe that a sovereign Quebec would continue to elect MPs to Ottawa. Forty per cent believe that Quebecers would keep their Canadian citizenship if Quebec were sovereign. Even among the Parti Quebecois, 30 per cent do not know what the word means. Keep in mind that one-third of Quebecois are either illiterate or functionally illiterate. Among Quebec Liberals, 69 per cent said they would vote against sovereignty.

The Parti Quebecois and its leaders, Jacques Parizeau, Landry, etc., continue to falsely propagate the view that the Quebec French are oppressed by the English in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada. Quebec today is *not* the Quebec of the past. English finance and its dominant role have gone. The PQ know this, but would get no votes if they admitted it.

Parizeau and Company maintain that a sovereign

Quebec will bring a new heaven and a new earth to Quebec. This simplicity sovereigntist thinking has permeated the minds of trade union leaders who have stated frequently that sovereignty will bring an end to unemployment. One has to be ignorant of economic to fall for this mother of all miracles! Jacques Parizeau has publicly claimed that the U.S. is the economic model for the Quebecois. Really!

To state the obvious, Quebec has a class structure and, obviously, resultant class tensions and stresses. There are very rich, very poor and plenty in between among all — whether Francophone, Anglophone or Allophone. For the sovereigntists to pretend only the Francophone do not share the riches of the land flies in the face on many facts — one such being the 6-800,000 French Quebecers who go to Florida annually to visit and vacation. Quelle pauvreté!

The sovereigntists' myth of a rich and powerful English ruling class oppressing the French must be countered with a socialist analysis based on a class struggle with Francophones, Anglophones and Allophones among the exploited and Francophones, Anglophones and Allophones among the exploited. Our troubles are still class-based and not nation-based.

How many of us realize that Sherbrooke, Quebec City and Montreal were all majority English cities in the last century? Not any more. Our ancient capital is now almost entirely French. And Montreal is about 70 per cent French. Their language is stronger than ever.

The provincial language laws — though insulting mainly to the English — neither strengthened French nor weakened the language of the English. Demography guaranteed a strong, vigorous and living language of the majority — the French.

The left must remember that trade union and their leaders have taken wrong positions in the past. One example is the anti-Black ideology of the white unions in South Africa's recent history. Another error of serious proportions was the widespread male-dominant unions' opposition to equality for women.

Let us not forget how unions and their leaders in the U.S. supported their government's policy in Latin America after World War Two with disastrous results to the working people in those countries.

Make no mistake about it: the sovereigntist movement to fragmentize our country would bring the day closer for the United States to achieve its Manifest Destiny. All of us — including the French of Quebec — would well rue that day.

*Dr. T.N. Hardie,
Chomedy Laval,
Quebec*

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welcomes your letters.
We reserve the right
to edit lengthy
contributions, while
making every effort
to preserve their
integrity. We do not
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May Day Greetings from our membership and staff



**Canadian Area International
Longshoremen's &
Warehousemen's Union**

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May Day Greetings

**VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT
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OF ALL
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The Tribune

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A new paper, a new opportunity

From a financial perspective, the launching of The Tribune as a new, Canada-wide newspaper is something of a leap of faith... For the paper to succeed both politically and financially, the support of our readers is essential.

For working people, May Day is a time to celebrate the struggles of working people. The **Canadian Tribune** and the **Pacific Tribune** have always been an important part of marking this day. For those of us at the **Tribunes**, May Day 1992 has an additional significance. It marks the merger of our two newspapers into one **Tribune**, published jointly in Vancouver and Toronto.

We see the merger of our two papers as part of a larger project: the creation of a popularly-based Canada-wide socialist newspaper. We are committed to creating **The Tribune** as a voice for social solidarity and a forum for socialist unity in Canada.

From a political perspective the time is ripe for the launching of a Canada-wide socialist newspaper. The struggle against the neo-conservative agenda has given rise to a broad alliance of working class and popular organizations reflected at a Canada wide level in the Action Canada Network. Left activists hold influential positions within unions and women's organizations, including the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. The Canadian Labour Congress is poised to elect a new, more militant leadership.

In the course of many struggles, a common critique of the corporate agenda has emerged and a shared recognition that a radical alternative must be found to the future offered by the transnational corporations. There is a wider recognition than ever before of the national rights of Quebec and aboriginal peoples. And new sense of international solidarity has emerged in the fight against the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The opposition to the agenda of the corporations and right-wing governments is broad and united. Yet, this opposition has not had a Canada-wide weekly newspaper of its own. Important events have gone unreported. Insights about strategies have often not made it from one end of the country to the other.

It is this gap which **The Tribune** hopes to fill. It can play an indispensable role as a place where popular movements and coalitions see their actions reported and where activists can raise and debate issues and initiatives. It can also serve as a forum for socialist unity, a place where the left can develop and exchange new ideas.

From a financial perspective, the launching of **The Tribune** as a new, Canada-wide newspaper is something of a leap of faith. We know that many of the loyal supporters of the **Canadian Tribune** and the **Pacific Tribune** recognize the vital importance of their financial contributions and will donate generously to **The Tribune**. Our project of making **The Tribune** a Canada-wide newspaper that reflects the breadth of the struggle in Canada will require their support and much more.

For the paper to succeed both politically and financially, the support of our readers is essential.

Politically, we require your support as contributors to the paper. We need to hear about events that should be covered in the pages of the paper. Better still, we need cartoons, pictures, articles, book reviews and features. We need letters telling us what we are doing wrong and how we can do things right.

We also need ideas about how to broaden out participation in running **The Tribune**. Currently, the editorial policy of **The Tribune** is set by the management boards located in Vancouver and Toronto. We see ourselves as playing a transitional role. One of our main objectives is to create an Editorial Board which is representative of the working class and popular movements in Canada as well as of the various regions.

For **The Tribune** project to succeed, we need your financial support both in the long-term and today. We currently have a fund-raising drive under way. The funds are desperately needed in order to keep the paper functioning as we seek to establish a broader base of support for the paper.

We hope we can count on your support both financially and politically.

1992 cross-Canada tour

Meet your Trib representatives

Manitoba	May 5 - 12
Saskatchewan	May 13 - 18
Alberta	May 19 - 27
Vancouver (Canadian Labour Congress)	June 7 - 13
Alberta	June 14 - 15
Saskatchewan	June 16 - 17
Manitoba	June 18 - 19
Ontario	
Thunder Bay	June 20 - 22
Sault Ste Marie	June 23 - 24
Sudbury	June 25
Toronto	June 26

Norman Brudy and John McLennan will be in your area to talk to you about the Trib and ask for your support in our 1992 financial drive. Take this opportunity to meet with them and share your ideas about the paper and how we can work together for a better Canada.

The Tribune

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Don't be left in the dark

Every week **The Tribune** offers its readers news and analysis which you won't find in the mainstream press. Our point of view is straightforward. We stand with everyone everywhere who is struggling for social justice, for their democratic rights and a better world.

To play its part in these struggles **The Tribune** needs many things. We need correspondents in every part of the country who will write about the important events taking place in their communities. We also need feedback from our readers. Let us know when we get it wrong. And an occasional pat on the back goes a long way too.

To succeed **The Tribune** also needs volunteers. We need public-spirited people who will organize fundraisers and help put the paper on a sound financial footing.

And we need more readers. If this is the first time you've picked up the paper, or if you only read it occasionally, we'd like you to subscribe. If you're a subscriber we'd like you to do a friend a big favour and buy them a subscription. Or talk them into taking out a sub themselves.

Help us build a subscription base which will allow us to expand and improve the paper.

Don't be left in the dark. Subscribe to **The Tribune**. Today.