

BILL BURGESS

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SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN PLATFORM

Halt the U.S. war against Nicaragua. End Canadian complicity. No U.S. intervention in El Salvador. End the U.S. occupation of Grenada. Canada out of NATO and NORAD. End testing of the Cruise. No nuclear weapons in Canada. Recognize the PLO and the right of the Palestinian people to their homeland.

Jobs for all. Build the CLC campaign for a 35-hour week at no loss in pay. Nationalize the banks and oil companies. Convert military spending into a massive public works program: housing, schools, hospitals, daycare, etc. Restore jobs in and expand social services. UIC, welfare and minimum wages at union rates of pay for all: no discrimination against youth.

For an independent and French Quebec. Recognize Quebec's full right to self-determination. Restore its veto over constitutional change. Withdraw the RCMP and Canadian army from Quebec. Defend Law 101. Full language rights to Quebec's French majority. For an independent and socialist Quebec.

Full equality for women. Remove abortion from the criminal code. Support free-standing abortion clinics. Drop the charges against Drs. Morgentaler, Scott, and Smoling. Legislate affirmative action with quotas. Equal pay for work of equal value. Free quality daycare for all.

End all racist and national discrimination. Full language rights for Francophone minorities in English Canada. Make French an official language in Manitoba and Ontario. A network of French schools in English Canada controlled by the Francophone communities. Support Native land claims and their demand for self-government. End racist discrimination in jobs and housing. Full restitution for Japanese-Canadians.

Stop farm foreclosures. A moratorium on debts for working farmers. Low-cost credit for machinery, fuel, seed, and fertilizer. Guarantee family farmers an income adequate to meet production cost and sustain a decent living. Restore the Crow rate. Nationalize the CPR.

Full democratic and union rights. Repeal Law C-9: abolish the government's security and intelligence service. Repeal B.C.'s Law 28 and all other anti-labor laws. End all government and court interference in the unions. End discrimination against gays and lesbians.

Fight for working-class political power. For a Quebec labor party based on the unions to lead the fight for independence and for a workers and farmers government. Fight for socialist policies in the NDP. For an NDP-Quebec labor government that will fight for socialism and Quebec's national liberation.

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Open Letter to Members and Supporters of
the New Democratic Party
from Bill Burgess, Revolutionary Workers League candidate in
Vancouver Quadra

July 30, 1984

Sisters and brothers:

I am writing to you as the Revolutionary Workers League candidate against Prime Minister John Turner and Tory MP Bill Clarke in Vancouver Quadra. As a sawmill worker, I am an active builder of the International Woodworkers of America and the New Democratic Party. I am also the Socialist Youth delegate to the Lower Mainland Solidarity Coalition. Recently I participated along with other trade unionists in the international work brigade that helped with the cotton harvest in revolutionary Nicaragua.

I and four other RWL candidates in Hamilton, Toronto, and Montreal are using the platform provided by these elections to explain how workers and farmers in English Canada and Quebec can unite in political action to oust the Liberals and Conservatives from power in Ottawa. We think working people in both nations should adopt the perspective of fighting for a government formed by the NDP and the Quebec labor movement.

The growing crisis of the capitalist system across Canada and around the world-- a system of exploitation, oppression and war that both the Liberals and Tories serve-- makes popularizing this proposal more urgent than ever. As parties of the bankers and industrialists, the Tories and Liberals are going to do their best to guarantee huge profits to their corporate masters by lowering our living standards and demolishing our democratic, human and trade union rights --just as the Socreds are trying to do here in B.C.

What kind of government should the
NDP fight for in Ottawa?

"We need a government as loyal to our class as Maggie Thatcher is to hers."

These are the words of Arthur Scargill, leader of the heroic British miners in their battle against pit closures and unemployment. They apply equally to working people in Canada today. We too need a government that acts in the interests of working people by reorganizing the economy so that the workers

and farmers who keep the country running, actually run the country. It's the only way to put human needs before private profit. It's the only way to replace capitalist injustice and market-place anarchy with socialism.

The NDP, because it is a party organized independently of the employers and is based on the power of the trade union movement in English Canada, has a crucial role to play in the fight for a government "100 percent loyal to our class." The formation of the NDP in 1961 was an historic step forward for working people in the struggle for a working class government. This remains true, even though the NDP and trade union leaderships are wedded to the hopelessly unrealistic goal of reforming capitalism rather than eliminating it altogether.

For these reasons the RWL candidates are urging every worker, every Solidarity activist in B.C., every women's rights fighter, every defender of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, to rally behind the NDP in English Canada. At the same time, we propose that working people take up the struggle to change the NDP's program into one that uncompromisingly defends the interests of workers and farmers and advances a clear strategy for establishing working class political power in Ottawa.

The dead-end perspective being put forward by the NDP leadership in this election without any democratic discussion within the party underlines why such a struggle is necessary. Instead of explaining how to get a different type of government with a different class in power, the NDP campaign strategists are proposing that working people fight for a Liberal or Conservative minority government by electing enough NDP MPs to hold the "balance of power." By acting as the "conscience of Canada," we are told, we can "keep the old line parties honest."

But this perspective--which has been at the center of NDP federal campaigns since 1973--actually undercuts support for the NDP. Because it implies that the only choice

AUTHORIZED BY JOHN STEELE, OFFICIAL AGENT FOR BILL BURGESS CAMPAIGN



workers really have is between the two parties of the ruling rich--that is, between, in Ed Broadbent's words, the "Bay Street Bobbsey twins who view life from the 45th floor."

For years the Liberals have tried to present themselves as the more progressive "lesser evil" to the Tories. Today more and more workers agree that this is a fraud.

But is the idea of a minority Liberal or Conservative government as a perspective for working people any less fraudulent? Will such a minority government be able to solve the horrendous problems we face today?

Minority government: the real record

NDP leaders often refer with pride to what they claim are the achievements of the 1972-74 minority Liberal government, in justification of the support they gave the Trudeau government for 18 long months. Former leader David Lewis said the achievements for working people were "greater than any obtained by recent majority governments over four years."

But low-income families and the aged fell farther behind as pitiful increases in family allowances and old-age pensions failed to match rampant inflation. And the establishment of Petrocan within the framework of the Liberal Party's overall energy policy only succeeded in its fundamental purpose of generating windfall profits for Canadian banks and corporations.

During the 1974 federal election campaign, the NDP aimed its fire at the Tory proposal for a 90-day wage freeze and did not expose the fake opposition of the Liberals to this proposal. This "lesser evil" approach, coupled with Lewis' praise of the 1972-74 Liberal minority government, did not convince workers to draw the class line at the ballot box between themselves and the Liberals and Conservatives. Many workers decided that rather than voting for the NDP so it could "make parliament work" through another Liberal minority government, they might as well just vote for the Liberals.

The 1974 election results were a disaster for the NDP--from 31 to 16 seats and a 17 percent decline in the vote total.

And then one year later, the Liberal majority government that came out of the election imposed a three-year wage control program on workers in English Canada and Quebec.

The program and minority-government perspective being advanced in 1984 is not much different than it was in 1974. Experience has shown that no solutions to unemployment, sexism, racism and war can be found down this road, because it is a road which relies on capitalist governments and parties to act against their own class interests.

For a working-class political perspective

Some NDP leaders are fond of blaming working people for the difficulties facing the party.

But the historic Solidarity movement in B.C. in which tens of thousands of people

showed their willingness to fight against the attacks of the Social Credit government showed that such a view is erroneous. The NDP would have dramatically increased its support had the leadership thrown itself behind a powerful strike movement which had the potential to bring down the hated Socred regime. Instead the NDP leadership confined itself to parliamentary opposition and hid from the battle against the government taking place on the picket lines and in the streets.

We need a fundamental break from this narrow parliamentary perspective which projects the NDP as the parliamentary "conscience of Canada." In this campaign, the NDP should commit itself to taking the lead through its elected MPs in Ottawa, in building a massive coast-to-coast B.C.-style Solidarity movement with the goal of establishing a government of the NDP and the Quebec labor movement in Ottawa.

In addition, the NDP campaign would be immeasurably strengthened by adopting a policy of using its resources to champion and provide a platform for the ongoing battles being waged by workers and other oppressed groups. For example:

- The NDP campaign needs to take up the fight for the 35-hour week without loss in pay in 1985. This perspective was adopted by the 1984 Canadian Labour Congress convention as a key weapon in the fight against unemployment. The NDP also needs to give visible support to such key class battles as that of the thousands of meatpacking workers at Burns and Canada Packers against the union-busting strategy of their bosses to wring major concessions from the unions.

- As part of its campaign for women's equality, the NDP must be a forthright defender of women's right to abortion. Besides putting forward the need for affirmative action, the NDP needs to throw itself behind the pro-choice fight. Women can never be fully equal as long as they are denied the right to control their own bodies.

Ed Broadbent and all the NDP candidates have a duty to take up Dr. Henry Morgentaler's challenge to present openly and aggressively the NDP's adopted position for repeal of the federal anti-abortion laws. The NDP campaign has the responsibility to dissociate itself from the Manitoba NDP government's persecution of Dr. Morgentaler for the operation of his Winnipeg abortion clinic.

- The rights of Canada's almost one million French-speaking people outside Quebec are coming increasingly under attack. Yet Ed Broadbent declared in Winnipeg that francophone rights were no longer an issue in Manitoba. In this way he gave implicit support to the retreat of the Manitoba NDP government on francophone rights last winter in face of a Tory-led chauvinist campaign against the legitimate demands of Manitoba's 50,000 francophones.

- The NDP membership has shown its support for the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. They identify with the advances made by the workers and peasants since the overthrow of the hated Somoza regime. The NDP leadership needs to put defense of Nicaragua against the escalating U.S. war against the Nicaraguan people at the very

center of its campaign.

Taking a clear, public stand on these issues would not only strengthen the NDP campaign, but also aid the fighters engaged in these important battles. As the labor party in English Canada, the NDP can be an important tool in advancing the interests of all those fighting injustice.

The RWL believes that the NDP has a central role to play in supporting, building, and generalizing the struggles of unionists, women, francophones inside and outside Quebec, Native people, and farmers into a united struggle of working people in English Canada and Quebec for political power.

Why an alliance with Quebec labor is crucial

The only way for working people to break out of the no-win, NDP balance-of-power perspective is through charting a course toward unity with Québécois workers in the struggle against the Liberals and Conservatives.

But the absence of such a perspective is a historic weakness of the NDP. The leadership's record of opposition to the Québécois national struggle is shameful. As a result, in Quebec the NDP is identified with the repressive policies of the federal Liberal government toward Quebec.

• During the 1980 Quebec referendum for Quebec's sovereignty, the NDP leadership, like Trudeau and Joe Clark, campaigned for a "no" vote as dozens of multinationals threatened to leave Quebec if the "yes" vote won. Despite this systematic intimidation, more than 50 percent of French-speaking people in Quebec voted "yes."

• Major sections of Law 101--affirmative action legislation to overcome centuries-long discrimination against Quebec's French-speaking majority--have now been ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada. This attack on Law 101 further undermines Quebec's right to self-determination and reinforces the privileges of the anglophone minority in Quebec. Ed Broadbent's avowed support for the so-called "rights" of anglophones in Quebec during the televised French-language debate July 24, only two days before the Supreme Court gutted Law 101, was a blow against the national rights of the Québécois.

• The fundamental goal of the new federal constitution is to undermine Quebec's right as a nation to determine its own future. That's why every labor federation in Quebec opposed the constitution, 700,000 signed a petition against it, and thousands demonstrated in the streets to stop it. Yet the NDP leadership and parliamentary caucus lined up with the Trudeau government on this crucial question. Broadbent's claim to support a veto for Quebec on constitutional issues has not yet been backed up by the NDP's actions.

It is no wonder that Québécois delegates to NDP federal conventions have been reduced from 200 in 1961 to 12 in 1983. By refusing to recognize that Quebec is an oppressed nation with the right to determine its own future, the NDP has cut itself off from support from Québécois workers.

The October 14, 1976 Day of Protest against Trudeau's wage controls and the 100,000-strong November 15, 1981 Ottawa demonstration against high interest rates prove that we can unite against our common enemies in Ottawa. These were two of the powerful political demonstrations by the working class in English Canada and Quebec. But a solid political alliance in the fight for government can only be forged if the NDP recognizes Quebec's right to self-determination as a nation and backs its fight to end its national oppression and establish its independence.

Working people in Quebec need their own trade union-based political party to fight to end their oppression. By supporting the Québécois struggle, the NDP would help to encourage the establishment of such a party, which in turn could wage a struggle with the NDP in English Canada to form a government in Ottawa.

Political discussion needed

The revolutionary socialist views being put forward by the RWL candidates, reflected in the biweekly Socialist Voice and French-language Lutte ouvrière, show the path by which working people can forever change the face of politics in this country. They need to be discussed thoroughly by working people everywhere--particularly those engaged in our common struggle to build and strengthen the NDP as a fighting labor party.

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Read about the campaign that is part of the fightback—the socialist campaign of the Revolutionary Workers League candidates.

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lutte ouvrière

Abonnez-vous à Lutte ouvrière.
Cela vous permettra de suivre les événements qui se déroulent partout dans le monde: du Salvador au Liban, du Chili au Tchad et du Québec à la Colombie-Britannique. Des analyses conçues à partir de ces événements vous aideront dans les luttes que vous menez contre le patronat. Lutte ouvrière appuie, participe et rapporte les luttes en cours du mouvement ouvrier.

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Faites-nous parvenir votre chèque ou mandat-poste à l'ordre de Lutte ouvrière, 1317 Ste-Catherine est, Montréal, Qué. H2L 2H4.

Socialist Election Rally

Hear:

Katy LeRougetel



Revolutionary Workers League candidate in Montreal.

An apprentice-machinist at Canadian National Railways and a leader of the RWL's Revolutionary Youth Committee who has participated for nine years in the struggle of women for abortion rights. LeRougetel is campaigning to defend French-language law 101 against attacks by Ottawa, and to champion Quebec's struggle for independence.

Mel Mason

Presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States.

A fighter for Black and working class rights and a former city councilman from Seaside, California. Mason recently visited Ireland, Britain and Nicaragua in solidarity with the Irish liberation struggle, the British coal miners' struggle, and the Sandinista revolution.



Bill Burgess

Revolutionary Workers League candidate in Vancouver-Quadra

Other speakers to be announced

Saturday Aug. 18

Reception 7 pm

Rally 8 pm

Scottish Auditorium

1605 W. 12th Ave. (at Fir)

Admission \$3.00 (unemployed \$2.00)

For tickets call 879-3413