



Organize to resist police violence!

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Race, class struggle & wisconsin

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**UNITED
WE EAT
DIVIDED
WE STARVE**

CLAIRE VOLTARIN

On April 1, members of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), people on social assistance and their allies took to the streets of downtown Toronto to protest the slashing of the Special Diet Allowance supplement to Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

Demonstrators converged on Nathan Phillip's Square to mingle and enjoy a free meal before crossing the street to rally outside the Sheraton Hotel, where Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan was speaking at a \$90-a-seat luncheon. The inherent hypocrisy between cutting vital financial support required for poor people to eat, while on the same day hosting an expensive fundraising lunch, was pointed out by OCAP organizer John Clarke as he addressed the crowd under

a large banner emblazoned with the 1930's-era workers' slogan: *United we eat, divided we starve.*

Participants were then treated to a theatrical presentation put on by students from a grade seven/eight math class, which demonstrated the economic polarization that has resulted from decades of neoliberal

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Deporting Daniel Garcia was an injury to us all!

BRANDON GRAY

In 2007, Brenda Garcia's partner was shot to death in front of her younger brother Daniel; her sole crime was being born gay.

15 year old Daniel soon fled to Toronto with his sister, after her lover's killers threatened to murder them if they didn't leave the ultra-conservative Mexico City neighbourhood they called home. The local police - infamously corrupt and always on the make - had refused to intervene.

While in the process of submitting their claims for asylum, Daniel's legal counsel died suddenly, leaving the young man to fill out rather complicated legal documents with what meagre English he had been taught in his ESL classes - and no additional legal consultation. Through no fault of his own, he became lost in the system while desperately trying to work within it, and was arrested while most of us were getting ready to unwrap gifts with our families on Christmas.

Brenda was deported on December 27. Despite the overwhelming support of his teachers, fellow students, and community members, Daniel was denied a stay of appeal so that he could properly complete his refugee claimant forms with the help of a lawyer that had stepped forward to offer assistance. Instead, he was deported like his sister - after spending several additional



nights in a jail cell for the holidays. His new lawyer had submitted a report explaining the circumstances of the case, in the vain hope that Immigration Minister Kenney's office would have "enough goodwill to give him a break,"; instead, Daniel was tellingly kicked out of Canada before his next hearing could occur. Daniel and Brenda Garcia are now at the mercy of homophobic killers and the dirty cops that protect them - thanks to our government's idea of law and order. Happy New Year, Daniel.

What is striking about Daniel Garcia's case—and bear in mind that there are thousands of people like him who have passed through immigration prison cells—is what a upstanding community member he proved himself to be within the working class community of Parkdale. In just a short time after witnessing such a heinous and traumatizing crime, Daniel nonetheless flourished in his new community:

he proved himself to be an excellent student, volunteered at St. Casimir's Church while working for Parts and Labour in the student coop program and even helped organize a student group focused on (mainly Roma) refugees. His dedication to English language classes earned the respect and public support of his ESL teacher, while his regular studies at Parkdale Collegiate won praise from the school's principal and teachers. As many of the speakers assembled outside his first hearing eagerly testified, Daniel is a textbook example of the type of person that deserves clemency; with what limited resources he had, he devoted his time working to better his new community. Yet despite his strong case and the clear desires of all parties involved, in the end there was not a shred of goodwill granted by the government. The unfortunate lesson

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about common cause anarchist organization

Common Cause is an Ontario wide anarchist organization with members and branches active in several cities across the province. Our goal is to build a strong voice for anarchism within community and labour struggles. We believe that the anarchist principles of self organization, direct democracy and direct action are the tools needed to defeat the attacks and obstacles facing our class and provide building blocks for creating a new society. To find out more about us please get in touch:

- Toronto**
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learned is that without the looming threat of serious political or economic disruption, our elected politicians will continue to trample over our dignity and safety without mercy - or even acknowledgment. Faith in the goodwill of government must be replaced with confidence in our collective power if we are to uphold our shared dignity and safety.

The treatment of teenagers like Daniel by the state sets the precedent for how it treats the rest of us. If their goons are free to roam our streets, armed to the teeth, snatching our best and brightest from us with impunity, then tomorrow we all could be facing the brunt of such police state tactics. This is the daily reality over two hundred thousand undocumented workers in this city already face. Activists and trade unionists in this country must partner with workers internationally to help fend off racist and homophobic attacks wherever they happen so that people like Brenda and Daniel need not flee murder and persecution in the first place and can instead freely choose the terms of their travels. Those of us serious about social justice and anti-discrimination must put forward proposals as to how to prioritize ending these deportations.

One of the ways we can do this by building on the links which already exist between the brothers and sisters of organized labour. This type of broad cross-union support was evidenced during a June 2009 day of solidarity with Iranian workers engaged in mass street clashes with a violently reactionary regime that brutally

denied basic organizing rights - all while openly executing homosexuals and trade unionists under religious decree. Labour activists can and must support other unions and working class communities when they are defending themselves against attacks from the ruling class.

There are plenty of examples from our histories that demonstrate that when we defend people like Daniel Garcia, we are defending ourselves. Let's prepare our fellow workers to act next time one of our own is under attack, because - as we all should know by now - an injury to one is an injury to all!



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Race, class struggle & organized labour in the “age of Wisconsin”

AJAMU NANGWAYA

Many commentators have asserted that if there had been no revolt in Egypt, and no forced departure of the pharaoh-like Hosni Mubarak, there would not have been mass protest action in that oh-so-white of a state, Wisconsin. It is simply amazing to think that the fair citizenry of Wisconsin would require an external political stimulus to challenge their exploitation; the racialized section of the United States’ working-class has been bearing the brunt of the racist, sexist and capitalist battering of the welfare state structures since the 1980s without much sympathy from their white working-class counterparts.

But predominantly-white Wisconsin is up in arms when the chicken comes home to roost in their own backyard! Martin Luther King was quite right when he declared, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” We can only hope that white workers come to realize that white supremacist beliefs and practices only weaken the working-class - to the advantage of the small capitalist elite.

The political and economic elite in the United States is ruthlessly using the aftereffects of the Great Recession as a pretext to further weaken the economic, social and political conditions of the working-class. It was the actions of the captains of industry and commerce and their politicians that were responsible for the massive job losses, near-collapses of major financial firms, housing foreclosures (which largely affected racialized urban communities) and overall ‘bust’ of the capitalist business cycle.

One of the effects of the preceding events was a massive reduction in revenue flowing to the coffers of the different levels of government. It should be noted that prior and ongoing tax cuts - granted by the political class to corporations, wealthy individuals and high income earners - were also critical factors in the deficits now faced by state governments.

But it is the working-class in the public sector and the members of our communities who are dependent on public services that are being called upon to sacrifice their already tenuous or precarious standard of living to slay budgetary deficits across America. From the federal government under the pied piper leadership of President Barack Obama to two-bit governor Scott Walker in Wisconsin to multi-millionaire Governor Rick Snyder in Michigan, tax-cuts to the well-heeled, disciplining of the working-class and social programme spending reduction are the preferred policy options.

Hopefully, this bitter medicine from the neo-liberal or monetarist black bag will alert workers to their true class identity and interests. The fox (capitalist class)

and the chickens (workers) cannot have a community of interest. It is in the nature of the former to desire the latter for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

Many members of the United States’ working-class have been mislabeling themselves as middle-class as a result of the relentless ideological and social conditioning by the combined forces of the media, school, family, politicians, religious institutions and even union bureaucrats.

However, the current state-sponsored legislative initiatives aimed at destroying collective bargaining rights, decent wages, workplace benefits and the ability of unions to financially support political activities - along with union-crippling “right to work” laws - should disabuse workers of their middle-class illusions. If you sell your labour and do not exercise substantive control over the organizing, managing and directing of work or the labour process, you are a member of the working-class, period!

the racialized section of the United States’ workingclass has been bearing the brunt of the racist, sexist and capitalist battering of the welfare state structures since the 1980s without much sympathy from their white working-class counterparts.

One may be forgiven for thinking that the pulse of resistance had disappeared from the body of organized labour in the United States. Other than participation in the farce that is electoral politics (*politricks?*), organized labour has been, for the most part, absent from political struggles against white supremacy, sexism and capitalism.

The assault on collective bargaining rights of public sector workers by Governor Walker could be an undisguised gift to social movement activism. It has certainly been a long time since labour and its allies have mobilized tens of thousands of people into the streets over point of production or workplace issues.

Andy Kroll, a writer and an eyewitness at the protest actions against this potentially game-changing legislative attack on public sector unionism, states that “within a week there were close to 70,000 protesters filling the streets of Madison.” The writer was so moved by the spirit of resistance in the occupied Capitol building in Madison and events in the street that he declared, “Believe me, the spirit of Cairo is here. The air is charged with it.”

While protests on the scale of those in Madison, Wisconsin may bring into motion forces that represent radical

or revolutionary demands, I am not among the commentators who are overly impressed with what I have been seeing and reading. I am reminded of the instructive refrain of the African Jamaican dub poet, “A revolt ain’t revolution.” A revolution ought to be guided by revolutionary ideas and demands. It would be a stretch to even think that the preceding condition exists in Wisconsin, or even Egypt. We are currently at such a low level of movement activism or upsurge that even a ripple of protest may inspire fantastic declarations and expectation.

However, Larry Pinkney of the online publication *The Black Commentator* has a more sobering assessment of the Wisconsin protest than Kroll, which runs counter to the euphoric pronouncements that I have read in alternative spaces:

While it is certainly heartening to see some people making and taking a stand in Madison, Wisconsin, this does not mean that Wisconsin has somehow become Egypt. It has not. There are numerous inherent contradictions that have yet to be forthrightly addressed in Wisconsin, U.S.A., and which strongly impact the most economically and politically dispossessed and despised of people in Wisconsin and throughout the United States.

Pickney is raising questions about the oppression of the racialized working-class, inclusive of those with and without jobs. Their material interest does not garner substantive or broad sympathy from white union bureaucrats and rank-and-file members.

Where were the protests when Reagan and Clinton assaulted the working-class by changing “welfare as we know it” and demonized African Americans and the poor in the process? Where was the howling from organized labour when Clinton proudly declared his intention to put 100,000 additional cops on the streets of America and dramatically increase the number of Africans, Hispanic and poor whites in the prison-industrial complex or penal colonies? Where was organized labour when affirmative action was being savaged for merely trying to weaken white supremacist employment and other structural barriers in the workplace and the wider society?

Organized labour is willing to move when it is faced with self-evident existential threats. Stephanie Bloomingdale, Secretary-Treasurer of Wisconsin’s AFL-CIO, seemed to confirm the preceding assertion when she noted, “[o]ur very labor movement is at stake and when that’s at stake, the economic security of Americans is at stake.” I wonder whether her visual image of “Americans” looks like the people on Fulton Street in Brooklyn, New York. On the contrary, when the “slings and arrows” fired at the racialized

working-class provoke even the slightest bit of racial animus, union bureaucrats and white workers, through their inaction or silence, tend to support the initiatives of the ruling-class.

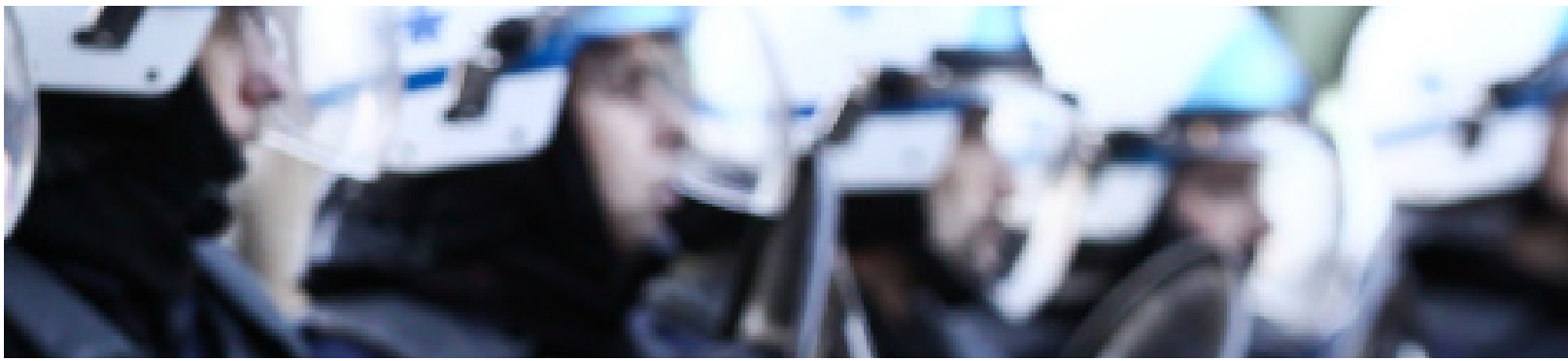
White supremacy has been a reliable tool, used to set white workers against Africans and other racialized workers in the United States, from the days of chattel slavery up to our current period of wage-slavery. Marx’s 1867 assertion remains valid today: “In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralysed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded”.

where was the howling from organized labour when Clinton proudly declared his intention to put 100,000 additional cops on the streets?

The class struggle and a united working-class movement in the United States (and Canada) will remain “paralysed”, deformed and underdeveloped, if the commitment to the elimination of white supremacy does not become a strategic goal of organized labour and the general working-class. Would the outpouring of solidarity with Wisconsin workers be the same if the target was a group of largely racialized public sector workers?

The task facing us class struggle and anti-oppression advocates is to be “ruthlessly” frank and firm in our commitment to challenge and eradicate white supremacy within the labour movement, the general working-class and the structures of the wider society. The objective reality facing organized labour and the working-class in general is the need for a full integration of a principled anti-racist practice into the heart and mind of the resistance against capitalist domination.

a full version of this article is available online at <http://www.linchpin.ca>



NO JUSTICE NO MERCY

Fighting back against police violence & uniting for alternatives

organizing against the police i

KRISHNA BERA, TARA LYONS & GREG MACDOUGALL

On 15 March 2011, about 75 people demonstrated against police violence in downtown Ottawa, marking the International Day Against Police Brutality. This was the first year an event was held in Ottawa, taking the lead from the annual march in Montreal that started in 1997. Toronto and Halifax also saw marches commemorating the day this year, while Winnipeg held one the following Saturday.

In Ottawa, participants gathered at the Human Rights Monument, where Algonquin Elder Albert Dumont delivered opening remarks; Frederique Chabot of POWER (Prostitutes of Ottawa: Work, Educate and Resist) spoke next, noting the police's harassment and unequal treatment of sex workers and members of the LGBTQ communities. After the crowd marched down Elgin Street to the Ottawa Police station, Andrew Nellis of the Ottawa Panhandlers' Union and Matthew Morgan-Brown of OPIRG/GRIPO-Ottawa both spoke of their personal experiences of (mis)treatment by the police/criminal system, drawing particular attention to the systemic nature of the problem of police violence.

Despite several recent high-profile cases of Ottawa police brutality, including the laying of charges against an officer that very day in relation to the Stacy Bonds case (a young woman who was violently strip-searched in the cellblock after being unlawfully arrested), both major Ottawa newspapers chose to focus their coverage on Morgan-Brown's involvement in the demonstration. In doing so, they failed to address the rising intolerance of the Ottawa public to the police force's mistreatment of citizens.

The march was connected to the Forum on Police Violence, Incarceration and Alternatives, held over the weekend at the University of Ottawa and organized by OPIRG/GRIPO. Over 120 people attended the opening panel, which featured five speakers, and was followed by a day of workshops.

During the forum, Jaggi Singh emphasized the structural nature of police violence, noting that the problem has been escalating for years in Canada - to the point where now it is not just dissent that is being criminalized, but organizing itself.

Ashanti Alston, via video feed, spoke from his lived experience of involvement with the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army. Alston pointed out that the historical record of incarceration, policing, racism, classism and slavery dates back

at least 400 years; he highlighted the importance of combating our fear of taking on the police/criminal system, of working to replace the need for these institutions, of connecting with people internationally who are working on alternatives, and the urgent need to struggle on behalf of all those who suffer and of those who are already dead.

Three speakers gave personal accounts of friends and family members who have died at the hands of police.

Anas Benes was shot in Montreal as he returned to his house following morning prayers at a nearby mosque; Samir Shaheen-Hussain of the Justice Pour Anas Coalition pointed out the rampant racial and ethnic profiling carried out by police, but also noted the effectiveness of community organizing as a tool for seeking justice. The riots that followed Montreal youth Fredy Villanueva's killing by police spurred a coroner's inquest, whereas the Benes family has not received any similar semblance of justice.

Gladys Tolley was hit by a police car while crossing the road in Kitigan Zibi reserve, two hours north of Ottawa. Bridget Tolley's long and arduous quest for justice in the case of her mother's death has run into a litany of corruption, incompetence, stonewalling and conflicts of interest as three police agencies (including the reserve's own police) have colluded to avoid blame.

Ben Matson was killed in Vancouver, where police brutalized him after a verbal altercation with an off-duty police officer. His daughter, Julie Matson, spoke about the murder of her father by police in full view of the public and local media; she was able to obtain an inquiry, in which she was able to share her account of her father's murder with the public - yet the only possible outcome from the beginning of the proceedings was 'accidental death.'

All three deaths were greeted by police cover-ups, who consistently blamed the victims and callously disregarded the concerns of their families and communities.

The Forum on Police Violence, Incarceration and Alternatives explored specific types of police violence against queers and sex workers. The workshops also provided an opportunity to draw connections between struggles and to work towards grassroots solutions to police violence and incarceration.

The Forum sought to question, what our movements can do to effectively fight against police violence and incarceration. Some suggestions that were discussed included resisting state tactics that seek to divide our movement into 'good' and 'bad' protestors and actions, building a culture of solidarity to help work through fear of resisting police and imagining alternatives, and imagining what a world without prisons and communities without police would actually look like.

"We were glad to see people from

a variety of communities and organizations take part in our events against police violence. This is an issue that many of us take to heart. These systemic problems need to be addressed and tackled head-on," said Pierre Beaulieu Blais, one of the forum organizers.

Further reading & resources

Centre for Police Accountability

If you are a victim of police brutality or misconduct, you are not alone. Many people have a shared experience of being abused by the police. Unfortunately, people feel powerless when it comes to getting justice against the police. The C4PA is working to change this.

<http://www.c4pa.ca>

Ontario Coalition Against Poverty

<http://www.ocap.ca>

Collectif Opposée à la Brutalité Policière

<http://www.cobp.resist.ca>



JUSTICE PEACE!

in ottawa, toronto and montreal



MARCH 15 2011 - TAKING THE STREETS IN TORONTO

Toronto joins Montreal in annual march Against Police Brutality

ALEX BALCH

Montreal's annual march against police brutality has long drawn the participation of anarchists, youths and anti-authoritarians of all stripes - and the most recent installment of the city's raucous annual ritual was no exception. A couple of correlated trends made this year's march stand out, however. Taken together, they offer a prescient foreshadowing of the looming conflict between an embattled and enraged working class and an increasingly militarized police force; for the first time, demonstrations spread to several other major cities, including Halifax, Ottawa, Toronto and Winnipeg - causing the police to respond with alarm and a massive increase in surveillance and state repression.

In Montreal, the repression began early. On March 12, during an anti-austerity demonstration organized by a collection of student and labour unions, marshals physically isolated a small group of anarchists and pushed them out of the march. According to a report in the Centre for Media Alternatives Quebec (CMAQ), the group was then encircled by "a swarm of 30-50 riot police" from the "preventative arrests' squad". While several members of the group managed to push their way out of the encirclement, twelve individuals

were arrested. Ten of these individuals were charged with criminal conspiracy, echoing a precedent set last summer during the G20 in Toronto - though in this case, the conspiracy charges were dropped after just two days.

The march against police brutality, on March 15, saw the preemptive arrest of all but one of the main organizers. In a nod to the tactics of the G20 Integrated Security Unit (ISU), these targeted individuals, members of the Collectif opposé à la brutalité policière (COBP), were arrested before the demonstration even began - under the flimsy pretext that the flags and placards they were holding constituted dangerous weapons. Despite these arrests, the demonstration went ahead, with a crowd of over 500 people gathering at metro place des arts before marching east towards St Laurent Blvd. By the time the demonstration was over, several vehicles and shop windows had been damaged, police had fired tear gas and stun grenades at the crowds, and 258 people had been arrested - the majority of whom after having been kettled in the street for over three hours. According to the Montreal Gazette, six of these arrests were for alleged violations of the Criminal Code, 13 were for breaking municipal bylaws and the remaining 239 were for road safety violations.

In Toronto, a crowd of roughly 100 people responded to a call out from the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) - assembling in front of 51 Division Headquarters, on Parliament St. They were met by a massive police presence that included dozens of bike cops, two contingents of mounted police, twenty minivans full of riot cops - even snipers from the Toronto Police Service's Emergency Task Force (ETF).

The disproportionately heavy police presence surprised many of the rally's participants, and was even deemed excessive by a commentator writing for the right-wing Toronto Sun. Still stinging from the international embarrassment caused by last summer's riot, members of the Toronto Police Service had taken extensive preparations to ensure that there would be no repeat; an email sent from a private security firm to local tenants and retailers in the days leading up to the rally warned that "Toronto Police are anticipating a large number of participants, possibly including anarchists who use black bloc tactics, and that the event may escalate in the late evening." It went on to list "52 Division on Dundas and Police Headquarters on College" as other potential targets for anarchist disruption.

While the rally certainly saw a sizeable anarchist contingent, there was no black bloc, and the event concluded without any property destruction, or arrests of any kind. After listening to several speakers - including representatives from OCAP, No One is Illegal (NOII), Barrio Nuevo and The Community

Solidarity Network (CSN) - an impromptu break-away march took to the streets and headed north to Police Headquarters chanting anti-police slogans - eliciting cheers from several excited onlookers - before dispersing at the St Patrick subway station.

While the demonstration in Toronto failed to match the size or intensity of its counterpart in Montreal, it did provide tangible successes - both by creating a physical space for victims of police violence to confront the state's repressive apparatus and by christening an annual institution within which such resistance can grow. Furthermore, in both cities the police clearly demonstrated that the wealthy elite whose interests they serve are growing increasingly worried by the threat posed by anarchist militancy.

As Victoria Barnett of the CSN put it, "what we continue to see now is a larger and more aggressive police presence - both in our communities and at meetings or events that are forums where people speak out against the police, or speak out against banks and corporations - or [even] question their purpose in the first place. [...] We are here to convey a message to the police - who are all around us right now - that we have the will and the capacity to resist, and that we will continue to do so."

>> OCAP continued from page 1

policies. The demonstration then marched up University Ave, and across Wellesley to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, where additional speakers from OCAP, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and Ottawa's Under Pressure spoke to the devastating effects of the Special Diet cuts and the importance of defending the supplement.

The "new" Special Diet Allowance was rolled out on April 1, and all recipients of the "old" Special Diet will be cut off on July 31. For many individuals and families living on social assistance, this change will mean a drastic loss of income. For some, it will mean once again encountering some of the

serious risks associated with the extreme poverty that people on social assistance often face: illness, hunger and homelessness among them.

The cuts to the Special Diet, and social assistance rates as a whole, do not only affect those on OW/ODSP. Rather, they are clearly connected to austerity measures and other issues that affect the entire working class.

Placing the cuts within the context of this international attack on the poor, Clarke noted that "the Special Diet is in the way as far as the [provincial] Liberal government is concerned. It has partly undermined their efforts to drive people on assistance into deeper poverty and, thereby, force them into

the lowest paying jobs on offer. One worker in six in Ontario is now working at or close to the minimum wage and the immense losses in income for the poor on social assistance have been vital in this process. If the Special Diet can be gutted successfully, the low wage sector can be supplied with even more workers."

Speaking on the prospects of successfully fighting these cuts - and the larger offensive of which they are a part - Clarke affirmed that "an upsurge based on the mountains of anger in workplaces and communities is possible and even inevitable but it will require a fight for fundamentally different approaches. Our movements will need to be as committed to the

class struggle as those on the other side... and we have our work cut out to revitalize them on that basis."

OCAP's demands are clear: Restore the Special Diet Allowance and raise OW and ODSP rates by 55% - bringing them back to the level they were at before the Harris government cuts. These demands should be supported by the entire working class, and just as important, they must be connected to the broader struggles against austerity measures and against a system that attacks us all. Whether we are unionized or non-unionized workers, unwaged or on OW/ODSP this is our struggle to fight - and our fight to win.

The forgotten general strike / movement history

BRUCE ALLEN

calling for a general strike.

Few people know it today, but we had a country-wide general strike in Canada - this coming October 14 will mark the 35th anniversary of it. There are no films about it; you won't find reference to it in history books, like you will the Winnipeg General Strike. But it did happen. I can tell you first-hand that it did, because I participated in it first-hand, even though I was unemployed at the time. One of the primary reasons you've likely never heard about it is because it was a failure - for essentially the same reasons the general strikes during the Ontario Days of Action in the late 1990s were a failure.

In 1973, inflation in Canada was running at over 10%. The Federal Tories responded by calling for wage and price controls. The Liberal government of the day, led by Trudeau, rejected the idea, and a July 1974 Federal election followed. Wage and price controls were a central issue in the election campaign. The Liberals won a majority government. Their victory was at least in part due to their opposition to wage and price controls. Indeed, during the campaign Trudeau loudly proclaimed to workers that if the Tory plans were implemented their wages would be controlled, but not prices.

Less than a year later the Trudeau government instituted wage and price controls. The centrepiece of the program was a body called the Anti-Inflation Board (AIB); it was empowered to impose wage settlements within the government's guidelines, effectively nullifying meaningful collective bargaining.

Union leaders howled in protest, but their rhetoric wasn't backed up by any substantial action until the Quebec labour movement (the same one that had staged the Common Front provincial general strikes four years earlier) stepped up to the plate. In November 1975, 20,000 workers took to the streets of Quebec City in opposition to Federal wage controls. In the months that followed the AIB added fuel to the fire by repeatedly rolling back negotiated wage increases.

Momentum was now building. On March 22, 1976 the CLC organized a march on Ottawa in which over 20,000 took part. The next month another rally was held at Queens Park, drawing an estimated 18,000 workers. By now Canadian UAW Director Dennis McDermott was advocating general strike action. So was the CUPE National President Grace Hartman. This meant that the leaders of the biggest public and private sector unions were both

All of this set the stage for the CLC Convention in May 1976. At the convention a resolution was passed authorizing the CLC to conduct a general work stoppage "if and when necessary". The adoption of that resolution was followed shortly afterward by wildcat strikes in Thompson, MB and Kitimat, BC - both carried out in response to AIB decisions. This paved the way for the general strike of October 14.

On the big day over a million workers stayed off the job, and rallies were held across the country. The strike was strong... but the rallies were not. Speeches that day featured a lot of angry rhetoric, but no indication of where things would go next.

Two cities were particularly outstanding that day in terms of being effectively shut down; they were Sudbury, ON and Sept. Illes, QC. In the latter city every business shut down as a gesture of respect for their customers who had stayed off the job. The province with the greatest overall percentage of workers on strike was BC; Quebec was notable insofar as there was strong student participation in the day's actions.

The main problem was... that was it. Nothing followed. Then, three months later, CLC President Joe Morris dropped active opposition to wage controls.

Success could be identified in only one measurable way. The Quebec government withdrew from the program. Why? The Quebec government of the day was a Parti Québécois (PQ) government led by René Lévesque, who was greatly indebted to Quebec's labour movement. Without the support of organized labour, the PQ never would have been elected - and they wanted continued labour support in a future referendum on Quebec independence. The PQ also repaid organized labour in Quebec by being the first provincial government to pass anti-scab legislation, which remains in place to this day.

The contrast with the NDP is noteworthy. The Federal NDP was onside with the CLC in opposing wage controls, but provincial NDP governments participated in Trudeau's program - most notably in Saskatchewan.

By any other measure the general strike was a failure. We had very little to show for it, and the union bureaucracy was clearly content to quickly put it behind us and act like it had never even happened.



Some general observations are in order, and I should note that essentially the same conclusions could be drawn from the Ontario Days of Action against the policies of Mike Harris' government in the late 1990s, when several city-wide general strikes were staged, including here in Hamilton - where 100,000 people marched through the city. The high point of the Days of Action was the Metro Toronto Day of Action in October 1996, when a general strike was accompanied by the mobilization of 250,000 people in the streets, effectively paralyzing downtown Toronto.

After reaching this high water mark, the union bureaucracy, rather than continuing the struggle to the next level, deliberately began to wind it down. A couple of more Days of Action took place - but these were little more than theatrics. The bulk of Harris' policies went through unimpeded, and continue to this day under the Liberals, who have done very little to reverse directions. So the Days of Action were also a failure, in terms of meeting their stated objectives of "taking back Ontario" and other such nonsense (as if we've ever been in control of Ontario).

One conclusion to be drawn from all this is that without sustained and cumulative pressure from below, there never would have been a general strike on October 14, 1976; a series of events, over the course of about a year forced the leadership to call it. Another conclusion to be drawn is that pressure from both within and from outside of the existing structures (ie. the wildcat strikes) were indispensable to making the general strike a reality;

the May 1976 CLC Convention clearly demonstrated this, and illustrated why it is so important for militants to make serious interventions during these events. Furthermore, I would argue that the subsequent absence of pressure from both within and outside of the existing structures made it possible for the CLC leadership to abruptly retreat shortly after the general strike, thereby ensuring that no follow up actions of any kind took place - unlike after the Metro Toronto Day of Action, where subsequent events served to wind down the struggle more carefully, and I would add, more cynically.

Another important lesson to be learned is that the last thing the union bureaucracy wants is to engage in a serious confrontation with capital and the state - and it will do whatever it can to avoid such a confrontation. Indeed the union bureaucracy has allowed itself to become wholly integrated into the structures of this capitalist society, even as the ruling class systematically works to marginalize organized labour as a political force and cripple it in the workplace - as those of us in the CAW know only too well.

So the challenge we are left with is to develop and execute a comprehensive, multidimensional strategy to be deployed both within the existing union structures, without any illusions about them (or our ability to transform them) and where possible outside of these structures - recognizing how difficult that is in practical terms. This is what is necessary to move the struggle forward and realistically raise the possibility of future general strike action.

Parasite politicians & their police

BRANDON GRAY

I was the anarchist Doug Ford told to “get a job” at the People’s Delegation to City Hall – an action which resulted in a coalition of grassroots community organizations crashing a Toronto municipal budget committee meeting on February 10 to protest proposed cuts to social services.

This exchange occurred shortly before I was tackled by his armed thugs and imprisoned in the basement of the notorious 52 Division – whose notoriety stems, in part, from a 2004 probe which implicated a dozen of its officers in drug trafficking and the operation of an organized crime network. As I was being led to a small room, one of the officers on duty taunted that he wished he could be the one to administer my strip search. Later that night, after loudly asserting that we were “spoiled” for being placed one person per cell, another of “Toronto’s finest” took sick satisfaction out of turning off the heat for the evening. This particularly sadistic individual then proceeded to mock my requests to be given my coat – as I was wearing sweaty, thin, ripped clothing that left me shivering the hours away on a steel slab in a concrete cell during a cold snap of -16.3 Celsius. I was released after 30 hours of illegitimate detention with abrasions down the left side of my face, my wrists cut and bruised from tight handcuffing; my left knee, already sore from recent reconstructive surgery following a workplace accident, was badly inflamed from the attack, and my right shoulder and neck were aching from being choked and kneed in the back.

My arrest and subsequent imprisonment are criminal transgressions on my liberty and safety that have caused my family, friends, and supporters much trouble and grief. According to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, I am supposed to have the right to public protest without being attacked by the police, but in reality

- as many realized this past summer during the G20 - no such right actually exists. During last summer’s protests my spouse received a concussion from riot police, who charged her as she peacefully stood outside the police kettle at Queen and Spadina that I had been trapped inside. One billion dollars was spent on beating my friends and fellow activists, kidnappings in unmarked vans carried out by plainclothes cops, illegal detainment, sexual harassment and military interrogation techniques, and throwing many lives into shambles through outlandish judicial repression.

Ford’s ‘get a job’ quip, subsequently seized upon by the corporate media, is a common crutch used by cops and right-wingers to avoid responding intelligently to urgent social problems and the left-wing ideologies that set out to solve them. As an activist, I am quite familiar with this thoughtless rebuke – that is why I have made a habit of preemptively telling officers to ‘quit the force and get a real job’ at public demonstrations.

After Ford denied the quip, and was subsequently confronted with a recording, reporters then asked him if he would apologize. His response: “I don’t apologize to anarchists.” This is for the best. I would never accept an apology from parasites like the Ford brothers, who have used their father’s money to exploit, control and condemn those who lack the same privileges. After Ford told another protester “go fuck yourself ... you fucking prick”, I responded by asking him, “you think starving people makes you rich and your buddies richer? Is that how your budgets work?” He then made his dim-witted quip, stood smiling proudly and I called him out for what he is: a reactionary scumbag; a maggot that feeds off the excrement of a sick society by pandering to some of its more openly racist forms of white supremacy and fake working-class populism.

The budget being discussed by Ford



and his fellow bureaucrats was a conscious attack on the working class that cut shelter space, thereby ensuring that ever more homeless human beings will freeze to death on our cold streets next winter, services for immigrants will be slashed and public sector union contracts eliminated. One of the only social services that didn’t take a cut was the city’s already bloated police budget – which is naturally sacred to someone like Doug Ford, who needs armed thugs to repress opposition to his war on the poor; that hallowed bulwark of institutionalized violence will get more money than they even asked for, bringing their share of the budget to nearly \$1 billion. Apparently this is the government’s magic number for funding domestic repression.

Several years ago, Police Chief Bill Blair told a group of community youth representatives, in a meeting called by the Toronto Youth Cabinet to address police brutality, that he commanded “a paramilitary force”. However, he left out the crucial class element of this force – namely, who it serves and who it protects against. I would suggest that readers consider the reality that Toronto is under armed occupation by a paramilitary force hostile to the political and economic interests of the majority of us who live and do real work in this city. This paramilitary force is a necessary evil only if those few who do not work, but rather feed off the surplus value of our labour, are to retain their role as dictators running our decaying society into the ground.

It is within this context that readers should understand Budget Committee chair Mike Del Grande’s statement that “disruptive activity really doesn’t advance anyone’s cause.” It is mindless to expect debate or dialogue to convince reactionary businessmen

like Rob and Doug Ford to give up the monstrous unearned wealth that comes from being members of the parasite class that sits atop the pyramid scheme we call capitalism. These two are standing proof that government is a synthesis of the exploiting business class and their corresponding need for social control and coordination; the political expression of economic parasitism. The Ford brothers will never “get a real job” and stop stealing our surplus value - we must force them to, by building a militant working class movement that can seize political power and economic independence from the free-loading fat-cats in City Hall, Parliament and Bay Street.

Those of us who are forced to sell hours of our lives to our bosses should not only acknowledge the audacious irony and hypocrisy of the Ford brother’s obsession with demanding everyone but themselves ‘get a job’, but must also defend the dignity of those who are unable to sell themselves for a wage due to serious health issues. The hired guns that beat the homeless, shoot down our racialized youth, and rape women and trans people living on the margins are the same government bullies that have historically turned their batons on striking workers. We have the same interests and the same greedy enemies. We must make a common global front that fights for our collective dignity while maintaining our own unique voices. We must strike together while thinking for ourselves; our lands and minds are rich and fertile enough to abolish this miserable existence as beggars and wage-slaves—and we will have our goddamned dignity one way or the other.



TORONTO COPS SERVING AND PROTECTING THE RICH

Despite hype, London fascists a “no-show” to their own event

TONY V

Rumours of a looming resurgence of white supremacist activity in London, ON had been circulating amongst anti-racist activists in southern Ontario for over a week before being given credence by an article in the London Free Press, which announced that “upwards of 50 members of the so-called Combat 18” would be gathering at City Hall, on March 12. This article, released the day before the planned rally, provoked a series of impromptu meetings, where plans for a counter-demonstration were hastily drawn up.

‘Combat 18’ is a notoriously violent neo-nazi organization from the United Kingdom; their attacks primarily target immigrants and visible minorities - particularly members of the country’s Muslim population. While no chapter of the organization currently exists in Canada, there has been some interest shown by other fascist and white supremacist groups and individuals - and the fear was that this rally could mark the beginning of a violent new push in the region. London has a dark history of hate groups such as the Northern Alliance - a homegrown neo-nazi organization that had attempted

to resurrect themselves at last year’s Pride parade.

In the London Free Press article a spokesman for the London Police stated that they had the situation well under control, and that “problems” could only be expected should anti-hate protesters show up - as though the fascists were just planning to converge and have tea on the steps of City Hall.

On very little notice, through social media and word of mouth, supporters and members of Common Cause, together with other anarchists and individuals concerned by the prospect of fascists rallying in their city, organized a rapid response to this development. Some felt the need to mask themselves for fear of reprisals from violent individuals if identified, while others chose to oppose them openly; either way, our goal was to send a clear message to this group that they could not organize their hatred in London without being confronted. Once we had gathered a small crowd of 25-30 people, we went to City Hall to see what was happening. Media and police were the first thing we saw. And then we realized something was odd.

The so-called “rally” consisted entirely of two of London’s most well known ‘boneheads’: Dave Ruud and Tomasz Winnicki. Ruud heads the largely defunct Northern Alliance and runs a dismal hate website, while Winnicki recently ran for mayor on a “London’s biggest hater” ticket.

In a peculiar display, the two hid behind signs protesting the

fluoridation of London’s municipal water supply; this was certainly a crafty deflection intended to save face - and no one in our group was fooled.

Eventually these ‘boneheads’ became utterly demoralized and left with a whimper and their tails between their legs. We applauded their decision to leave, and quietly hoped that this might be the end of open fascist organizing in London. If not, we’ll be more than happy to come out and ‘welcome’ them again.



Fight back against the rich!

anarchists in hamilton and pittsburgh show support for locked out steel workers

ANTI-CAPITALIST CONTINGENT @ “THE PEOPLE VS. US STEEL”

On Saturday January 29th several thousand people took to the streets of Hamilton in support of United Steelworkers 1005 locked out of US Steel Hamilton and against Stephen Harper attacks on working people across the country. Dubbed “The People VS US Steel” the demonstration organized by the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) was the largest in Hamilton in a decade and promised to be “the Largest Anti-Harper Protest Ever.”



ANTI-CAPITALIST BLOC IN HAMILTON

In the lead up to the 29th Common Cause Hamilton worked with anarchists both in Ontario and Pittsburgh to stand with USW 1005. Anarchists in Pittsburgh staged a solidarity rally outside of US Steel’s head office simultaneously with the events in Hamilton. Hamilton anarchists coordinated an Anti-Capitalist Contingent within “The People VS US Steel” as a way to show support for 1005.

The day of the march more than 50 anarchists and anti-capitalists from across the region responded to the call out issued by Common Cause Hamilton. Our bloc marched the parade route alongside thousands union members, students and workers from Hamilton and across the province: Canadian Auto Workers, Service Employees International Union, Communication Energy and Paperworkers Union, and public-sector unions including the Canadian Union of Public Employees. While comparatively small in numbers our contingent provided a noisy and visible anti-capitalist presence within the larger demonstration. Our message was clear: working people need to stand together as a class against ALL bosses and ALL politicians!

back that needs be undertaken if we are to defeat capitalism’s most recent offensive. Lockouts and layoffs, cuts to welfare and disability benefits, healthcare, and immigration services, attacks on pensions, CPP, wages, public transit- all of these are part of the larger Austerity Agenda. This mobilization which USW 1005 President Rolf Gerstenburger called “a historic gathering that makes a historic statement” (Hamilton Spectator), was a manifestation of what this fight back might look like: Solidarity between union and non union workers, students, community members and groups against their common enemy.

PITTSBURGH SOLIDARITY PICKET @ US STEEL HEAD OFFICE

On Jan. 29th, 2011, at 1pm, two cities showed that workers’ solidarity cannot be confined by national borders. While the steel workers of Ontario’s Local 1005 and thousands of their supporters held a march and rally to protest US Steel for locking them out of their jobs, their fellow workers and allies held a protest at the US Steel Headquarters in Pittsburgh, PA.

The rally in Downtown Pittsburgh, organized by the Northeastern

Federation of Anarchist-Communists (NEFAC), brought 20-30 people to brave the cold in front of the U.S. Steel Tower. Those present included union workers, students, anarchists from various groups, the IWW, and others. The picketers sipped hot coffee as they held signs, which read “Workers Unite: Solidarity is our Weapon,” “Steelers Fans for Pension Plans,” “US Steel: End the Lockout,” “Steel City Supports

Steel Workers,” “Working Class Power,” and “Springsteen: The Only Boss I Listen to.”

Buses, taxis, and cars honked in approval. Picketers handed out information about the lockout to the unusually high number of passers-by--many of whom were brought to the area by a local radio show contest--Downtown on a frigid Sunday afternoon.

Protesters vowed to continue to put pressure on US Steel and act in solidarity with Local 1005 until the company allows the workers to return to their jobs, with their pensions intact. Pittsburgh NEFAC extends their congratulations to workers of Hamilton, Ontario for their successful demonstrations.

Local 1005: Pittsburgh stands behind you! In the struggle for better lives for workers and their families, in Hamilton, in Pittsburgh, and everywhere else. In the struggle to build an international workers movement capable of making the rich pay for their own recession!



PITTSBURGH ANARCHISTS SUPPORT USW 1005