

A.P.C. Housing Campaign Proposal

draft
09 NOV 02

Why we should do a Housing Campaign:

- Housing is in a serious and immediate crisis.
- Housing has always been under attack in capitalist systems and it is something everyone is affected by. There is great potential for mobilising people around the issue.
- This crisis is being intensified by the policies of the Liberal government.
- The lack of resources put into maintaining and building social housing is an ideological choice made by a government that ignores the needs of poor and working people.
 - The attacks are being levelled primarily against poor and working class people: women, immigrants, seniors, the disabled. The Liberal government intends to maintain a cheap labour pool and have all public services shifted to the private sector. They are attempting to create a fast and direct flow of capital into the hands of a minority of wealthy and powerful.
- In Canada there has been a long standing and concerted effort by the federal and provincial governments to pass off the monetary responsibility of maintaining public services to the private sector. Housing is an example of this.
 - The province and the feds are responsible for under-funding a system that's been consistently starved for years.
 - The current crisis is not inherent, it has been manufactured.
 - In this political climate we will never be able to elect a government that is seriously committed to publicly maintaining social housing.
- By denying housing, the Liberals are putting people into a situation where it is difficult for them to organize.
- Our government and their big business partners are attempting to prevent a strong and intelligent fight back.
- The Liberals attack on housing emphasizes the importance of a strong resistance and at the same time, presents new obstacles to organising
- Housing is intrinsic to an overall fight against poverty.

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What does a successful strategy look like?

EDUCATION/OUTREACH

Freezing social housing in this province is being presented as a necessary fiscal measure. Education must be done to correct this misinformation.

- We need a strong and persistent outreach strategy with the goal being mass based mobilisation.
 - Targeted leafleting, workshops, recruitment, networking with people in women's, youth and community centres...
 - Specific constituencies must be identified and targeted within this strategy.
 - Single mothers, youth, the disabled, seniors, immigrants ...

- Expansion into all areas in the Greater Vancouver area, implementing our outreach strategy in areas outside of the downtown core.
- Nation-wide network building with groups across the province and country. Building this issue in order to put pressure against the federal government.

ACTION

Our enemies must be identified and strategically targeted. Our targets are fluid, they will change based on the circumstances of each action. We must have an overall strategy that specifies the way in which we will target each of our enemies individually and we must build our actions in the context of that overall strategy.

We must identify the context in which our enemies are relevant:

1. Municipal Government
The civic government is essentially the government of "last resort" in regards to social housing. They are under increasing pressure. There is a better chance of getting results than when attacking the province.
2. Federal Government
The feds have the largest tax base and are historically associated with the development of social housing. With the current federal political climate, the Liberal government will be taking an angle wherein they focus on more social services. There is potential in targeting the federal government based on the 'leftist' slant they will try to push in the upcoming year.
3. Provincial Government
Despite their responsibility to build and maintain social housing the provincial Liberals have put freeze on all social housing. They have closed the Residential Tenancy Office in Vancouver and made have made changes to the Residential Tenancy Act that diminish the rights of renters. Through their legislation and policies, provincial government is significantly exacerbating the housing crisis.
4. Private Sector
Private developers that are pressuring the government for subsidies and tax exemptions, under the guise of building social housing. Business Improvement Associations and businesses that are promoting the gentrification of our communities. Real estate speculators. Landlords.

We must clearly communicate our intentions and demands to our enemies, our allies and the public at large.

Political action must be undertaken with the intent to strengthen the movement as a whole.

We must be able to clearly articulate how our actions will move toward meeting those goals.

Our actions must use innovative and militant tactics that are effective with a commitment to strategic escalation.

- These tactics must be used in conjunction with outreach that will meet the specific goals of the action and in turn build towards our long-term goals.
- These tactics include, but are not limited to: Strategic demonstrations, rent strikes, occupations, squats, homeless encampments.
NOTE: When undertaking actions such as squats our role should primarily be one of organizing and empowering the constituency.

We must have clear long term and short term goals that follow a realistic, effective timeline. We must focus on objectives to be met in 3 months and in 6 months: