

EVALUATION

OF

APC

JANUARY 2003

Overview of Evaluation

- Need to have more internal and external education
- Need a defined strategy
- Need clear roles of organization members
- Need clearer guidelines of campaigns
- Lack of follow up in general with our work
- Need to have clearer goals and boundaries
- Need proper work delegation and co-ordination of tasks
- Need better outreach
- Need better process for dissemination of information both within and outside of APC
- Lack of focus and prioritization
- Need better planning process for implementation of campaigns
- Need clear conflict resolution

1) Was going to Campbell's house an effective tactic? What could we have done to follow up with our success at Campbell's house?

- Extremely effective, personalized, publicity high, conveyed public anger follow up?

Should always target Campbell 'till he's scared of his own shadow" Intimidation value we have been unsuccessful in breaking out being a 'marginal group

- Have not broken out of media portrayal as a bunch of jobless schmucks
- Should do it a couple of times a year, larger each time
- No sound system, lost focus by allowing people not related to rally to take over, ineffective tactical plan

- Need a group specializing in demo planning and implementation
- Successful in bringing attention to certain issues
- Successful as it set a high bar, we took initiative
- Other actions were reactive, have not lived up to it afterward
- 500-700 people at first action (not union called)
- Good demo as it was a 'demonstration' of our power
- APC was made into a household name
- Ineffective follow-up
- Let momentum slide
- Outreach after was ineffective

3) How well have we dealt with the corporate media and their projections of us?

- Media portrayed us as dropouts
- Started to become more balanced because they measured temperament of province
- Have not dealt properly with them after
- We should speak to media via one voice (message box and person)
- Everyone else should not speak 'officially' on behalf of APC
- We set ourselves up to spend too much time responding to negative press
- Be aware of media ideology (e.g. Izzy Asper)
- Dealing with media workshops??? (Tielman, Murray Bush...)
- No media strategy in APC, big flaw
- Need a strong response, should have alternative ways of getting our message across
- Utilize Indy media more (not enough yet)
- We have held our own

- We can take advantage of Campbell's hate
- Don't worry about press too much (all publicity good)
- Rather focus on our own message and projection of our politics
- Has been insufficiently developed before hand
- More local newspaper coverage (Now, Leader, Courier, etc.)
- Not doing bad with press, must create a better image with people and not the press
- Avoid media stars
- Rotate official speaker duties
- Best to combine all of the above?
- Our response to Britannia had powerful influence on the outcome of civil politics

5) What was the relationship like between the general members and the steering committee like?

- Non existent relationship
- Did not know who is on steering committee who? When? How? Etc...
- Exclusionary others kicked out almost
- All agree there were problems, little information sharing
- Un-elected (implicated attitudes)
- No mechanism for general members to initiate
- Since start some were opposed due to being un-elected, no strategy, still opposed by this person
- Again no relationship between general members and steering committee
- General meetings were for steering ctte. to report and dictate their decisions
- Felt steered by steering committee
- Problems struck form situation in B.C. and different ideologies
- Still have not done so bad with all things considered
- Often did not follow own structure, should have had orientations so that people understand their role (did not do that though they said they would)
- General members did not have enough information to make informed and empowered decisions, led to alienation
- Improperly defined membership
- Lack of delegation outside of steering committee (allowed for over control and hogging)

- Lack of strategic direction allowed for this to happen
- APC is just steering committee
- Distrust between steering committee and general members
- General members just became tools (perception)

7 +9) How well have we included various strengths and talents available in this group?

How clearly has membership criteria been laid out and how welcome have we made new members feel?

- Skills inventory needed – we have to let go and delegate
- No follow up on delegated tasks or accountability
- Membership criteria???
- Did not use talents and strengths well and our membership criteria and how well we have treated new members was lousy
- Steering committee did not coordinate, in sufficient coordination and communication, this is supposed to be the job of the steering committee – to not do the work but coordinate it
- Criteria for membership of steering committee too easy, membership too, there needs to be a proper process
- Must balance need for openness and rigidity
- Get a database happening for talents and strengths of members
- Need more formal membership process needed (related to #5) highlight these points
- Database
- Make membership criteria more clear
- Better developed orientation process (maybe not an orientation session though)
- People should be able to do work, this will allow people to get more involved and to take ownership (collectively)

11) How well have we stayed committed to the work that we have agreed upon doing in the general meetings?

- When making decision and sticking to it we fooled through
- Lacked inability to do long term work

13) How successful have our campaigns been? Why and why not?

- Britannia was a good opportunity for publicity, mishandled it, failed in involving other people in ‘illegal’ activity without speaking about it before hand

- Good job in actions, practical stuff, however poor job in campaigns
- Big expenditure of valuable resources with zero returns (training wage) failure
- Campaign not good, did not follow through
- We drop campaigns when other stuff comes up (e.g. training wage campaign/woodwards)
- Need to make campaign clear to new members
- More clarity needed between campaign (tactics) and relation to strategy
- Lack of focus and prioritization (must be ongoing)
- 'Implicit' understanding on part of members vs. explicit
- Have not really made any campaigns (got to think about it)
- Lack of follow up (e.g. good ideas and relationships out of disability forum)
- Campaign should have a time frame (calendar starting from point A to Point B after which we reassess)
- Not enough resources to have 6 or campaigns
- Need more support to do that

15) Are there any other areas that we need to evaluate and discuss?

- We can refocus and get better if everyone has one task at least
- We have to consciously recruit
- Does this type of organizing work, no
- Need to seriously ask this question
- Go after people who elected this government
- Failed on coalition and networking: roles in those coalitions must be clear
- Need better provincial networking
- Need to concentrate on a more common political language (political discussions, discourse, misunderstandings, etc...)
- Discuss list is one of the most destructive things it should be eliminated or moderated / monitored
- Need ability to air things out
- Better way to network and ally ourselves needed
- Need ability to process information as a group and pass it on and act upon it effectively

- People who break with basis of unity should be dealt with, it has to be made clear so as to avoid problems
- Membership only email list (guidelines for posting need to be defined, understood and followed)

2) Was our role in Woodward's a positive one? What could have been improved? What worked well?

* C - yes - positive - improvement: too much fighting with community folks like Layden etc. - need a better understanding of how to work in a coalition - folks willing to get arrested was a good thing

* L - lot of solidarity with one another - call-arounds done when jail support etc. needed - group became too action-focused though and it ungrounded and unfocused the group and the group's projects.....

* D - what could have been improved.... Woodward's squat still continuing through residents councils - APC should be involved in spreading residents councils and agitators and has political discussions. the campaign for social housing is not dead we shouldn't pretend it is.

* J - detracted somewhat from other ongoing work APC already committed to. focused in the streets for months which was partly necessary but also over-focused. we need to consider what our goals and boundaries are in the very beginning so that we don't bail on people and so we can keep our commitments. more skill-sharing needed in the community so that actions can be kept ongoing.

4) What has been our most successful action? What has been our least? How could have improved on it?

* C - Most - Art Gallery action - stopped Gordon Campbell - good turnout. Least - Training Wage demo, was derailed and turnout was poor, conflict on the demo between organizers and participants.

* J - Most - Art Gallery, but it wasn't really an APC action entirely - context was more of a context in that action.

* L - Least - Training Wage - could be improved with better outreach. Need to be going to other group meetings, union locals, student

meetings etc. Didn't make a concerted effort to mutually work with outside groups.

* D - Most and Least were the same - Emergency Needs Assessment - strong demo and good organizing - but we took it nowhere - no follow-up. didn't activate support to continue the campaign. need to focus on that work

6) How well have we utilised our office?

* M - Office - used as a way to control information and communications. People in the office often treat outside activists as not as committed because they aren't putting the time in.

* J - Poor security, phone numbers and lists etc. Security protocol needed.

* L - We haven't oriented people very well to the office - basic training and need to build up information that is in there. People that come in need to feel welcome - people feel that they aren't treated well when they come in. Needs to be a work space.

* D - There is no substantive work when people come in to do work. Work needs to be delegated when people come in. The office should be the "mothership of work". List of organizations and newsletter distro should happen through the office. Focus on outreach. Need to stop it from being a drop-in .

* J - We don't have a proper utilization of direct action casework. Who is doing casework, what casework is going on. Needs co-ordination - and a couple people just need to do this work so that people are aware.

8) How well did we handle conflict in the group? What was positive and what needs to be improved?

* P - didn't handle it well at all. issues weren't faced early enough and then were avoided so as not to "hurt people's feelings". closed office group who didn't let stuff out, outreach was poor as a result to

supporters. in a politically active group there is real conflict and you have to be prepared to deal with it otherwise it festers and creates real problems.

* C - Need conflict resolution mechanisms which are respectful to the individual, anti-authoritarian. People have left because of poor handling of conflict resolution. Need to deal with these issues properly. In terms of charges - rejection of "Charge" "Investigate" "Punish".

* M - need something in our basis of unity that addresses conflict.

* L - agrees because otherwise some individuals have too much power.

* J - need to distinguish between conflict resolution and anti-oppression work. this distinction hasn't been made.

* M - hierarchical leadership leads to hierarchical conflict resolution mechanisms

10) Rate the overall outreach of APC in gaining allies to our struggle.

What has worked and what hasn't? What are some ways we can improve on it?

* L - outreach has been abysmal. VSW has been an example of some good outreach but we need to focus more and not just on the dtes. who isn't here? and why not?

* J - don't have a clear strategy with a series of goals and escalation in our struggle. need to outreach *with* something, can't just go out and outreach to no purpose. need to create unification in the struggle.

* M - outreach helps us deal with racism, anti-oppression work.

* M - need to understand our role in society and where we can do effective outreach.

* C - \$6 an hour training wage leafleting has been a big waste of time -- didn't get a single person contacting the group who was getting paid the training wage despite all the leafleting. Need to get involved in other people's struggles, doing direct action casework in communities in need etc. (Example - OCAP doing work in the Somali community - that is outreach that counts) - Need to be seen as willing to take risks to

support other communities.

* P - outreach is a two-way street. there has to be acceptance on the part of those we are trying to outreach to? Seniors network picks carefully who they outreach to - have to analyze what you want to do with outreach and whom you want to outreach to and why. are they the type of org we can involve ourselves with? APC has not defined things very clearly by over-focus on action. Allies don't understand what we're doing and don't want to associate. patchy presence is important.

12) How clear has the strategy of APC been?

* M (B) - hasn't been very clear. we find strategy in planning actions when it should be the other way around.

* M (O) - no clear strategy limits our outreach. big mistakes with communities - such as the Iranian community because of the lack of strategy around why we're aligning with them.

* J - 3 months down the road - IOC coming etc. housing, gentrification, poverty issues all part of this. different strategic things we want to build up to - we need to look to so we aren't always reacting.

* L - next meeting - sheets on defining strategy and tactics so that we're all on the same page of what those things are.

* D - when APC first started out - the strategy was very clear - fighting the Liberals - all groups are affected. Since woodwards, we have lost the drive against the liberal regime.

* J - most of us aren't just fighting back against Gordon Campbell, many of us are fighting back against government in general. We are not clear within ourselves about our politics, GC is the most intensive form of capitalist government, but really we are fighting capitalism.

* P - what are the lifestyle issues? what are the political issues? once you address the overall issues of strategy, the emotional content of the debate gets much heavier which makes people emotional and sometimes that's unpleasant. need to get through the emotional patches without blowing the organization apart. need to look at the real political analysis.

14) Has the education of our members inside and outside APC been successful in regards to anti-poverty issues?

* L - would like to be doing a lot more education. education is central to advocacy work and casework. we need to take this more seriously. nights where we do just education. more workshops to involve and empower people.

* C - more workshops for our members, by our members. outside APC, always need to make sure the anti-poverty issues are at the top of the agenda. this has been successful in coalitions with trade unions etc. issues are also a two-way street, we want people to support our struggles we need to support theirs.

* J - what kind of education do we need? we need to empower the community. poor people want to know how they can win, how they can see tangible gains. get people involved in struggle.

* M - empowerment and education aren't necessarily two different things. people outside of activism and outside of the group hear about us primarily through the news media. need to translate.

* M -

* J - false divisions created for us - between our communities - we need to be more clear on what the divisions are and why and how they are created outside of us. we don't need to educate people about why they should struggle, but initial motivation can come out of personal circumstance. empowerment can come through education.

* P - 2 kinds of poverty, kind you are born into, poverty that people get into by choice or accident. APC might want to focus on putting together a workshop by street people. We do not have people from these communities involved.

* J - education has to be tactically used and not just for the sake of it.

16) Give an overall evaluation of APC from your first day in the organization.

* M - asked to join to be involved in the welfare occupation, problems lead to leaving the group - decided to get involved again cause of the problems that have resurfaced - to be part of pushing it forward. more in the direction of more representative of this neighbourhood.

* C - Woodwards brought C in and it was because APC was there and that's why he's involved. Even poor, and homeless could still fight back. Need to bring everyone in - unions have helped and we need to work with them.

* J - had a difficult time when he first came into APC, found it cold and unwelcoming. hard to break into this group - came into APC at the worst possible time - little action since October and a lot of complaining since then.

* J - Overall really happy with APC, has been a good personal learning experience, the group has been very valuable in a lot of ways. criticisms can be worked through.

* D - is confused by what's being said - process, lingo, explanation have been complicated and not engaging. we can't pretend to outreach to organizations - we need to be clear how and why we outreach and we can't pretend to be different. macho attitude needs to go.

* P - been around a long time - APC has been an interesting experience in many ways - it's amorphous, defines itself by its actions. wants more clear definition of goals. has not faced problems and solved them properly. the organization has been a positive experience in many ways. has credibility because APC has been on the line, well-known. hope that we can work together we're going to have problems.

* L - up/down relationship - overall positive - lot more confidence, groups have conflicts and in communities splits happen. evaluation really important to do - energizing.

* M - echoes many already spoken sentiment. likes where we are now cause there is a lot of room for change all of a sudden, and we can change how we organize and treat each other and that is inspirational - to feel supported etc.

* C - frustrated in some ways, but have never worked with people who

**are as committed and courageous - inspired to get going in the new year
and start kicking some ass.**