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 To: apc-announce@lists.resist.ca
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 Subject: [APC-Announce] Proposal to Decentralize Power and Build Community in the APC

THIS PROPOSAL HAS BEEN SUBMITTED BY JOEY ONLY

>>PROPOSAL TO DECENTRALIZE POWER AND BUILD COMMUNITY IN THE APC
 >>Giving the bulk of the organizing power to a few individuals in the APC is
 >>dangerous. This proposal is about innitiating fundamental changes so the
 >>group will become more inclusive. When our community becomes strong
 >>enough we will be able to effectively challenge the laws oppressing our
 >>community. This proposal includes no political analysis because I believe
 >>the root of our analysis is in our name. Anti-poverty which should
 >>inherently mean anti-priveledge, anti-capitalist, pro-community and
 >>pro-equality.

>>

>>

>>APC DIRECTORY

>>The purpose of the Skills Directory is to bolster organizational strength
 >>in the APC by utilizing the gifts of the members. It is a forum for
 >>members to promote their abilities.

>>

>>If people are good at computers, counselling, writing, carpentry, or any
 >>number of tasks; they could post that in the directory under SKILLS. If
 >>someone wants to write a proposal but they aren't handy with the computer
 >>or the English language, they could look in the directory to see who can
 >>write. Access to power.

>>

>>The directory can also include the names of other organizations that do
 >>casework. It should have contact info of Steering Committee members. But
 >>it does not have to have general membership contact information. Contact
 >>can be made to people through the APC office, or a voted member.

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>>

>>FLEXIBLE CAMPAIGNS (One fight, end poverty).

>>Make room for members to take innitiative, and develop their own
 >>campaigns. People could write a proposal and bring it to the general
 >>membership. The G.M. discusses the proposal and votes more than 66% in
 >>favor (2/3rds). Then the general members would choose an organizing team
 >>of two or three to work on the campaign.

>>

>>Two or three organizers on a campaign! We can have as many sub-campaigns
 >>as we have groups of three available. Major ammendments must be passed
 >>through either the Steering Committee, Campaigns Council (will discuss
 >>next) or the General Membership. (Depending on what meeting comes first
 >>or if it is emergency).

>>

>>All campaign organizers must council together in weeks that there's no
 >>General Members meeting. At the one hour meeting there would be report
 >>backs, discussion, and information dispersed. This will help the
 >>campaigns to network. At every General Membership meeting there must be
 >>reports back on the campaigns.

>>

>>The purpose of the organization is to offer resources for those who want
 >>to organize through our Basis of Unity. Regina wants to organize an
 >>African Diaspora Film Festival. We should be able to stamp it and provide
 >>reasonable resources for that fundraiser; and let her go do the work she

>>is interested in doing. IT WILL NOT HURT THE ORGANIZATION and it empowers
>>people.
>>
>>It is up to the organizing teams to compile needs and jobs for the General
>>Membership for vote on. The membership must be encouraged to help
>>organizers. By the nature of this system it is a given that some
>>organizing teams will be more succesfull than others. That should be
>>tolerated.
>>
>>
>>ORGANIZING IN APC COULD WORK LIKE THIS
>>Main Campaign: collective/total strength of APC.
>>Casework: office team
>>Sub-campaigns: accountable teams of three.
>>Steering Committee: Facilitating all operations transparently, or
>>abolished in six months.
>>
>>The advantage is more flexibility. More availability for people to take
>>innitiative in organizing actions, events, or educational workshops.
>>
>>
>>MAIN CAMPAIN (one fight, end poverty)
>>Every six months we could choose a new main campaign. An example of this
>>is found in the successful Ontario Coalition Against Poverty and
>>Convergence Des Luttes Anti-Capitalistes
>>
>>OCAP spent \$15,000 pulling together the Ontario Commonfront June 15th
>>2001. The OCF then worked to Defeat Harris in October. Then they went
>>after the Tory Convention, March 22nd 2002. Then OCAP organized to take
>>the Pope Squat, June 15th 2002.
>>Le CLAC organized the Quebec City FTAA protests on April 20th 2001. Le
>>CLAC squatted a building in August. Then Le CLAC joined the Defeat Harris
>>Campaign October '01 They worked to TAKE THE CAPITAL, anti-G8 actions
>>June 26-27t 2002. Now they are fighting gentrification in the St.Henri
>>region of Montreal.
>>
>>In two years OCAP amd Le CLAC have changed their focus more than four
>>times and have broadened their day to day capabilities by doing so. My
>>suggestion is that we start to organize for when the International Olympic
>>Committee comes in March. After March we can re-evaluate our
>>capabilities, and choose our next project.
>>
>>
>>EDUCATION AVAILABILITY
>>Knowledge is power.
>>The APC can arrange to empower people with skills workshops. In December
>>there will be classes to learn about computers. People who know how to
>>use computers have organizing power over those who don't.
>>
>>We cultivate talents that would help the organization in its fight, and
>>build upon what we already have by expanding the abilities of the
>>membership. Ie. Legal rights and activist legal defence, public speaking,
>>self defence, media relations, activist and non activist first aid...etc.
>>
>>
>>FURTHER STEPS
>>It is important that we actively seek out interpreters of many different
>>langauges. We can produce 3-4 multi-lingual newsletters a year and put
>>them into the immigrant communities represented.
>>
>>We can also target oppressed communities by assigning people the task of
>>writing an APC mini-newsletter focussed primarily on that community and
>>poverty. Ie. Queers and Poverty, an APC report, or Women and Poverty.
>>Every sub-campaign should try and create a newsletter twice a year, even

>>if it is only two pages. The existence of information tends to legitimize
>>campaigns.

>>

>>We can also delegate individuals to try and engage, educate, and organize
>>communities they are familiar with (ie Chinese, African, Youth, Seniors,
>>etc.) Then we would be actively seeking a Chinese/English speaking person
>>with organizing experience to start APC organizing in Chinatown.

>>

>>Try to delegate long term jobs to people. An example of this is how a
>>committee wasn't needed to make a newsletter or do finances, but a few
>>people were given the tasks. Steering Committee members with tasks in the
>>organization, should try to find someone with no tasks to take over, or
>>co-work with them. It may even be useful to develop members to be our
>>specialists in certain fields of APC's work, say on Welfare, Housing,
>>Immigration, etc.

>>

>>Establish APC website, where members can post important information.
>>(Jonathon CAN do this). We should post every casework victory no matter
>>how small it is.

>>

>>

>>It would be the role of the Steering Committee to facilitate the change as
>>the General Membership hammers out the details. I make no finite details
>>for this proposal. The General Membership must decide how it wants to
>>utilize and implement the ideas.

>>

>>This proposal actively seeks to dish out as many organizing tasks to as
>>many people as possible, as part of the organizations structure. Various
>>people would work on tasks such as; housing, engaging ethnic communities,
>>training wage, finances, call arrounds, postereng, immigration, casework,
>>media, newsletters, office maintenance, press release writers, spokes
>>people and specialists on issues, computer maintenance. Etc. The point is
>>to assign tasks to people so that they are active and accountable to the
>>organization, equally as important as the next person, and to not have the
>>bulk of the organizing power in a few peoples hands. Keep on office record
>>who is assigned to what tasks.

>>

>>Cultivate our community, it will grow. If we allow people to find where
>>they fit in, the organization will put their talents to their maximum
>>potential. The time of exhausting meetings, centralization of power,
>>massive committee's and lack of political vision can end now. This
>>proposal is a simple series of steps that we can take to maximize the
>>potential of the APC as it is now, and leave room for it to grow. An open
>>and inclusive APC would attract people to the group.

>>

>>As we make the group more inclusive, we must actively seek out and work in
>>different communities in Vancouver and abroad. By communities I mean both
>>towns, regions, ethnic centres, cultural communities, and subcultural
>>communities. We must also challenge our own oppressive behaviours and be
>>accountable to each other. We have to learn solidarity, we have to watch
>>each others backs in order to stay together. We must be a community, and
>>we must work in the communities around us. When our community is strong
>>enough we can collectively win.

>>

>>

>>By the way, this is about humanity.
>>FIGHT TO WIN FIGHT TO WIN FIGHT TO WIN FIGHT TO WIN...

>>

>>

>>ACTION PROPOSAL

>>The Anti Poverty Committee must respond to it's
>>demoralization/demobilizationg. To weather the storm APC needs quick and
>>tangible plans or goals to get mobilizing. If APC is to pave the way for a
>>means of resistance in this community, now's the time to start rebuilding

>>with passion.

>>

>>Vancouver's poor don't believe a silent vigil will change anything, nor
>>have the time to go to a march 'so they can feel good about holding a
>>sign.' If we are doing anti-poverty work, we need commitment and short
>>term strategy. What is the way to counter demoralization in the APC, the
>>leaving of persons, conflict, and the stalling of movement building? APC
>>is losing membership fast. How can we pick the momentum up, escalate the
>>situation, and show this province that despite our divisions; WE MEAN
>>BUSINESS? And what we mean is that we intent to disrupt business as usual.

>>

>>I propose we try some of the following short term goals. Then we must
>>begin to organize.

>>

>>

>>SIX BUCKS SUCKS

>>If we are to convince people that we despise the hated training wage, the
>>action must reflect that. The action doesn't have to be short sighted,
>>ill prepared, or reckless; quite the opposite. We know that distributing
>>pamphlets in front of McDonalds is not going to be enough to make them
>>back down from their \$6.50 wage.

>>

>>First we issue a set of demands and lay out some consequences:

>>-All McDonalds in Vancouver pay their workers \$8 an hour min.

>>- If a worker comes to us whose 500 hours are up, we will see to it that
>>there are consequences by means of action if they are fired.

>>

>>To show McDonalds we are serious, we start to do some organizing. We can
>>randomly target McDonalds locations and shut them down. Most McDonalds
>>have two customer entrances. Ten people at each entrance will disrupt the
>>business of McDonalds and set a precedental tone.

>>

>>We don't need to get arrested. It will take at least 10 to 15 mins. for
>>a big enough police force to arrive and co-ordinate themselves. We can
>>link arms and block the doors until they give us the ultimatum. Once the
>>ultimatum comes from the police we slyly appologize and leave. A week or
>>two later we hit another McDonalds. We issue them the demands, and then
>>we SHUT THEM DOWN. Ghandi calls it civil disobedience and it builds
>>momentum.

>>

>>

>>IOC=INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC CAMPBELL

>>The International Olympic Committee is coming for an inspection March
>>3-5th. Golden opportunity! We must work to create a climate that is so
>>hostile to the IOC, they would dread putting an event of the Olympic
>>magnitude here. We can prioritize this as an organization while we work
>>out our internal difficulties. We contact the NO GAMES 2010 COALITION,
>>and get up to speed with their action agendas, we talk to the unions, we
>>talk to the activists, and we fight Gordon Campbell. We push the issue to
>>build momentum.

>>

>>The Olympics will mean a steady process of gentrifying and yuppifying the
>>Downtown Eastside into homes for jocks. An appropriate action to take at
>>this time would be another squat. Woodwards will have been history, and
>>we could use the media savvy of the IOC to force the issue back up to the
>>surface, right when they thought it was over.

>>

>>We can also encourage blockades, and other disruptions. We have the
>>collective power of disruption.

>>

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>>DIRECT ACTION CASEWORK

>>We actively seek out people attacked by Immigration Canada, especially
>>those going back to unsafe countries. IC is trying to deport 2,500

>>Iranians. We can find those Iranians, and stop some deportations. The
 >>Convergence Des Luttes Anti-Capitalistes, and the Ontario Coalition
 >>Against Poverty have been able to stop dozens of deportations. They could
 >>co-ordinate against Iranian deportations in the east. OCAP member (Sarah,
 >>who does immigration work) has told me they are interested in pursuing
 >>this campaign.

>>
 >>We must be willing to turn down some cases if they are ones that aren't
 >>strategic. We must build contact lists to other organizations; so that we
 >>can pass some work on. Using the TACTICS of occupation, and delegations
 >>such as the emergency BC Hydro/Elda action of November 15th, must be
 >>prioritized.

>>
 >>Casework can create a culture of resistance in the impoverished
 >>populations of Greater Vancouver. Casework is a means to win with
 >>uncompromising tactics and a will to instill dignity. A lot of the APC
 >>Casework to date has been bordering on social work. I don't say that in
 >>the spirit of being malicious, but critically. We need to be more
 >>creative/inspirational with our actions. We must not reward Campbell for
 >>closing Social Programs by doing the work they once did, it proves
 >>neo-liberalism to be a successful model. The basis of casework must be
 >>resistance to those cuts.

>>
 >>If we build casework that inspires people, we will win, grow, and develop
 >>a reputation. Often OCAP, CLAC, and the Tenant Action Group (my hometown
 >>group), won cases because we dealt with an agency before. They wouldn't
 >>be bothered to let us disrupt them again. Following through with
 >>draconian practices wasn't worth the penalty we would make them pay.

>>
 >>These tactics work. OCAP wins 95% of their casework. OCAP took 1000 Safe
 >>Streets Act (arresting homeless and panhandlers since 1999) to court. The
 >>province opened three court rooms to deal with all the cases they brought
 >>forward.

>>
 >>Doing casework for the sake of work's a good start. Now we have the know
 >>how to take it to another level.

>>
 >>
 >>OTHER IDEAS

>>Actions around housing could be planned into the International Olympic
 >>Campbell action.

>>
 >>I won't speak for the Womyn's Campaign as to what actions and agendas they
 >>>want to pursue. But I would urge this committee to arrange an action in
 >>the next few months. Try to co-ordinate the effort with Moms on the
 >>Drive, and the Vancouver Status of Women.

>>
 >>There is direct actions happening in Victoria December 21st. Justin,
 >>Shane and Joey are planning to be in Victoria at that time. APC could do
 >>one of two things.

>>-send some people.
 >>-delegate someone to plan an emergency direct action to stand in
 >>solidarity with those actions.

>>
 >>Can we issue an appology to APOV for the rift between us? It isn't a
 >>matter of who is right and who is wrong. We reconnect the alliances, and
 >>we build a coalition because we believe that we can have victory only
 >>through alliances and mass mobilization.

>>
 >>
 >>It is our Basis of Unity, to fight poverty and network with other groups.
 >>Let's discuss an action that we would like to take and schedule it for
 >>late summer/fall. We convince groups across the province to sign on to the
 >>campaign. We try to send speakers to groups that want to co-ordinate.

>>
>>We don't ask them to endorse the campaign. Signing on means to create an
>>active and equal partnership. When the time for action comes, we have
>>groups across the province committed to acting at that same time. We can
>>talk to activist groups across the country that we are connected with.
>>
>>We can reach out to native, student, anti-capitalist, and activist groups
>>and make it clear that signing on to this campaign will be to establish a
>>loose alliance for future actions. We agree upon the action at a General
>>Membership meeting, and we host a big FORUM in the spring and invite as
>>many groups as we can to participate and sign on.
>>
>>
>>This proposal puts direct action back on the agenda. It was direct action
>>(to my understanding) that put APC in the limelight. At the same time
>>that we organize actions, we can deal with our internal
>>breakdown/exclusivism and re-establish a more participatory structure.

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