

HOUSING ACTION COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

Upcoming Meetings and Events

For VANDU members

- ★ HAC meets Tuesdays 2pm (tickets start at 11am)
- ★ Hep C Support Group - Mondays 2pm (tickets start 11am)
- ★ Western Aboriginal Representation Society (WARS) - Thursdays 2pm (no tickets)
- ★ BC Association of People on Methadone (BCAPOM) - Wednesdays 2pm
- ★ All of the above meetings are at 4112 E. Cordova

If you are interested in becoming a VANDU member please visit our office at 4112 E. Cordova

**WEDNESDAY,
MARCH 5th, 2003**

**Mobilization Against
the 2010 Olympic Bid**

**Meet at the Robson
Street entrance of the
Art Gallery at 4pm**

DTES Residents Demand An End To Illegal Guest Fees!

The biggest racket in the DTES is between the slumlords and the government. First we are degraded and exploited by welfare who treats us like shit then our slum lords who in some cases charge us 75% of our cheque so that we can have the privilege to live in a shit hole.

Right now in Victoria a bunch of Liberal assholes are deciding the laws around housing. These laws will fall under the Residential Tenancy Act. A couple new laws they're pushing for their property-owning friends are all about furthering the rights for the slumlord and flushing any rights we had down the gutter.

One new proposal is regarding inspections. They want it so that the slumlord or one of his cronies inspect your room with you for damages when you move in and move it. On the surface it seems alright considering usually when we leave they keep our damage deposit on the grounds of a hole in the wall that was there before we moved in. BUT the fine print is that the slumlord makes the time and date for the investigation so if you miss it your screwed out of your deposit that we have to pay back to welfare.

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Our Mission Statement...

The Housing Action Committee (HAC) is an organization of poor people fighting back against poverty. We understand that:

- ★ Our conditions and positions within this system are constructed by people with power. Those who abuse their power to exploit and discriminate against us must have their power removed by us.
- ★ We must empower ourselves as well as our brothers and sisters so that we can struggle against injustices and have real control over our own lives.
- ★ The housing crisis, which marginalizes and dehumanizes us, is only one aspect of the class war. Homelessness is no accident - keeping the poor in destitute and miserable living conditions is key to keeping them oppressed and silent.

We refuse to remain silent. We know that only together can we fight back and win, so we organize in our streets in our shelters and our hotels. We fight against racism, classism, sexism, homophobia and all forms of oppression.

We will pick our fights and win them by every means necessary.

The Canadian Housing Crisis and Vancouver

In 1993 the Federal Government cut funding for social housing, virtually eliminating the construction of decent, affordable housing for poor and working people all across the country. The only provinces to continue building social housing were BC and Quebec, though at a very limited rate. In BC, the Feds had been responsible for 67% of all social housing funding and without their support the construction of housing fell far below what was necessary to maintain even the most basic stock of non-market housing.

In 1998, the City of Vancouver published a report on the Downtown Eastside (DTES) that stated: "Homelessness is related to...the availability of affordable housing. Reducing the low income housing stock would likely lead to less housing choice and increased homelessness." At that point, they were already stating the obvious. In 1996 two homeless shelters catering to "high needs" individuals turned away 1,959 people due to lack of space; two years later that number jumped to 4,075. By 2000, there were 400 shelter beds in the Lower Mainland and an estimated 300 to 600 people sleeping on the streets every night. Then, in 2001, just after they took power, the Liberals froze and then cut social housing completely.

In March of 2002, Rich Coleman (Liberal Minister for Residential Tenancy) closed the Downtown Vancouver Residential Tenancy Office that handled 9,000 walk-in clients and 5,000 arbitrations in 2001. The Liberals are also gutting the Residential Tenancy Act and stripping what little power renters do have to challenge the rule of their landlords.

Housing is an important issue for all poor and working people in Vancouver, in BC and in Canada. Homelessness is only the most blatant violation of the expected and deserved right to housing. Market housing never has and never will meet the needs of poor and working people. The most vulnerable people with the least resources are forced by real estate market conditions into cramped, decrepit, expensive housing and then into homelessness. The fight for social housing is a fight for survival, for dignity and for the basic rights of people...against profit, against property.

... 'Illegal Guest Fees' continued...

Another friendly feature for the slumlord is the proposed monthly inspections. This new legislation would allow the slumlord to inspect their tenant for a "reasonable purpose". What exactly is "reasonable" to these unreasonable bastards?!

These proposed changes only legitimize the slumlord and welfare workers' constant surveillance and harassment of poor people. But the real scary shit is that they might finally legalize guest fees. That's right, for the time being guest fees are NOT legal. Section 14(3) of the current act states that "a landlord must not impose restrictions respecting access to residential property by (B) a tenant of residential premises located on the residential property or persons INVITED BY A TENANT OF THE RESIDENTIAL PREMISES."

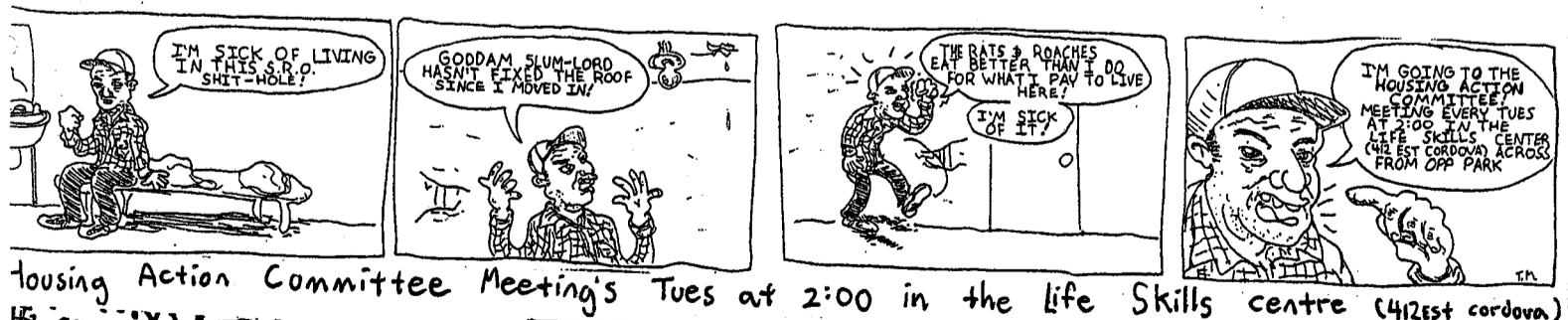
They can charge for overnight guests but "only to the extent that the charges and restrictions are reasonable" so every time we gotta pay to visit a friend in their own home were being-robbed by the man at the desk. HAC calls bullshit on that!!

But what are we gonna do about this syndicated extortion? Fight back, that's what!

WE DEMAND AN IMMEDIATE END TO ILLEGAL GUEST FEES!!!

We'll set up pickets like the one out front of the Regent to inform our brothers and sisters about our rights as well as go to City Hall every second Tuesday to demand city councilors pay guest fees to visit our public institution until they pass a city by-law prohibiting the unreasonable charging of guest fees.

Join the struggle to reclaim what is ours! Only together can we fight back and win!!



Housing Action Committee Meetings Tues at 2:00 in the life Skills centre (412est cordova)

