



Anti-Poverty Committee Newsletter

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Another Four Years? Hell No!



During the first four years of BC Liberal rule, the people of BC mobilized to fight back and defend our communities. We must now challenge their second term head-on, intensify our struggle, and strengthen the collective movement to defeat them. This means working towards real, lasting justice and economic equality that only the people can create!

The Anti-Poverty Committee is preparing a march against the BC Liberals on July 9th. The purpose of the march is to bring together the many grassroots organizations that have been fighting the Liberals over the last four years. Our groups have fought through many struggles and won many important victories. At this time it is important that we celebrate those victories and build on them to continue our collective struggle.

We will meet at Victory Square at 2pm on Saturday July 9, 2005. The march is planned to weave its way through the Downtown Eastside. Throughout the march we will stop at different locations that are significant to our movements. We will end the march with a picnic in a park in the neighbourhood. Join this march of various grassroots organizations that have been fighting from the front lines. Join us as we celebrate our victories and continue our fight to win!

Raise the Rates!

David Cunningham
21 Jun 2005

Unemployed persons and their families receiving income assistance are forced to live up to 60% below the poverty line. The amount of money given by the Ministry of Human Resources for rent is \$325, while the average bachelor suite in Vancouver is over twice that amount.

Unemployed workers, people with disabilities, and their children are made to live in worsening conditions. For many, earning even an hour's wage would have them thrown off welfare. Under discriminatory restrictions there are thousands of people in need who do not qualify for welfare and even thousands more who are made to wait three weeks

after applying before being able to speak to a worker.

The BC Liberals have ensured that those facing hunger and homelessness through welfare cuts have few places to turn to for help, by cutting back or destroying women's centres, community advocacy, and poverty law services. The only way to defend ourselves is with one another. By organizing support through differ-

ent communities and engaging in mass direct action casework, we have been able to force concessions from government. The most significant was their frantic retreat from the infamous two year time limit in 2004.

The intention of the Raise the Rates campaign is to force the government to raise the amount of

day-to-day survival of families without enough to eat.

Mass applications and multiple appeals will strain government resources, while at the same time will realize an increase in the amount of money welfare recipients will get. The Anti-Poverty Committee has shown that we are able to mobilize hundreds of people

into their welfare offices at a time. The Ministry has responded by closing all offices across Vancouver on the days they found out we were showing up. Fighting back by any means includes forcing concessions from the government. When we fight for food we are struggling to



income assistance by no less than 40%. We understand that they will not feel morally obliged to do so and that only through direct action will they begin to budge. Our first campaign will be to set up welfare clinics and make mass applications for supplementary benefits.

Many recipients are never told that they are entitled to extra funds. Access to this money makes a drastic difference in the

provide the strength, justice and dignity needed to continue the struggle for a system of economic equality.

Without an immediate raising of the rates families will continue to sleep in shelters and people will remain hungry. We understand we only get what we organize to take, and when it comes to a fight we are willing to do what ever it takes to win!

Four Arrested at Class War Demo

Jill Malliga Chettiar
April 3, 2005

At about 6 pm on Saturday, April 2nd a small but loud and militant crowd of protesters arrived at the Westin Bayshore to demonstrate at a meeting of the BC School Trustees at which Gordon Campbell was scheduled to speak. Upon arriving, we were greeted by at least 20 VPD officers and hotel management.

We set up our speakers on a walkway adjacent to the hotel parking, in clear view of the doors, to make our demands and hear some speakers. No soon had we begun when the VPD began fulfilling its role as the protector of the ruling classes and told protesters to move back to the sidewalk or they would be arrested.

We refused to move - poor people in this province have been making room for the Liberals and their cronies for too long! We are sick and tired of being beaten back from what is rightfully ours and we were prepared to fight!

The first speaker was Claudio Eckdahl, an APC member and a member of BCGEU Local 603. Immediately after our brother had finished speaking, the police grabbed David Cunningham, threw him to the ground and arrested him. We surrounded him, demanding that he be released immediately, but he was picked up and carried into the hotel, out of sight.

Three of our members, Lily Loncar, Kim Kerr and Anton Pilipa, sat down and militantly refused to move until

David was released. The rest of the demonstration created a moving picket around the front of the hotel, screaming our demands that Dave be released. One by one Lily, Kim and Anton were arrested and carried away.



WE REFUSE TO BE SILENCED!

Infuriated protesters remained on the scene, demanding the release of their comrades and calling shame on the BC School Trustees who sat inside. Their complicity and cooperation with this government's drive to harass, criminalize and brutalize the people of BC is disgusting, but not surprising. The people on the front lines of the struggle - poor and working people, women, children, seniors, indigenous people, immigrants, refugees, people of colour, people with disabilities - are all too familiar with the disdain of those who have escaped the brunt of

the Liberal cuts, and especially those who have been instrumental in implementing those cuts.

Our sister and brothers were held overnight, as they refused to sign release papers that contained 'no-contact' orders with one another. No-contact orders are one of a set of tactics the cops and judicial system use to try to intimidate and divide organizers. Another APC organizer, Jagdeep Mangat, was recently picked up by the VPD and is currently facing trumped-up charges that date back to May 2004. His bail conditions include a restriction on participating at public demonstrations.

We will not be intimidated! We will continue to fight back, stronger than ever in our resolve and conviction that united we will win!

SOLIDARITY IS NEEDED NOW!
More than ever, the APC needs your support. To contact us, e-mail apc@resist.ca or call 604-682-2726. If you are able to donate financially to our legal defence fund and on-going campaigns, please send a cheque or money order made out to the Anti-Poverty Committee, P.O. Box 1, 12 East Hastings Street, V6A 1N1

People's Inquiries Into Police Violence

*Jill Malliga Chettiar,
23 Jun 2005*

Time passes, inquiries are ordered and nothing changes. The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) operates with seeming impunity throughout the city and especially in poor communities and communities of colour.

Much of the public debate around police accountability is circular. It often appeals to or results in the investigation of one police force by another or in calls for reforms that do nothing to address what are ultimately systemic problems. We believe that police brutality is a structural phenomenon, not a rash of isolated incidents involving rogue officers. Further, we reject completely the idea that cops investigating cops will result in any real form of justice for individuals or groups targeted by a brutal system. We refuse to have any hope that the same system that creates this violence can someday, somehow serve justice to our brothers and sisters. While the ruling class is still the ruling class, the poor will never see this hope realized. There will never be an independent investigatory body that will be able to undo the 500 years of colonialism; no democratically-elected police board will ever be able to find the 'missing' women of the downtown eastside and there is no sensitivity training that could possibly undo the hate - sheer, unadulterated class hate - that drives the VPD.

With this analysis, the APC recent-



ly organized a series of public forums titled the People's Inquiries into Police Violence. The purpose of these first few forums was to establish a space for communicating about the reality of the many different forms of police brutality and violence in Vancouver. By bringing together representatives of several organizations and/or

communities that are directly targeted by the VPD we hoped to deepen our analysis of police brutality, profiling of people of colour and other specific groups as well as the VPD's participation and complicity in physical and structural violence against women.

Since the announcement of the

2010 Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, poor people in this city have faced a steady increase in the level of police repression they must suffer. All three levels of government are working together to create enforcement conditions in the Lower Mainland that will ensure that by the time the Olympics roll into town, poor and homeless people will have been put into one of three places: a jail, a hospital or a grave.

These attacks on poor people have been fought for long and hard by private interests, led by organizations like the Business Improvement Association and front groups like the Safe Streets Coalition. The lobbying of these groups has resulted in the enact-

ment of the Safe Streets Act in BC, as well as changes to the Trespass Act that serve to further criminalize poor people and give private property owners and their agents (like security guards) unprecedented powers. These legislative changes, together with the building of a virtual army of private security forces and recent increases in the police department's budget spell disaster for street-involved and homeless people. The 2010 Olympics have provided a convenient excuse for the accelerated social cleansing of Vancouver via enforcement and gentrification.

The Anti-Poverty Committee has responded to these attacks by taking our struggle to the streets. At a recent demonstration against the

Safe Streets Act (April 9, 2005), four demonstrators were arrested. The previous week, at another anti-Liberal demonstration, there were four other arrests. With the increase in the brutalization of poor people there has been a proportionate increase in repression of all forms of resistance.

We will continue the fight against police brutality and the targeting of our brothers and sisters. Through legal defence campaigns, further public forums, demonstrations and direct actions we will make it loud and clear to those in government and the private interests that prop them up: we will do whatever it takes to defend each other.

Sun Peaks Arrests

Jill Malliga Chettiar
24 Jun 2005

On June 16, 2005, Justice F. Cole jailed four Secwepemc Nation members Nicole Manuel, Rose Jack, Trevor Dennis, and Mark Sauls, for their participation in a 4-hour roadblock on August 24, 2001 at Skwelkwek'welt (Sun Peaks Ski Resort). Sentences ranged from 45 days for Nicole Manuel, 28-year-old mother of two, to 90 days for the three other Secwepemc Defenders. At the same proceedings, Beverly Manuel and Miranda Dick (also Secwepemc Nationals) were given suspended and conditional sentences.

Justice Cole's decision in this case is yet another example of the continued persecution of indigenous peoples by the colonial government. The battle over Skwelkwek'welt is just one example of the many struggles for self-determination in BC. In many instances, as is the case with Skwelkwek'welt, ski resorts are the commercial vehicle of colonialism, providing a capitalist rationale for land use in areas



that are unceded by indigenous people. The resulting environmental destruction, the settling of the lands by the upper classes and the increased repression of indigenous resistance are not mere by-products of the resort development process. They serve a political purpose dividing communities, destroying and poisoning resources and threatening traditional ways of life.

For updates on the situation in Skwelkwek'welt and how to support the Secwepemc defenders, visit the Anti-Poverty Committee website at <http://apc.resist.ca/home> or the No One Is Illegal website at <http://noii-van.resist.ca/home>.

Seven Questions

Taken from Seven Oaks Magazine. Gina Whitfield interviewed Jill Malliga Chettiar for Seven Oaks Magazine on April 12th 2005. For more on Seven Oaks Magazine, please see <http://sevenoaksmag.com>

1) At your April 2 protest four activists were arrested. What message were you trying to bring to Gordon Campbell and the BC school board trustees?

The message we were bringing to Gordon Campbell and the school board trustees is one that we have dogged the Liberals with throughout their term - the attacks on poor and working people will not go unmet. We wanted to convey to the trustees that meeting with Gordon Campbell is not acceptable - as has been proven over and over again, any notion of working 'with' this government to create positive change is completely ridiculous. The only partnerships that the Liberals are working to foster are within the private sector.

2) How has this government's agenda affected the educational system for students from poor and working class backgrounds?

First of all, there has never been a government in BC with an agenda favourable to poor or working people. The Liberals may be more ruthless and cut-throat about how they implement neo-liberal policies, but we cannot forget the NDP's attacks on poor, working and indigenous people in this province.

Students from poor and working backgrounds have been adversely affected by all of the Liberals' cuts, not just those specific to the education system. No matter if it is kinder-

garten, high school or university, learning is all the more difficult for anyone to do when they are preoccupied with the stress and anxiety of economic insecurity, poor health or substandard housing.

3) The APC has been a target of the police repression in recent years. Was this a motivation for working on the people's police inquiry?

Police brutality and repression against the Anti-Poverty Committee is certainly at an all time high, although this isn't what prompted the People's Inquiries. Our members have witnessed and/or experienced the systemic brutality of the VPD as it affects women, people of colour and poor people on daily basis for too long. We wanted to create a venue to discuss the true systemic nature of police violence.

To this end, we have held four forums so far, three of which were focussed on specific themes - policing poverty, racist police brutality and police violence towards women as well as their complicity in other violence against women. By discussing in-depth the operation of police brutality within the spheres of classism, patriarchy and racism, it helped us deepen our analysis of this issue as we continue to work on this and other campaigns. It also helps maintain and develop the perspective that police violence is not a problem of a few rogue officers or something easily remedied by small reforms to the current system. Rather, we

believe that the entire system and the oppressive mechanisms that uphold it must be overturned for this abuse of authority to stop.

4) In fact, since the end of the Woodwards Squat and the arrest of the Britannia 9, there has been a decline in street protest against Campbell. Has repression worked to quiet dissent?

Brutality, harassment and intimidation have always been effective tools of the state in dividing and marginalizing people. Although the numbers vary, there has continued to be a steady stream of protest against Campbell and the Liberals. Several of these protests have involved arrests, police assaulting protesters and threats.

5) This last weekend there was a demonstration against the so-called Safe Streets Act. What happened there?

This weekend's demo included squeegeeing, panhandling (both of which are now illegal under the Safe Streets Act) as well as posterizing and leafleting. We met at Victory Square park (Cambie and Hastings) and by the time we reached Pender and Homer (two blocks away) there were four people arrested, and several tickets given out for by-law infractions as well as SSA infractions. We will be contesting these and any other tickets people come to us with.

6) MLA Lorne Mayencourt brought

in this legislation, and recently he's been accused of taking his bullying of poor people to the physical level. Did you have any security plans in case he showed up at Saturday's protest?

Lorne didn't show up. I don't know if that's fortunate or unfortunate - I guess we had enough squeegees to defend ourselves with had he shown.

Mayencourt's absolute and unmasked disdain for poor people is a perfect

example of the real face of the Liberals agenda for poor, working and otherwise marginalized people in this province.

7) How can people support the campaigns that the APC is currently working on?

To learn more about our on-going campaigns and how to get involved, the first thing is to get in touch. Visit our website

(<http://apc.resist.ca/home>), e-mail

(apc@resist.ca) or call (604-682-2726).

For anyone who can afford it and is so inclined, financial contributions are always appreciated. Cash can be deposited directly into our account at any branch of VanCity (account is listed under Anti-Poverty Committee), or cheques/money orders made out to the APC can be mailed to us at P.O. Box 1, 12 East Hastings St. Vancouver, BC V6A 1N1.

continued from page 8

from making tenants live in such appalling conditions, to apply for over 1.4 million dollars in funding to fix up the building and hire new city-approved security staff. All the tenants have been evicted. The police went to all the other hotels and told them not to rent to anyone from the New Wings Hotel. The city's Tenants Assistance Program, which has a mandate to house people evicted for city-ordered repairs and demolitions, did nothing to help them. Many ended up sleeping in nearby parks.

This is not the first time this has happened. It happened before this to the neighboring Marr Hotel. It has happened in different ways over the past two years, and the scenarios have varied from building to building, but the underlying theme of a loss of low-income housing is apparent. Several downtown hotels have closed or converted over that same period of time. The Paslin, The Marr, Dunsimuir House, Cordova Rooms, the BC Rooms, the Dominion Hotel, the Granville, the Ivanhoe, the Marble Arch, the Rainer, and the Avalon and Silver Hotels have all been shut down despite a city council promise that there would be no Olympics-related homelessness and despite the fact that this same council passed a by-law to prevent conversion and demolition of these hotels. According to my best and most conservative estimates 832 people were displaced from their homes in the above hotels from the time Mayor Larry Campbell and COPE took city council. Of those, 501 were displaced after this same council passed the the SRA By-law, which council proudly claimed would protect those units and their tenants.

City efforts to relocate people during this crisis have been pathetic. The city insists that they have relocated a small number of people from these hotels, but claims that they have no direct responsibility to relocate most of them because they were evicted by their landlords, not by the city. That all these hotels had tacit support or outright encouragement from the city does not factor into their logic. We cannot decide for ourselves because the person directly responsible for relocating people, Judy Graves, will not release any information about the job she supposedly performs.

In the final instance, all these evictions are Olympics-related, and city efforts are currently directed to ignoring the role of the Olympics in creating homelessness in Vancouver. The effects of the Games will be felt all across the Lower Mainland long before they actually arrive. They will be felt in hotel closures and conversions now, and they will be felt in increasing rents and the conversions of apartments to strata-titled condominiums all across the region.

What we are facing now in the Downtown Eastside will be felt by apartment renters in the West End, Mount Pleasant, Grandview, and Kitsilano. What we need is a coalition of forces willing to stand up to city hall and call these closures what they are - evictions directly tied to the Olympics. When it comes down to it, they control and regulate all real estate in this city. This mess is most certainly at their door.

The City and Homelessness

Anton Pilipa
24 June 2005

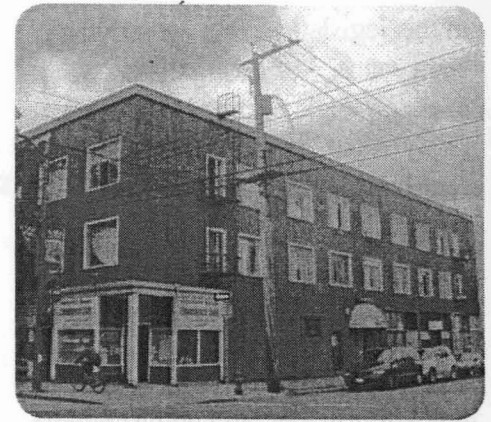
The City of Vancouver, through the Vancouver Agreement, is creating a new housing program for SRO Hotels in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. It purports to take many of these badly-managed and poorly-repaired slum buildings and force their absentee owners to accept city-trained managers and building supervisors. As an enticement they will offer the owners RRAP Loans which are forgivable under certain circumstance, usually on the condition that the owners not raise their rents above a fixed amount for certain number of years. Sounds like a good idea, right?

Wrong. The reality behind this situation is that the city will insist on the necessary repairs and demand that the owner evict everybody in the building. The city offers none of these people assistance with finding new accommodations. Meanwhile, the federal government rewards the owner with a forgivable loan that is measured in

the millions and an increase in rent that will put the price of renting these newly renovated rooms out of the reach of welfare recipients and pensioners. The likely new tenants will be students looking to live close to downtown campuses and building trades workers coming to Vancouver to work in the Olympic-inspired building boom.

Not that former tenants are likely to be let back in after the renovations are done. The new management will be city-trained, and as such will view the former tenants no better than criminals. The existing mentality of City Hall and the police is that these tenants are the scum of the earth and do not deserve even the most basic tenancy rights.

A case in point is the recent city-ordered closure of the New Wings Hotel, at 143 Dunlevy St., right next to Oppenheimer Park. A double homicide in the building prompted the police to evict ever-



Many people are homeless from city-ordered closings of SRO Hotels, like the New Wings above.

body from the building for a week, even though the homicide was confined to a single room. After they were allowed back, city inspectors ordered that tenants were not allowed to have any guests or visitors, contrary to the Residential Tenancy Act. When asked in front of a RTO Arbitrator to justify what authority she had to do this, she said that she was doing it based on her own opinion. The arbitrator concluded that it was violation of the act, but declined to enforce the law.

The city then helped Saewhan Kim, the slumlord who profited

continued on page 7

Who are we? How to get involved?

The Anti-Poverty Committee is an organization of poor and working people, who fight for poor people, their rights, and an end to poverty by any means necessary.

The poor face constant attack under the capitalist system and these attacks have only intensified under the BC Liberal government. APC is committed to fighting the brutal policies of the BC Liberals through direct action,

mass mobilization, and casework.

We oppose racism, sexism, homophobia, and all other forms of oppression. APC is an independent and democratic organization open to anyone who agrees with our basis of unity. We are committed to working in solidarity with the struggles of other progressive movements — locally, nationally, and internationally — to end poverty and injustice.

The Anti-Poverty Committee has twice-monthly general meetings. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month. Meetings start at 6pm in the Common Room of Solheim Place, 251 Union St., Vancouver BC. If you would like to join APC or get to know us better, please call our office at 604-682-2726 or email us at apc@resist.ca.