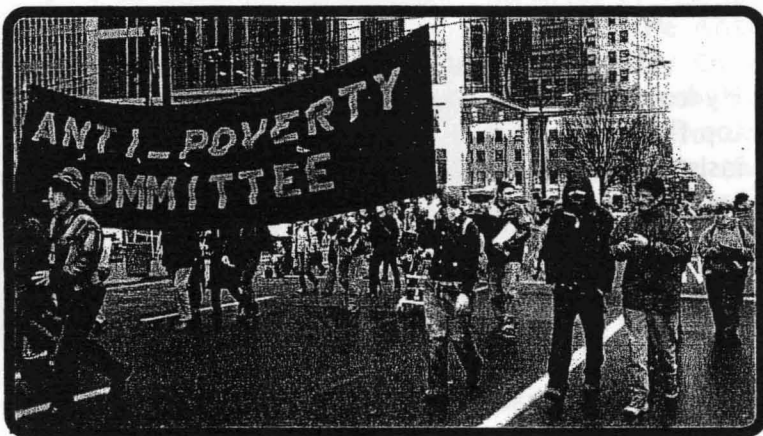


Anti-Poverty Committee News #10

42 Blood Alley Sq. Vancouver, BC V6B 1C7 604-682-2726 apc@resist.ca Jan/Feb 03

Against the War and Deportations! APC One Year Later

While we send troops and weapons of mass destruction around the world, our borders at home in North America have become fortified walls to repel or detain people fleeing



APC at the November 17th, 2002 rally against the War in Iraq

from regimes of terror. America's anti-terror bill and mass detentions, like those in Los Angeles where they held captive some 700 men and boys, are a blueprint for what will be done here. It is because of acts like that, as well as constant harassment and surveillance, that so many have fled America in hopes of sanctuary in Canada. From January to October of this past year, 191 people filled refugee claims citing persecution in the US. The number has risen considerably since, mostly along the BC border.

In Canada, most refugees and immigrants face a two-tier system of victimization. The first act of victimization is exploitation. Since the beginning of the colonization of Canada, the market has relied upon immigrant labour for the construction and maintenance of capitalism. Workers of colour are forced financially to fill the jobs that the predominant white working class will not do. Now, because of mass layoffs in most job sectors, highly skilled immigrants are given the same jobs as white workers with less pay.

The second act of victimization comes from the constant threat of deportation. The status of immigrants and refugees is held in uneven balance by immigration officials who can, under a number of pretexts, have them deported. Right now, in Vancouver and across Canada, 2500 Iranians and many members of other ethnic communities are facing deportation. Canadian immigration laws have always been based on racism but now with the hysteria following September 11th the Immigration Act itself has become a tool of terror.

Those of us who fight against this war of terror and struggle for human rights must stand together against deportation, detentions and the imperialism of the Immigration Act. When communities are under attack by the government we must assist in defending them. APC believes direct action cannot be confined in general themes but in order to be effective must become a weapon of self defence in the day-to-day lives of those organizing to fight back.

- David Cunningham

A year ago, at a public town hall meeting against the BC Liberals, some folks came together to discuss poverty under the current government. The Anti-Poverty Committee was soon formed and immediately began work to organize a demonstration in front of Premier Gordon Campbell's Vancouver home. Over 500 people mobilized to oppose Campbell on his doorstep, signalling a desire to step up the fight against the Liberals and their brutal attacks on the lives of poor and working people in this province.

That demonstration was one of the many successes the APC has had over the past year. Our direct action casework has many times secured people's welfare, fought cruel landlords, and won against corporate attempts to endanger people's lives. On several occasions we have prevented Campbell from making public appearances such as last summer at the Art Gallery and this past fall at Britannia Community Centre.

We played a strong supportive role in the Woodward's Squat and at militant demonstrations and actions called by other unions and organizations. We continue to mobilize through education and action, hosting several forums, most recently around the devastating government attacks on people with disabilities. And with this edition, we celebrate our tenth newsletter.

Trying to build a radical, grassroots, anti-poverty organization in the midst of the Campbell cuts has been a struggle. While there is no shortage of energy to fight, it has

con't inside

end deportation! no forced detention!

APC One Year Later

con't from front page

been a struggle to build a strong organization internally, at the same time as building a strong movement externally. We have faced many attacks by the police, courts, corporate media and even Campbell himself, over the last year. However, the APC remains and the attacks have just forced us to grow stronger in our continued fight.

Recently, there was an internal struggle in the organization that resulted in a small number of members splitting from the group. We want to wish them success in their future organizing. It is an important time to recognize our common struggle and build the unity that is required to defeat Campbell, the BC Liberals and ultimately capitalism, imperialism and war.

While the BC Liberal government has been our main target, it has always been in the context of a broader struggle against poverty and oppression, both locally and internationally. The Anti-Poverty Committee will continue to work towards being an open, democratic, broad-based group of poor and working people. We will continue to build and work in coalition with other progressive movements for education, mobilization, unity and action.

Over the past few months the APC has been engaged in self-critical strategy evaluations. We are looking back on our past and planning for the future. As an organization we've learned a lot in the past year. We don't profess to have all the answers, but remain dedicated to our basis of unity (see the back page) and to building a diverse and participatory movement of poor and working people, women, people of colour, First Nations, queers, immigrants, refugees, disabled, elders, youth, and all struggling for freedom and justice.

Direct Action Casework Victory!

On November 15th, APC came to the aid of a disabled woman, "Eva", whose hydro had been cut off. She had been without power for two days and the cold, damp conditions were making her disabilities worse, putting her in discomfort and pain.

We sent BC Hydro a letter that Friday morning saying we meant business: If they didn't turn her power back on by 2 pm we would deal with them personally.

At 2:30 pm eight APC members, a journalist, and Eva stood in the BC Hydro office refusing to leave. Two APC members took the elevator to the top floor to pay the Junior Vice President a visit. Everyone at BC Hydro insisted that their office was not responsible for bill payments and that we were protesting at the wrong place.

In the end, Junior Vice President Shawn Thomas came down and negotiated a reasonable payment plan with Eva. The two APC members that went into Shawn's office refused to leave until he did so. Eva's hydro was turned back on that same night. She would pay \$20 a month towards the \$1000 debt she had from 1996, as a new payment plan she could afford.

Mobilizing poor people to win back their rights is an important aspect of community activism. Eva alone could not have confronted the Jr. V.P. or negotiated a payment plan. Poor people who have to fight back alone are often left to sit in the dark and cold. A **flying squad*** creates such an atmosphere of disruption that it is not worth it for companies or government officials to stick with their oppressive agendas.

This is an example of the power of making demands. We can demand welfare cheques. We can demand that the Ministry of Children and Families not take a poor person's kid. We can demand that tenants are not evicted. We can demand the things we need with strength & dignity. Direct action casework empower peoples to build a culture of resistance. This culture is a living and vibrant part of the movement that the Anti-Poverty Committee is trying to build

* A **flying squad** is a small group of people who are ready to act quickly in an emergency or as a last resort. For example, a single mom is getting kicked off welfare and APC has exhausted all other avenues, we would call a flying squad to go to the welfare office and demand that she get her welfare cheque. This has proven to be very effective. If you would like to be part of a flying squad call the APC office at 604-682-2726.

- Joey Only



unity is strength!

Disability Forum: Survive and Resist the Cuts



The overcrowded disability forum on November 20th, 2002 at the Roundhouse Community Centre, organized by APC and the Vancouver Status of Women (VSW).

ple gathered to hear a panel formed of a doctor, advocates and lawyers dealing with poverty issues, giving their take on how the cuts are affecting the disabled community and their peers. Robin Loxton, an advocate of the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, was also there to advise people on the confusing reassessment process. At that time, the deadline for handing in the 23 pages long reapplication forms was Jan15/03 and people were in panic.

On Saturday January 11th, a strategy meeting was organized as a follow up to the forum. The meeting took place at the Ravensong Community Health Center and was attended by 30 members of the disabled community and their allies. We strategized around what tactics we would use in our fight back against the cuts and the Liberal government. Two working committees were formed. One to plan actions and mobilizations and another to do outreach/media work and build coalitions. One of the strategies discussed was to co-ordinate actions between Vancouver and Victoria beginning with weekly leafleting/panhandling at rotating locations to inform and educate the general public. Another one was, because there is no rational justifications for COPE and the Liberals to spend six billion dollars celebrating athletic mediocrity, to link our issue with resisting the Olympic bid by networking with other groups that are opposing the Olympics.

The government has backed down slightly, for now, by extending the deadline to March 15th and exempting 5,000 people dealing with mental health issues from being reassessed. The rules have also changed slightly for People with Persistent Multiple Barriers, but this is not yet enough. People are literally dying over the cuts to disability and regular welfare benefits. As many as thirty people have already committed suicide over the indignity and uncertainty of this reassessment process.

The reassessment process must end!! We do not have to prove that we are unable to work due to health issues! We have to make our voices heard and we demand to be treated with respect and dignity.

- PPBM

Woodward's Update

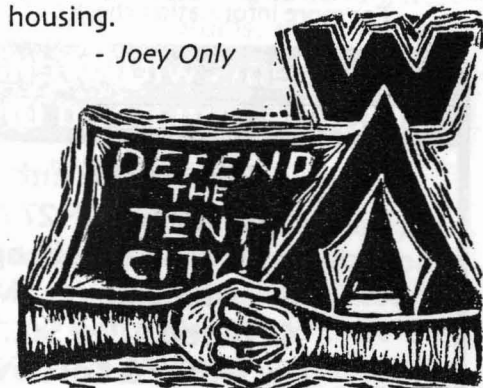
HISTORIC WOODWARD'S STRUGGLE CONTINUES...

It was a painful scene, turning around the corner to see an empty sidewalk. It was impossible not to cry. The vibrant and safe community we once had, was mopped up and moved into temporary housing. Woodward's had been a home for three months and was the first place I ever stayed in Vancouver.

Most squatters were put in two hotels for the winter - the Portland and the Dominion. The struggle for social housing at Woodward's proved that fighting for your rights brings results. Three months of protesting, legal battles and camping put about 130 people off the street for the rainy season. It did accomplish something valuable yet, we all know that the real fight has just begun.

There is a lot to be done. The seeds of resistance are growing in the Eastside and there will be more struggle to come. Now squatters are struggling to maintain a residents council (tenants union) and wish to expand that concept into more hotels in the DTES. The residents council needs support from the community. They meet every Tuesday 6pm at the Dominion Hotel (210 Abbott, near Blood Alley). For many of the squatters, some addicts, some disabled, some unable to work, all of them poor, daily life is a struggle. A political struggle, that must be continually engaged by everyone fighting poverty and demanding housing.

- Joey Only



stop the cuts to disability! stop the reassessment!

What is APC?

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 attacks under the capitalist system and these attacks have only intensified under the BC Liberal government.

The BC Liberal's brutal policies — the cuts to welfare, the six dollar training wage, the privatization of public services, the cuts to social programs, the restriction of democratic and human rights — all are designed to transfer wealth from poor and working people to the rich and powerful.

APC is committed to fighting these brutal policies through direct action, mass mobilization, and casework. The APC opposes racism, sexism, homophobia and all other forms of oppression. We are an independent organization that is 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.

Assembly to End Poverty Victoria, BC Jan 31 – Feb 2, 2003



Location: Downtown Activity Centre, 755 Pandora

Organized by: VIPRG, SWAG, Capital Region Race Relations, APOV, TAPS

Low income people, activists, advocates, allies, potential allies...

Join us to create a committed end-to-poverty, pro-social justice movement.

To register call: 250-721-8629 or email: endpoverty@vipirg.ca

For more information check out the website: www.vipirg.ca/endpoverty

Problems with welfare, landlord or boss? Maybe you need Direct Action Casework

Contact the Anti-Poverty Committee

tel: 604-682-2726, fax: 604-687-4347

email: apc@resist.ca

Office Hours: Mon-Fri 10am-6pm

42 Blood Alley Sq., Vancouver, BC V6B 1C7
b/w Water & Cordova, off Carrall in the DTES

APC Events

APC Strategy Meeting

Sunday, January 19, 10:30 AM
Kalayaan Centre
451 Powell Street, Vancouver
(near Oppenheimer Park)

All APC members are invited to discuss APC strategy and tactics for the coming year. Currently a member is someone who has been to one APC meeting and done an APC related task in the last three months.

APC Structure Meeting

Sunday, February 9
Time and location to be announced

This meeting will discuss proposals on how to re-structure the APC to make it more democratic and accountable to its members.

Get Involved...

General Meetings

every other Tuesday, 6pm
January 21st, February 4th & 18th
Childcare and coffee provided
usually at 327 Carrall Street (please call to confirm)

Welfare Campaign Meetings

Every Monday, 5:00 PM
APC Office, 42 Blood Alley Square

Women's Campaign Meetings

Every Saturday, 2:00 PM at the
APC Office

SOMETIMES IT IS NECESSARY TO
CHANGE CAMPAIGN MEETING
TIMES SO PLEASE PHONE THE
APC OFFICE TO CONFIRM!

Financial Support Needed!!

Can you help financially support the work of the Anti-Poverty Committee? We can accept cheques made out to "Anti-Poverty Committee" or direct deposit through any VanCity Credit Union.

house the homeless! feed the hungry! care for the sick!