

# Anti-Poverty Committee News

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## FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! WELFARE IS A RIGHT!

### APC Welfare Demo A Success

The Anti-Poverty Committee demonstration on August 7th to end the three-week wait was a success even before it began because of the fantastic wealth of anti-poverty organizations, labour unions, women's centres, community groups and other organizations representing tens of thousands of people who endorsed the following demands:

1. End the three-week wait.
2. End the forced family maintenance program.
3. Provide adequate childcare for single parents receiving and applying for welfare.



The march to the Regional Executive Welfare Office

The demonstration was confident and militant far beyond its numbers. We took the street without pause and did not hesitate at the police blocking the doors. As we beat the doors behind them and stickered the windows with our demands, two women dropped a banner reading "DEFEAT THIS GOVERNMENT!" from the balcony above the crowd. When a security guard tried to pull the banner up, a group of people on the ground rushed forward and held the banner. Eight people broke into the building through a back door and stormed into the lobby behind the line of shaken cops, waving banners and chanting, "FIGHT FIGHT FIGHT, WELFARE IS A RIGHT!" They pushed the front door open against the police and two were dragged out in chokeholds and arm locks. The others stayed inside and the glass barriers were pounded on from both sides.

The police and the bureaucrats in the office nestled up on the sixth floor conceded to a meeting and a delegation of two APC members, Dave and Debbie were admitted to deliver the demands to the executive welfare officers. While they argued with the

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## Fight Gordon Campbell's Training Wage!

When the training wage was first introduced in November, we knew that this was not really a 'training wage' at all, but simply a new \$6 minimum wage. Now, less than a year since it first came into effect, the obvious has been proven. Aside from its legal use, which is itself an unacceptable attack on young workers, we have seen numerous cases of people who should be 'exempt' from the legislation that are being hurt by the training wage. Some examples are:

1. Some workers are told that because they don't have experience in a particular industry, they have to work for \$6/h (in one case, the employer said that the worker didn't have experience in a pizza restaurant despite having worked at many other restaurants).
2. Workers already employed at \$8 and hour or higher are fired without cause and then replaced by new workers at \$6/h.
3. In one situation, a worker who recently immigrated to Canada was told by their new boss that they wouldn't be paid \$6 if they agreed to work one week for free.

All of these situations are illegal. They are also proof that the training wage was designed as an attack on all workers, despite claims that only people without previous experience would be effected. The training wage was designed to be abused. Very little information is available about when an employer can and can't use the training wage, so in many cases people don't even know that they are being illegally paid less money. This attack was made even worse by changes to the Employment Standards Act. Workers now have to fill out a 'Self-Help Kit' and try to resolve the issue they have with their boss before Employment Standards will even consider their claim. This is like giving a letter asking for your things back to somebody who robs you. Even when people know for sure that they are being paid the training wage illegally, there is little they can do about it on their own. The 'proper channels' provide next to nothing for exploited workers, and they don't really expect us to use them in the first place.

con't on back page

**welfare on demand! fight the training wage! defeat this gov't!**

## Fighting back!

### Queers Shame The Liberals

It was clear at this year's Pride Parade that the BC Liberals were not welcome participants. Lorne Mayencourt, Liberal MLA for Vancouver's West End, marched with a depressingly small contingent, while two to three times as many joined the parade to oppose him and his gov't. A quarter of the way into the parade, **Queers United Against Kapitalism** joined the entourage, taking place front and center in front of Mayencourt. Carrying banners reading, "Rainbow Flags Not Liberal Fags" and "Queer Bashing Liberals", QUAK delighted and engaged on-lookers, celebrating Pride, but clearly shaming the Liberals. This opposition resonated with the majority of the parade watchers, clearly signalling Mayencourt's dwindling support. This action was an overwhelming success, and an important note in the fight-back against the BC Liberals.

-Blain quak@tao.ca



APC and QUAK at PRIDE, August 4/02

### Direct Action on the Coquihalla

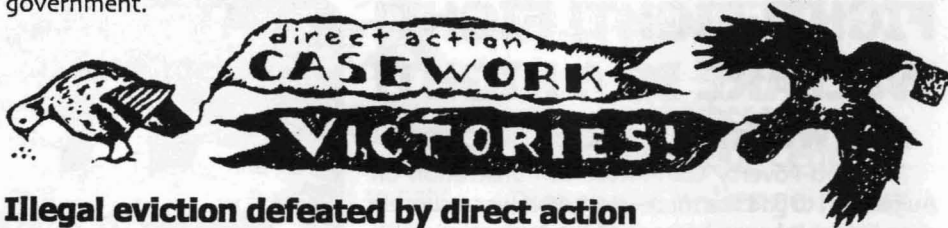
On August 7th, a group of community members opposed to the privatization of the Coquihalla highway, marched towards the tollbooth and convinced the unionized workers to join them in a demonstration. For a couple of hours, they handed out pamphlets to the many supportive travellers and let hundreds of vehicles pass through the tollbooth for free. This was a very successful example of direct action which generated community and union support, and resulted in thousands of dollars of lost revenue for the Liberal government.

### Women walkout on Stephens

On the morning of July 27th APC joined with the BC Coalition of Women's Centres to demonstrate against Lynn Stephens, the BC Liberal's Minister of Women's Equality. At a bogus consultation on her *Safer Communities Strategy*, women walked-out in protest and joined 50 protesters outside, to speak about how the Liberal cuts are going to effect women in this province. Her gov't is slashing funding to sexual assault centres and all funding for women's centres.

## What is Direct Action Casework?

Amongst other things, APC provides direct action advocacy for people being exploited and oppressed. We carry out this casework to win social assistance benefits, prevent evictions, and defend poor people who are under attack. We can make a difference by mobilizing to defend hundreds of individuals and families under attack by this government.



### Illegal eviction defeated by direct action

Last month, after our community meeting on Policing Poverty, Marc approached APC with a problem. His landlord evicted him without notice and put locks on his door. We contacted the landlord, explained the law to him, and told him that we would take action unless he immediately. We then dispatched a flying squad of 8 APC members with Marc to his room to remove the locks. When we arrived the lock had already been removed. The landlord had already reconsidered after realizing that we were serious. We left after informing the manager that his actions were illegal and if he did it again we would be back unannounced.

A week later Marc and his partner Jen came to our office with two identical eviction notices, even though they lived in separate rooms. We took Jen's eviction notice all the way to the Residential Tenancy Office in Burnaby. **Since the Liberals closed the Vancouver office, it is virtually impossible for poor and working people to fight the illegal evictions of their slumlords.**

After APC issued the notice of arbitration to the landlord, he was forced again to withdraw his attack upon a tenant in his building. He now knows that this organization is willing to go all the way to fight injustice. Throughout this ordeal Marc had dealt with a lot of emotional stress, so an APC caseworker visited his welfare worker and demanded a temporary excusal from work or job-search, which Marc got as well. Direct action casework proves that struggling in an organized way will achieve victory by victory.

- David Cunningham

### Benefits partially restored for homeless women

Linda is a disabled person who was thrown off welfare and made homeless by the Ministry of Human Resources.

Linda was cut off because she missed a *Family Maintenance Enforcement Program (FMEP)* appointment. The FMEP is a program created to collect payments from dead beat spouses - unless the applicant can prove they are fleeing violent or abusive relationships. The Ministry has a theory that *violent situations* magically turn into a *no risk of violence situation* with the mere passage of time. According to veteran advocates, the **Ministry is currently reviewing all exempted FMEP files** and testing this life threatening theory. Linda's file was reviewed after 7 years of collecting benefits.



Her file became an automatic denial because investigators alleged Linda was receiving money from her ex and was gambling it away at the casino. If these accusations had any form of hard evidence then Linda would have been cut off for fraud, not for a missed FMEP appointment.

Already amazed by the laziness and arrogance of the Ministry investigators, we were shocked when Linda revealed her situation. Her ex had been convicted for physical violence and one of her sons chose foster care rather than stay with him. The Ministry didn't know of any of these facts (including that she had sons) despite their "investigation."

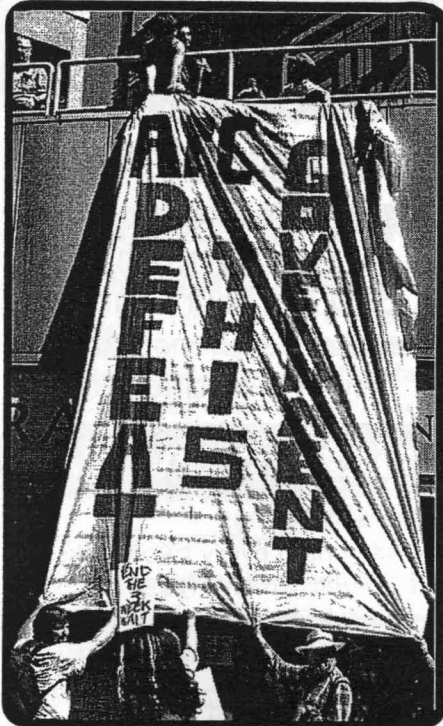
Outraged, we included this case as part of our WELFARE ON DEMAND Action. Thanks to the solidarity on August 7th, Linda will be getting another 3 months of benefits. In that time Linda again is requested to seek assets from her assaulter. The fight continues...

- Debbie Krull

**fight the forced family maintenance program!**

## APC's Welfare Demo a Success...

*con't from front page*



Banner drops from balcony above the crowd

officials, trade unionists spoke to the demonstration about solidarity and the fight to defeat Campbell. The women who dropped the banner escaped from the building into the crowd and the delegation returned outside to cheers of victory. The fight is not over, but with this demo, we have drawn a new line in the sand.

The solidarity at this demonstration and around these demands must grow and continue be used as the basis of our struggle against this government. The Anti-Poverty Committee is building its connection with rank and file union members and a foundation of trust with other groups working against the Liberals. We will use this action and all others underway right now to strengthen and unite ourselves into a movement that refuses to stand down or compromise; a movement of poor and working people to defeat this government and in its place create a just and democratic world.

- Ivan Drury



## Poverty in Palestine An International Analysis



Poverty in Palestine is the result of decades of brutal Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. The US imperialist government, which has fully supported Israel - militarily, economically, and politically since the formation of Israel in 1948, must be held responsible, together with Israel for the misery and poverty of the Palestinian people. Edward Said, one of the leading Palestinian scholars just recently and correctly said, "...the destitution and homelessness of so many ordinary people trying to survive in the ruins created by Israeli bulldozers all over the West Bank, the siege that has now gone on for months and months, the cutting off of electricity and water in all Palestinian towns, the long days of total curfew, the shortage of food and medicine, the wounded who have bled to death, the systematic attacks on ambulances and aid workers that even the mild-mannered Kofi Annan has decried as outrageous..."

Recent assessments by different international agencies are as follows: Chronic and acute malnutrition is widespread among children under five years of age and increasing rapidly. 45% of children under 5 years of age and 48% of women of childbearing age suffer from moderate to mild anaemia. More than 30% of the 3.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are dependant upon food handouts agencies and the number of Palestinians requiring food assistance is increasing daily. Approximately 50% of all Palestinians (refugee and non-refugee) require external food assistance to help meet their minimum daily caloric intake. Of 320 households surveyed, 50% stated their need to borrow money to purchase basic foodstuffs, with 16% selling assets for the same purpose. The March-April 2002 incursions brought at least a 50% increase in the number of Palestinian home demolitions since the beginning of the intifada. According to the World Bank, 70% of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza live on less than \$2 per day. Only 90 days ago, in April 2002, 50% of Palestinians were below the poverty level. The UN defines 62% of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza as "vulnerable," or in need of food, shelter, and/or access to health services.

- Ali

## Other News



On August 14th the Housing Action Committee (HAC) sent out a letter to thirty film companies operating in the Downtown Eastside demanding that they give equal financial compensation and alternative accommodations for all residents of buildings impacted by filming, give work opportunities to residents of the DTES and compensate for disrupted work including sex trade work and panhandling, and make sure all people who are interviewed or documented for newsreels or documentaries are respected and compensated fairly. Over the past week the response of the local and international media to these demands has been ignorant, classist and discriminatory. Really, all HAC is demanding is that poor people who work and live in SRO's or on the street be treated with equality and respect.

### Racist attacks in Vancouver

In mid-June taxi driver, Kulwinder Singh Parhar, picked up four passengers who started to yell racial slurs, knocked off his turban and beat him while he was driving. One of the passengers is a member of the Vancouver Police Department. APC endorses "Justice for Kulwinder Singh's" demand that this officer be immediately discharged from the Police Department and that the VPD issue an apology.

### Needle Exchange Open Again

For all who worked on and supported the APC nightly needle exchange that ran in defiance of the police when the VANDU table at Main and Hastings was shut down... the user run table is back... WE WON!

### THE POPE SQUAT



The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) has fought long and hard to open an abandoned

rooming house in the poor neighbourhood of Parkdale for social housing. OCAP has squatted the building for the past month and will continue to do so until their demands are met. The APC sends support and solidarity to OCAP and the Pope Squat!

**decent and affordable housing for all! end racist police brutality!**

## Fight Campbell's Training Wage

con't from front page

It is important for all working and poor people to oppose the training wage because it being used against us all - to squeeze more money from us and diminish what little job security we have. It is hitting workers at the bottom the hardest, including youth, women, people of colour, immigrants, and people with disabilities who are being cut off of BC benefits and pushed into the workforce. Wages continue to drop or stay the same despite inflation, and workers at the lower end are already starting to feel lucky if they start a new job without being asked to work for \$6. It is an outrage for us to be forced to get by on so little. We don't deserve to be pushed around like this, and it is up to us to defend ourselves against this attack on our rights. We have no choice but to fight back!



As part of our Campaign Against the Training Wage, the Anti-Poverty Committee is holding an open campaign meeting on September 16th at 6 pm at SFU Harbour Centre in downtown Vancouver. Anyone who is interested in fighting the \$6 training wage is welcome to attend. If we are to be successful, we need as many people as possible working together to put pressure on this government, working together to disrupt the businesses who are benefiting from it, and working together to make sure that the \$6 minimum wage is abolished.

- Mike Krebs

## 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.

The Anti-Poverty Committee 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.

## Logo Contest Extended!

We are looking for a logo that represents our work fighting for the rights of poor and working people, to end poverty and defeat this government. The prize for the winning logo is two hand-printed silkscreen t-shirts. Deadline is September 19th, 2002. Send submissions to our office at 42 Blood Alley, Vancouver BC, V6B 1C7 or email [apc@resist.ca](mailto:apc@resist.ca)



## APC Events

### FIGHT CAMPBELL'S TRAINING WAGE! PUBLIC MEETING

6pm Monday

September 16th

SFU Harbour Centre  
Fletcher Challenge Room  
515 W. Hastings St.

## Get Involved...

### General Meetings

Tuesday 6pm every two weeks  
September 3rd and 17th  
327 Carrall Street next to Pigeon Park  
Childcare and coffee provided

### Leafletting Against \$6

Every Saturday at Noon  
Call for locations

### Office Help

We always need help staffing the office. Sign up for a regular shift, be on call or just drop by.

### Direct Action Casework Meetings

September 9th and 23rd, 6pm  
At the APC office  
Call if you are interested in doing an  
advocacy workshop

### Financial Donation

We need money for our phone bill, childcare, demo expenses ect. We are also looking for a decent computer, paper, food and coffee... You can make a cheque out to APC.

## APC Office Hours

Mon-Fri 10am-6pm

Sat 12pm-5pm

42 Blood Alley Sq.

604-682-2726

Between Water & Cordova  
off of Carrall

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