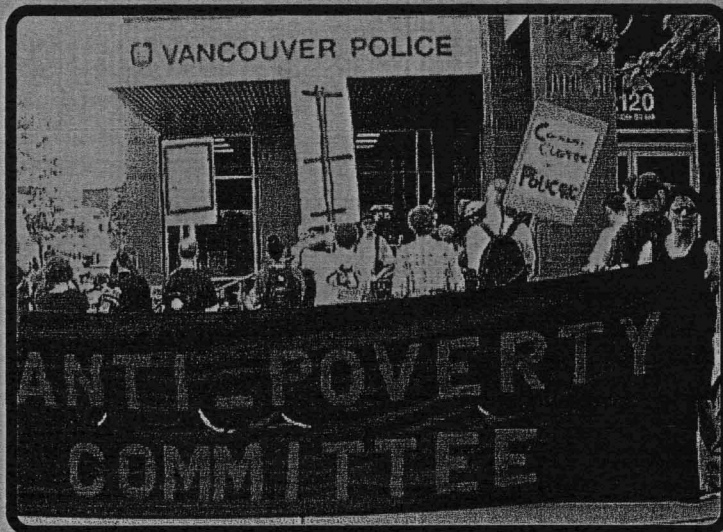


APC News #6

The Anti-Poverty Committee Aug 2002

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APC outside the Police Board, July 16th
photo provided courtesy of Brian Seidman

Police board refuses to hear community demands

On Wednesday, July 17th, about fifty people were locked out of the Vancouver Police Headquarters when they tried to make the Vancouver Police Board listen to the demands of a community meeting held earlier in the week. The Anti-Poverty Committee and members of the community wanted to show the Police Board that there are real alternatives to police harassment and brutality. Outside, various speakers said that police violence has increased under the Liberal cuts, and that the Police Board will have to seriously address the issues.

Anton Pilipa spoke of the need to view police violence in the context of the increasing poverty and frustration of people under the new Liberal regime. "You can't take money and real services away from people, and not expect them to act against it. People resist in the ways they can, and when they do, the police are there to keep them down. This isn't a justice system, it's a "just us" system."

Thomas Kerr spoke on what real harm-reduction means and how it saves lives and money. "Anywhere you look, where harm-reduction was implemented, the effects were positive - overdoses went down, violence went down, infection rates went down."

Debbie Krull spoke on the need for the police board to speak out against the cuts to women's crisis lines and women's sexual assault centres, "I started organizing when I was in a transition house, so I know how important this is to women. Only one in ten women who suffer a sexual assault, go to the police. Why then is the police board silent on this. They know how important it is to women lives. The reason is that they want the prov-

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Welfare on Demand: The Battle against the Three Week Wait

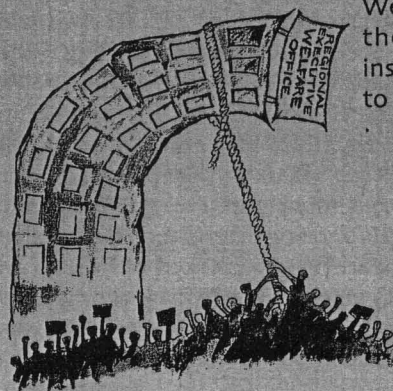
Since the first of the Liberal Government's welfare legislative changes came into effect on April 1st, the amount of people seeking social assistance has sharply declined. "I have never seen so few people applying for welfare, and I've been down here for six years," said one grizzled worker at one of the many offices in the Downtown Eastside. To achieve this decline in spending on the lives of poor people, the Liberals have perfected the same methods experimented with by the NDP government in the 90's: a bureaucratic and complicated process and the intimidation of vulnerable applicants. But perhaps their most effective means of keeping people off welfare has been the barrier that greets you when you first walk in the door: the three-week wait.

While being subjected to a mandatory three-week "job and alternative resource" search might not seem as negligent as the changes to the disability legislation (Bill 27) or as sadistic as the maximum two-year eligibility limit on regular assistance (Bill 26), but while the latter two are bound to have serious consequences in the future, we have felt the effects of the three week wait immediately.

Stripping potential "clients" of even the right to apply without qualification, the ministry has reduced people seeking assistance to the status of "enquirer." Enquirers sleep on the streets because they are told to go to overstuffed emergency shelters. They stand all day in food lines and sit before sermons just to eat. They file clinics and hospital emergency wards because they are sick. Enquirers are tenants watching their eviction notice run out; they are refugees who are not allowed to work. Enquirers are single mothers and children afraid to apply for welfare because the Ministry threatens to contact and seek "maintenance" from their abusive partner they fled. Enquirers are dope sick and desperate. Enquirers have no money and need assistance from the system that has created their poverty.

In June, twelve Anti-Poverty Committee members delivered a list of demands to the Regional Executive Welfare Office in Vancouver. The Ministry held an internal meeting and said that they would no longer send enquirers to hostels for 21 days instead of giving them a rent cheque. We must increase the pressure on the Welfare administrators to change internal policies to suit our demands. If the Welfare bureaucrats have the power to limit the percentage of enquirers allowed to by-pass the 3-week wait with a "15-18% quota", then they can increase that quota to 100%.

We will increase the pressure on the government and all its institutions. We demand an end to the three-week wait.



Welfare on Demand: no questions asked, no exceptions made.

-Ivan Dru

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

The Liberal's Attack on Sexual Assault Centres

This women-hating government has once again launched a vicious attack on women and girls in this province: they are threatening to cut between half a million to one million dollars of funding from sexual assault centres and community-based victim assistance programs. This, in a province which has a higher rate of sexual assault than anywhere else in Canada and where one out of two women will be assaulted at some point in their lives. With this new announcement, thirty-one out of sixty nine programs will have their funding decreased so they will no longer be able to run counselling services, crisis lines, hospital and police accompaniment programs and help women and children get set-up in transition houses. At least four communities will have their programs eliminated altogether: Castlegar, Kaslo, Grand Forks and Golden. In twelve communities, sexual and women's assault programs will be consolidated with community-based victim assistance programs which essentially means that all twelve of these sexual assault centres will be closed. This is unacceptable!

This announcement comes on the heels of cuts to childcare subsidies, legal aid, welfare and the proposed elimination of the zero tolerance policy in the courts towards domestic violence. All of these cuts will force women to stay in abusive relationships and push them

further into isolation. The government is proposing that they set up a 24-hour provincial crisis line but this cannot replace the value of local sexual assault lines, community counselling and police and hospital accompaniment. Furthermore, they are only designating \$400,000 for this line which is not nearly enough to respond to all the victims of family and sexual violence across this province. The purpose of this line is to refer women to places to go for help but after these cuts, where will all these women be referred?

The government also stated that they would be funding twenty-four new victim assistance programs. However, many of these will be police-based programs. This is not an option for women who cannot turn to the police because of social stigma, criminalization of their lives because of poverty, age and racism. According to the police only 1 out of 10 women report sexual assaults so without community-based programs, 90% of women will be left isolated with nowhere to turn. For many women and girls, sexual assault centres have been a large source of their strength and survival. There are many women and girls who credit their life today to the help that they received at these places. It is for certain that without these centres and crisis lines numerous women and girls will not survive. This is an attack on some of the most vulnerable in our province!

The APC is fighting back alongside of our sisters. Women have fought long and hard for these centres to exist and we will not be complacent as the government attempts to crush what we have gained for the rights and lives of women and girls. -Lisa

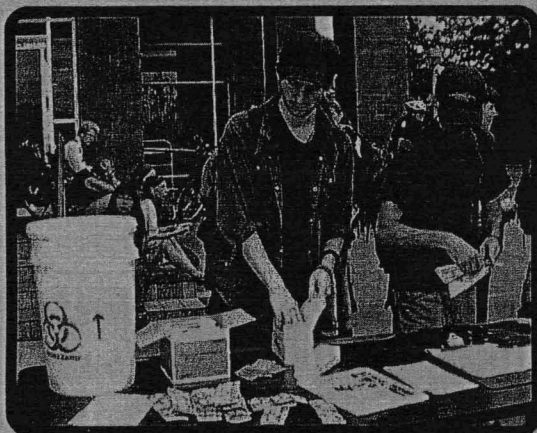
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ince to give them the funding for running sexual assault lines. Nobody is going to call a crisis line staffed by the cops."

Inside, on the 7th floor, the Vancouver Police Board, the bosses of the cops in this town, dithered about the issues. We then tried to peacefully enter the building, but were denied entry. Only those on the speakers list are given admission to the cops private clubhouse.

The reason? Not enough space. You see, while police board meetings are ostensibly open to the public, they are invariably held in a way that prevents poor people from attending. They are held upstairs in police headquarters. You have to show ID to enter the building and must be escorted up in small groups and the police keep a watchful eye over you the entire time. Priority seating is given to media and cop brass. In the end, you are not treated as someone attending a public meeting, you are treated as an interloper and a criminal for being interested in the police's business. We would have peacefully presented our list of the demands from the community meeting we held the previous Saturday. Instead we are going to have to find more creative ways of responding to police violence and racism in the future. Stay tuned for more updates.

- Anton Pilipa



*Needle Exchange outside the copshop, July 16th
photo provided courtesy of Brian Seidman*

Community Meeting on Policing Poverty

On Saturday, July 13th, over 100 residents of the DTES and representatives from concerned organizations, gathered at the Carnegie Community Centre. They came to tell their stories about violence at the hands of the police and their concerns about what is happening in the city around the police and policing issues. The Anti-Poverty Committee called this meeting because of increasing concerns about police violence and unlawful police activity. At the end of the meeting, we came together to endorse these following demands:

1. Community control of policing for an end to racist police brutality.
2. Community control of comprehensive harm-reduction and its facilities.
4. Full funding and community control of women's sexual assault lines and centres.
5. An end to discriminatory child apprehension.
5. End homelessness: build and fill social housing.
6. Community consultation on all decisions that affect the community.



end racist police brutality! restore womens' crisis lines!

General Strike for the Rights of All Poor and Working People

Since March, activists from the trade unions and the community have been meeting regularly to build grassroots support for a General Strike as the only way to stop the Liberal's attacks on working people and the poor.

Some in the Anti-Poverty Community have raised the question: Why should the poor fight for the demands of organized labour? While many trade union members are faced with the loss of their incomes, jobs and rights, poor people are faced with the loss of any meaningful existence, even with the loss of their own lives.

The answer is simple: unless a General Strike fights for the demands of the most vulnerable and marginalized in our society as a priority, the poor have nothing to gain by supporting one. Many who are old enough remember the infamous "Solidarity sell-out" in 1982 when the trade unions called off escalating strikes in exchange for a few crumbs from the government of the day.

The stakes are much higher this time around. Organized labour and the poor must support each other if we are to have any hope of success. Workers need strong unions, well-paying jobs and good working conditions and we should support this. But the poor, both the working poor and unemployed, deserve the same protection and rights as unionized workers: a decent minimum wage, affordable housing, quality medical care and, for those unable to find or keep regular employment, a guaranteed annual income covering all necessary expenses.

Solidarity is a two-way street. If organized labour does not forcefully take up the demands of the poorest in our society, they will not get mass support for their demands and we will all lose in the end. - Calvin is a member of APC and the Prepare the General Strike Committee

Prepare the General Strike Committee tel: 604-254-1421
email: prepgenstrike@hotmail.com
www.generalstrikenews.ca

Call from QUAK to bar the Liberal's from Pride

The queer community, like all marginalized communities, has come under massive attack since the BC Liberals were elected just over a year ago. The queer community is often represented as middle to upper class white men, but queers are women, single parents, poor, disabled, indigenous, people of colour, workers, youth, refugees and immigrants. All of these groups have been subjected to massive cuts and attacks by the BC Liberals.

The mainstream queer community has done little to protect the interests of marginalized queers. Lorne Mayencourt, Liberal MLA for the West End, is nothing more than the smiley gay face to cushion the blows of this government. Rather than advocating for and protecting his constituency of seniors, renters and queers, he has been in full agreement with the direction of his government.

And what has his government done? Since being elected they have axed the Human Rights Commissioner (an internationally respected lesbian), then cut the entire commission itself, eliminated funding for queer youth programs and groups, cut benefits for people living with AIDS (PWAs), slashed supports for transgender/ transsexuals, restricted access to justice through massive cuts to the legal system (including legal aid), and in a racist attack on indigenous people, showed that they believe in putting minority rights up for referendum vote by the majority.

Lorne Mayencourt has been behind these attacks on the queer community 100%; therefore, we call on the Vancouver Pride Society to take a stand in support of the community they represent and deny Lorne Mayencourt and the BC Liberals a space in this year's Pride parade. Mayencourt and the Liberals will not use our communities and struggles as public relations events for their hateful policies. These attacks on our lives are no less harsh wrapped in a rainbow flag. Together we can fight and win.

QUAK calls on all progressive groups and individuals marching in Pride to visually convey their opposition to the Liberals and to bar them from Pride. For more information or ideas for Pride and to forward endorsements contact QUAK: **Queers United Against Kapitalism: quak@tao.ca**. PRIDE is Sunday, August 4th @ Noon Denman & Nelson.

-Blain

Training Wage: Breaking the Law

The government in Ontario has also implemented a two-tier wage except in there it is crystal clear that the lower 45-cent wage is for workers under the age of 18. Here in BC the difference is a whopping \$2.00 making it intensely attractive for employers to creatively interpret the training-wage language to their own benefit. Businesses realize that this new government will not discipline them for breaking labour laws. With so many people being illegally paid less than \$8.00 an hour by employers, one can only surmise that the Employment Standards two-tier minimal wage was intentionally designed to be violated. For example:

Shirley Wong is 29 years old with a BA from Southern China. She works at a call centre that pays immigrants like herself less than the Canadian born workers. Shirley supports herself, her child (who is back home in China with her grandmother) and her husband who is going to school, on an \$8.00/hour job. She's signed a union card but she is really dreaming for a job at a place that already pays a starting wage of \$12.00/hour with benefits. To make ends meet she has to work at least 55 hours a week. She works 40 hours at this call centre and she works at another job for \$6.00/hour. Her union-organizing friends have told her that this is illegal but she can't afford to lose her \$6.00/hour job if she complains. She plans to wait until she gets a better job then file a claim at the BC Employment Standards Branch to get her lost entitled pay. This might be wishful thinking though, because Employment Standards Branch has been gutted and it is questionable that in the aftermath of the BC government lay-offs, if there will be anyone left to police and remedy the breaking of labour laws.

- Pendra Wilson

Join APC's Fight Against the Training Wage! Leafletting every Saturday at 12pm call APC 604-682-2627 for locations.

decent and affordable housing for all! fight the training wage!

Logo contest!

We here at the Anti-Poverty Committee have gone six months without a logo or symbol of our work. We are asking all graphically inclined people to design a logo for us. Besides the joy of knowing you are helping a struggling group, you will also be rewarded with a pair of tickets to the screening of *Finally Got the News* and 2 lovely silkscreened APC t-shirts. Deadline is August 14th, 2002. Send submissions to our office at 42 Blood Alley Sq. or email it.

APC Events

WELFARE ON DEMAND!
Wednesday, August 7th 1pm
Burrard Skytrain Station

No questions asked,
no exceptions made.
Demonstration against the Liberal's
Welfare policies

APC FILM NIGHT
Finally Got the News
Thursday, August 15th
doors at 7:30pm, movie at 8 pm
Video In 1965 Main Street
Sliding Scale \$5-10
(no one will be turned away)
Documentary on DRUM, the Dodge
Revolutionary Union Movement and
the League of Revolutionary Black
Workers in Detroit during the 70s.
Open Bar, Music & Kid-friendly

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. The poor face constant attack under the capitalist system and these attacks have only intensified under the BC Liberal government.

The Liberal's brutal policies - the cuts to welfare, the six dollar training wage, the privatization of public services, the cuts to social programs - are all 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 casework and mass mobilization. The APC opposes racism, sexism, and homophobia and all other forms of oppression and is 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.

How to Get Involved...

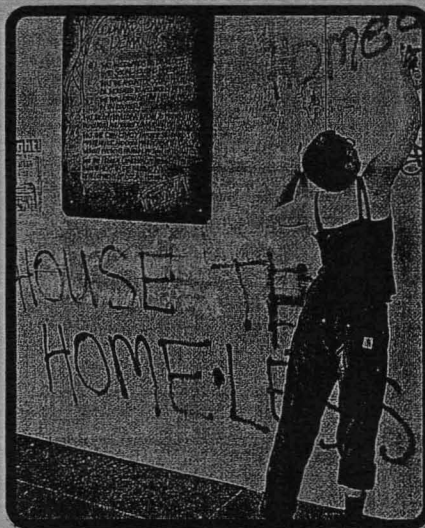
General Meetings
Tuesday 6pm every two
weeks August 4 & 18
at 327 Carrall Street
next to Pigeon Park
Childcare and coffee
provided

Leafletting Against \$6
Every Saturday at
Noon. Call for locations
July 27th at Broadway
and Fraser

Newsletter
Next submission date:
August 19th, email:
flagsandcrows@ziplip.com
or drop it off at the
office

FoodBank Leafletting
Once a week call for locations

Silkscreen Workshop/Workparty
August 7 & 8 @ 7 pm at the APC office
call for confirmation



We always need help
postering and staffing
the office. get on our
call list.

Any of you out there
who have more money
than time, we need
money for our phone
bill, childcare, bus
tickets etc. We are also
looking for a decent
computer and printer,
access to a
photocopier, paper,
office supplies, placard/
banner supplies, and
food and coffee for
meetings.

Contact info:
(604) 682 - 2726
42 Blood Alley Square
Vancouver BC V6B 1C7
apc@resist.ca

عرفی APC، کمیته ضد فقر

بیانیه بنیادین کمیته ضد فقر درونکوور

کمیته ضد فقر سازمانیست برای افشای زحمتکش، کارگر
فقیر که برای حقوق پایمال شده آنان مبارزه می کند.
کمیته ضد فقر معتقد است که با فقر در جامعه با هر
و ش ممکن باید مبارزه شود و ریشه کن گردد. مردم
زحمتکش و نادر بطور مدام تحت حمله سیستم بی رحم
بر پایه داری هستند. متأسفانه این حملات همه جانبه با
تغیبات آقای گوردون کمپل، رهبر حزب لیبرال بی سی،
نخست وزیر این استان تشدید و تعمیق یافته اند.
نیاست های تضییقاتی حزب به قدرت رسیده لیبرال تا
کنون شامل کاهش بودجه و لغو، خصوصی سازی بخش
خدمات عمومی و رایگان، کاهش بودجه خدمات اجتماعی
محدود نمودن حقوق دموکراتیک و انسانی مردم بوده
ست. به روشنی می توان مشاهده نمود که این حملات
صحت انتقال هر چه وسیعتر ثروت از افشار زحمتکش
طبقات دارا طراحی شده اند. کمیته ضد فقر، متعهد
مصمم است که با روشهایی از قبیل بسیج اعتراضات
عمومی، فعالیتهای عملی و فوری سیاسی و اعتراضی،
کمک به مراجعین به دفاتر و لغو و کاریابی، سمینارهای
سیاسی و اطلاعاتی، با این سیاستهای غیر
سازمانی بی رحمانه مبارزه کند. ما با استثمار، نژادپرستی،
سکسیم، هموفوبیا و بطور کلی هر نوع ستم مخالف بوده
با آن ها مبارزه می کنیم. ما سازمانی مستقل بوده و با
فروشی باز هر آنکه بیانیه بنیادین ما را بپذیرد با کمال
بیست استقبال می کنیم. کمیته ضد فقر در ونکوور
تعمهد است که در جهت پایان بخشیدن به بی عدالتی و
فقر، در همبستگی و یاری با جنبش های آزادیخواه و
رایبری طلب و مترقی، چه در سطح محلی و کانادا، و
به در سطح بین المللی همگام و همسو باشد.

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