

the anti-poverty committee

Issue #5

newsletter

July 02



Mass mobilization forces Campbell to cancel speech

June 14th was a successful day for the anti-Campbell movement when several hundred people congregated at the Art Gallery to demonstrate against a scheduled speaking engagement of Gordon Campbell. The event was the opening of an art exhibit featuring the works of Frida Kahlo, Georgia O'Keefe, and Emily Carr. Were these artists alive today, they certainly would not have approved of having a man who has shown such little regard for the well being of working and poor people as a featured speaker.

A very broad range of people came to the event, including anti-poverty organizers, union members, community activists, artists, poor people, students, Native people, and other people on the receiving end of the BC Liberal's policies, and through loud, spirited action, were successful in shutting Campbell down. He refused to show his face, and the engagement was cancelled. This demonstration was clearly a big success for the growing Anti-Liberal movement in BC, with media reports of roughly 400 people outside of the fenced-in area where the art opening took place and another 150 protesters who came with invitations inside.

We, the Anti-Poverty Committee, were one of several groups, including the Friends of Frida and the Guerilla Girls, who mobilized for this event. We mobilized because Gordon

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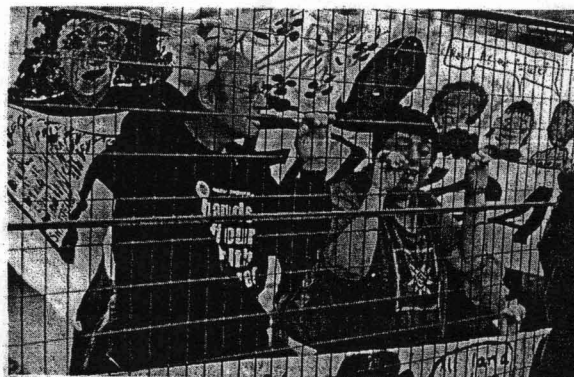
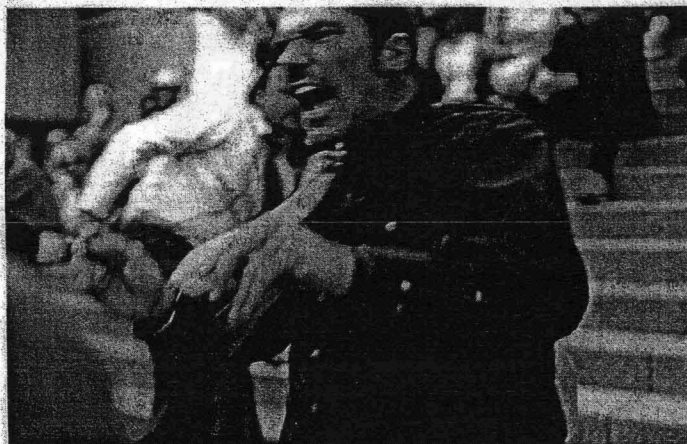
Campbell's policies are severely harming, and even killing, poor and working people in this province. For him to be able to strut into the Art Gallery within blocks of Vancouver's poorest neighbourhoods and pull a cynical public relations stunt like this is disgusting, and there is no way he should feel able to show his face in public without expecting to be met with the angry, outraged public whose lives he is ruining. Whenever he shows up at events like this, wherever in the province of BC, he should be met with protest. It is very interesting that a man who claims that the protests against his policies mean nothing to him would not have the courage to even show his face.

During this demonstration, the police were violent towards people at the demonstration many times, using pepper spray and batons against them. Several people needed medical attention after being attacked, and two people were arrested.

One of the people arrested is an organizer with the Anti-Poverty Committee, who was charged with assault after trying to speak from the podium at the event. However, the hundreds of people watching this happen could clearly see that the person did nothing that even remotely resembled assault, and the charges were dropped the very next day.

The other person arrested, an independent activist/artist named Marc Brady, has been charged with assaulting a police officer. It is alleged that he kicked an officer as they walked past him towards the other arrested person, although a number of eye-witness accounts dispute this claim. If the police try to make the charge stick, the Anti-Poverty Committee will be ready to show them that this charge is trumped up, and were laid against this person for political reasons. The Anti-Poverty Committee is an organization that stands up for the rights of poor and working people, including our members and supporters. The police in this city harass and bru-

talize poor people on a daily basis, and Friday night's events made it painfully obvious that they are prepared to attack people in the Anti-Campbell movement whenever their actions are successful. We will not stand idly when the police attack poor people and our organization, and are currently considering legal action against the Vancouver Police Department based on the documentation we have already collected.



people who came out to shut the event down. What mattered was that everything Campbell stands for is harmful to our interests as poor and working people in this province, be it the attacks on Native land rights, the training wage, the cuts to social programs, or the elimination of funding to women's centers. This is not about demanding amendments to proposed bills or defending narrow interests for one constituency over another this is about working together to fight against the entire BC Liberal program, pure and simple, through mass-based organizing and economic disruption. We must count this event as a success, then make our next move in the battle to defeat this government.

photos: Murray Bush

- Mike Krebs

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Actions

400 Protest BC Liberal Fundraiser at Canada Place



Canada Place, Liberal Fundraiser, May 30, 2002
photo: Janine Island

As many as 400 people showed up for a last minute action on May 30th against a BC Liberal fundraiser at Canada Place in Vancouver. Most of the people who showed up participated in human chains around the entranceways of the building in an attempt to prevent Liberal supporters, who were mostly business people in suits, from entering the conference room.

The action was lively and dynamic, with protestors regrouping several times after being pushed aside by police. In the end the police out maneuvered the crowd, pushing the chain away from the building and bringing in menacing looking riot police with big sticks.

This action was a success because it showed that people are willing to engage in militant action against the BC government and its pro-business agenda.

- Mike Krebs

A Victory For Aboriginal Women's Shelters

A press release alone motivated Minister Bradshaw and HRDC to instantly hold a meeting with the Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee before the protest was scheduled. The meeting happened so fast that protesters were not notified that the action was called off. So far the three shelters that were mentioned in the press release have had their funds reinstated.

- Debbie Krull

Casework

APC Marches to the Executive Welfare Office for The Needs of the Poor

On Wednesday, June 12th the Anti-Poverty Committee marched to the Executive Welfare Office downtown to demand that the welfare system do what it is suppose to do: house the homeless, feed the hungry and provide health care for the sick. The office workers were surprised when fifteen angry people demanded to meet with David Butcher, the BC Benefits Coordinator. They told us that he was in training and not in the office. We delivered a letter to his secretary and made sure she told him that the APC demands that he meet with us to discuss his policies which are preventing people from accessing their most basic needs. Since that day a member of the Anti-Poverty Committee has phoned him everyday and everyday his secretary claims he is not in the office. We will keep phoning him and if he does not answer the phone, we will mobilize more people to march down to his office and not leave until he meets with us.

- Kara

Changes to Welfare Effective July 1st for Families Three or More

These changes affect families of three or more and do not include people with DB2. For families with three or more persons shelter rates will be restructured to equal increments of \$35 per month per child.

Therefore a single parent with two children will be eligible for the same rate as an adult couple with one child.

	Old Shelter rates	New Shelter Rates
3 people	\$610	\$555
4 people	\$650	\$590
5 people	\$700	\$625
6 people	\$730	\$660
7 people	\$760	\$695
8 people	\$780	\$730

- Waldo

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APC Action Alert!

Injecting Gentrification: Taking the fight for harm reduction to the streets

The Anti-Poverty Committee has reopened the nightly needle exchange in front of the Carnegie Centre in protest against the vigilante actions of the Vancouver Police Department. This needle exchange is vital in the fight for harm reduction and against the ongoing institutional murder of drug users in the Downtown Eastside.

On the night of Friday, May 31st, without backing by City Hall or the Health Board, the cops closed the needle exchange table at Main and Hastings. The tables had been there for a year and a half and run consistently and effectively by volunteers from the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU). The tables were run by drug users for drug users and offered a degree of respect and dignity unequalled by any social service organization, particularly because anyone who used the service could become part of it. Apparently this is considered a problem for the police.

The tables were closed with a by-law ticket for blocking the sidewalk, and the next night they were closed again, this time with the claim that the group lacked a permit to operate. The real motivations for shutting the table down were revealed by police lies issued to the media. They announced: "more drugs than needles are being given out at that table" and made an absurd authoritarian statement in the Province that users should not be giving rigs to users, as though professionals know the needs of users better than users themselves. This attack on the VANDU exchange is clearly an attack on the rights, dignities and self-determination of drug users and all poor people. Shutting down the most effective needle exchange in the city is an extremely irresponsible and malicious way to "break" the corner of Main and Hastings:

to rid it of drug traffic make it friendly to tourists, shoppers and the Olympic bid. The VPD acted without direction from city hall or the health board and took exclusive action on behalf of the business community. The Anti-Poverty Committee will not stand by and allow poor people to be bullied by a gang of thugs.

Every night from 9pm to 1:30 am starting Tuesday, April 11th the APC has been running a needle exchange table in the same spot as VANDU. On the first night the police hassled one of our members who was doing security and monitoring police actions with a video camera. For three nights the police parked right in front of the table for most of the night, and flashed all their

lights. This greatly reduced the traffic at the corner and the number of people who exchanged their used needles. The other nights, police have left us alone and the table has exchanged about 500 used rigs each night, rigs which otherwise would have been used again or shared.

A day cannot be allowed to pass without an exchange table: to stall or stand aside is to sacrifice lives. We call out to all community groups and people in the city to support the marginalized and vulnerable people the police are attacking. - Ivan Drury



David and Nancy at the APC Needle Exchange on Main and Hastings, photo: Kara

definitions

Harm reduction means accepting that drug use does and will occur and accepting the need to minimize the harm this has on communities and individuals. It means recognizing that abstinence-based strategies are often impractical and ineffective in dealing with the street-entrenched drug scene.

Gentrification is when businesses, developers and government pour money into a poor urban centre in order to make space for rich people. It almost always involves the displacement of poor people. You know when gentrification comes to your neighbourhood when cheap hotels are converted to backpacker hostels, old buildings are turned into condos or lofts, and homeless people are kicked off the streets.

OPEN A DRUG-USER RUN 24 HOUR NEEDLE EXCHANGE ON MAIN AND HASTINGS NOW!!!

Action

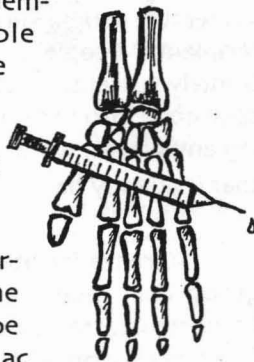
The Day VANDU was Banned from the Legislature for "A Really Long Time"

Despite the valiant efforts of members of East Vancouver and Strathcona, Joy McPhail and Jenny Kwan respectively, and a protest squad from VANDU - the barbaric campaign being waged by the Liberals against decency and humanity was crowned with royal assent at 9pm on May 30th. It was our intent to disrupt the legislature for long enough to stall the political process and postpone the reading of Employment and Disabilities Act also known as Bill 27, until after the summer legislative recess.

We arrived in Victoria in the early afternoon. Waiting to greet us were the principals of SWAG - S Women's Action Group. We owe them a huge dept of gratitude, which I like to express on the behalf of all of us who fight for social change and justice.

A press release was prepared to alert the various media organs. The release read like a manifesto: we demand the immediate withdrawal of the bill from consideration and the ouster of the parties responsible for its introduction. We maintain that the passage of this bill is not only going to materially injure and perhaps kill members of BC's most vulnerable citizenry it will also set the stage for a multifaceted system that designates prisons as a solution to social political and economic problems.

The true nature of this perfidious policy hiding under the skirts of fiscal rectitude must be exposed at once and held to ac



count. We the Opposition attempted to do this in their own home: the Legislative Assembly, from which we were banned for an indefinite period following a most spirited venting of our spleens and pouring of vitriol upon the heads of the gathered Liberals and the archly anti-people Murray Coell, the minister responsible for this bill.

We screamed epithets and rallied from the gallery. Almost immediately we were set upon and roughly escorted, kicking and screaming, out of the gallery to the rousing applause from the others who were there to support us. In fact many groups were represented there who haven't even heard of VANDU, but were united with us is a common cause. The house gendarmes manoeuvred us past the applauding throngs out of the august chamber into the hallway and onto a waiting elevator. We each enjoyed our own escort with an arm lock around our intransigent necks. The elevator was overcapacity owing maybe to the mass of revolutionary fervour, but more likely to the obesity of the six thugs who accompanied us, that elevator plummeted all the way to the basement past the floor whose button was actually depressed. Upon the arrival on the correct floor we were ushered to a room appointed in late Victorian regency furnishings with the stalwarts of Socred gazing down upon us disapprovingly from their portraits. There, we were advised of our rapidly vanishing rights, and were told that we under arrest, but were released a short time afterwards with a banishment from the legislature. When later asked what exactly was meant by the indefinite period of banishment, one of the brighter lights among the legislature's thugs said: "a really long time".

We call upon all the people to unite in solidarity - for our brothers and sisters who are going to die as a result of this bill. Although we did not achieve our chief goal, we did get the word out in the first of many battles that we are going to be waged. It will be one hot summer.

- George

George is a member and volunteer with the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users

VANDU is a group of drug users and former users who work to improve the lives of people who use illicit drugs. They do this through user-based peer support and education.

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Analysis

Survivors and Consumers do Work!

The purpose of this writing is to bear witness to the fact that many of us classified as being "mentally ill", operate under certain conditions that preclude us from having a job. I want to make the point that most of us on DBII who are survivors of the mental health industry, do not have "jobs", but we do work. We work all the time, mainly in unpaid volunteer positions. Many of us have had full time jobs, and some of us have worked for many years. What we were unable to do is procure or retain any type of pension/savings plans.

There are common threads that run through our community. The most prevalent being sleep disorders ranging from an inability to sleep to an overpowering need to sleep for most of the day. Either way it is difficult to do a 9 to 5. Conditions are unpredictable. We never know when they will hit, so we cannot be viewed as "reliable" workers.

The world is complicated: we are all inundated with stimulants, overloaded with information and survivors are especially sensitive to this, we are just not able to shut down, shut off, and tune out. The strain can be unimaginable, the stress overpowering, almost always resulting in physical, emotional and psychic ailments. It affects our behaviour, we get fired or laid off, or worse still we suppress our feelings and cause damage to our bodies and minds.

People who have been institutionalized for many years do not have the skills: to either get a job or even to merely operate in the world at large. We have a low tolerance for artificial situations. In the job structures of the commercial market place there is no accommodation for individuality, there is no flexibility: conformity is demanded. Times, places, dates, are engraved in stone. How can somebody who is "clinically depressed" be expected to keep to these structures when it is difficult to get out of bed?

When we get out of synch with the world it is

very difficult to focus on any task. The negative feelings this arouses in co-workers and supervisors exacerbate the situation and our health deteriorates rapidly. Many of us will at times focus on something to the exclusion of all outside or internal stimuli - we are tied into whatever and until the spiral winds itself out and down we are stuck in that place. Fear is an overriding factor in our daily lives. We bear the stigmata of the "mad", we live with being "crazy" and fear venturing out into "meanstream" society.

These are some of the actual conditions that make it difficult for us to join the "job force":

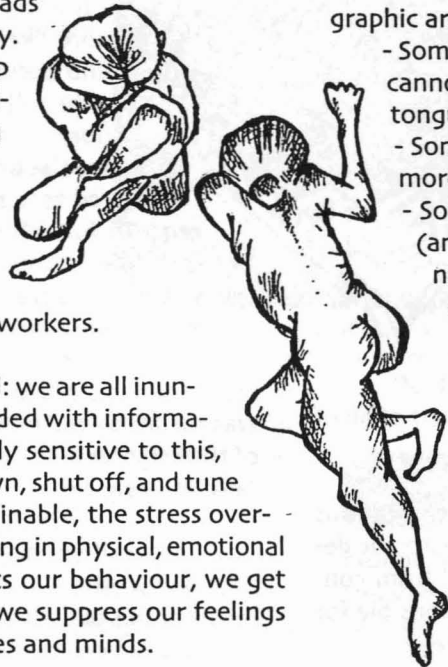
- Some of us cannot use the phone except for very short conversations;
- some of us may be literate and highly articulate but we cannot fill out a form or write a report;
- Some of us cannot go beyond one block of their residence, and then only in our car;
- Some of us have to stay within certain prescribed geographic area in order to not fly into full scale panic;
- Some of us are friendly and outgoing people who cannot interact with any new people but become tongue-tied and silent;
- Some of us are not able to be in the company of more than a few people at any one time;
- Some of us when we get nervous or concerned (and it doesn't take much) will inundate anybody near us with a barrage of words, a non-stop monologue that will continue, even with interruptions, until the listener says "stop";
- Some of us want to have a job very badly, and have had five of them in the past two years;
- Some of us need to have a predictable routine, deviations cause severe stress and an inability to function;
- Some of us have difficulty making minor decisions sometimes; what shoes to wear can be a major hurdle;

This government has targeted all the most vulnerable people - elders, single parents, children, gain recipients. People on a mental health disability are extremely susceptible to fear tactics. Many have practically gone into hiding, staying close to home, not making any waves, waiting for the axe to fall, not realizing that it already has.

- Karenza T. Wall

Karenza facilitates a woman's consumer/survivor group that meets every 1st & 3rd Saturday in the Carnegie Centre cafeteria at 2 p.m. Lunch is provided free and all women are welcome.

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The World We Live In

Institutionalized poverty is an evil and permanent feature of world capitalist-market societies. This is a situation in which a person lacks the basic things that help them to sustain a decent human life. The shocking statistics below show clearly how global capital creates global poverty and misery for the people of the world.

- The gap between poor and rich has grown twice as much in the last 50 years
- The wealth of the 3 richest people in the world is more than the total wealth of the 48 poorest countries consisting of 600 million people
- 1.2 billion people (one fifth of the world's population) live on less than a dollar a day
- The world's richest 20% earn 86% of the world's wealth and the world's poorest 20% earn 1% of the world's wealth
- Out of 1.3 billion people in the world living in extreme poverty: 70 percent are women
- 2.8 billion earn less than 2 dollars a day
- Of the more than 800 million who live in hunger, 44% live in Asia and 24% live in Africa
- More than 50% of children in third world countries suffer from malnutrition
- 150 million children are suffering of diseases resulting from malnutrition
- 55% of 12 million children before the age of 2 die of malnutrition each year
- In 51 poor countries only 47% of the population have access to tap water
- 93% of people who have AIDS live in poor countries
- 2 billion people in the world have no access to medicine and 11 million children die every year in less developed countries for not having access to very basic medicine
- Every 3 seconds 1 child dies of hunger or disease

What is Pivot?

Pivot is an organization that works on advancing the interests of drug addicts, sex trade workers and other marginalized persons through legal education, strategic legal action and law reform. Currently there are two long term strategies already in action:

- A CopWatch program that teams lawyers with residents of the DTES out on the streets to observe and document the brutality of the police
- The collecting affidavits of police brutality, and abuses in other systems such as welfare and housing in order to document systematic legal problems

When a significant number of affidavits are assembled they will be strategically implemented and will be used not only for law reform, but also as a tool for direct action advo-



با قانون جدید حداقل دستمزد،

The Training Wage بجنگید!

آیا شما اخیراً با ۶ دلار در ساعت استخدام شده‌اید؟
آیا فردی از آشنایان شما در چنین شرایطی به کار مشغول شده است؟ آیا کارفرمایی را می‌شناسید که به کارگران جدید این دستمزد را بپردازد؟
اگر پاسخ شما حتی به یکی از پرسش‌های بالا مثبت باشد می‌توانید به کمپین (کمیته ضد فقر) در ونکوور علیه این قانون جدید دستمزد بپیوندید. ما می‌توانیم شما را با قوانین کار و دستمزد آشنا نماییم.
کمیته ضد فقر در ونکوور، سازمانیست که از اشخاص و گروه‌های فعال مترقی در عرصه مسایل سیاسی، اجتماعی و اتحادیه‌های کارگری تشکیل شده است. ما برنامه عمل وسیع و گسترده علیه سیاست‌های قطع بودجه‌های خدماتی، بهداشتی، و لفر، و همچنین کاهش حداقل دستمزد، کاهش بودجه سالمندان و ازدیاد شهریه دانشجویان توسط دولت لیبرال آقای گوردون کمپبل داریم. ما علاقه‌مندیم با تمام اشخاص و گروه‌ها-سازمانهای مترقی و فعال همکاری نماییم. ما با همکاری و پشتیبانی یکدیگر می‌توانیم به این گونه اجحافات و محدودیت‌ها پایان دهیم. با آدرس ما در ونکوور لطفاً تماس حاصل نمایید. apc@resist.ca
Anti-Poverty Committee, 604.682.2726

cacy and for the education of people regarding their rights and most importantly to empower marginalized persons by giving them an effective voice. Throughout the summer PIVOT will export its outreach into the local community by holding weekly affidavit sessions at the offices of PACE (Prostitutes Advocacy Counselling Education) and VANDU, as well as communication with other non-profits. PIVOT is now sharing an office with APC in a joint struggle to give power to the poor.

- David

PIVOT Legal Society

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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 a 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.

Want to get involved?

APC meets every two weeks on Tuesday at 6pm. The next two meetings are July 9th and July 23rd. at 327 Carrall Street, next to Pigeon Park. Childcare and coffee provided.

If you can't make it to a meeting come down to our new office at 42 Blood Alley in the alley between Cordova and Water off of Carrall Street in the Downtown Eastside. Call for office hours.

Anti-Poverty Committee
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42 Blood Alley Sq.
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Upcoming Events

July 5th 7:00pm
APC and PIVOT Office Party

Come celebrate the opening of our new office at 42 Blood Alley with entertainment and foodTa'ayush (co-existence) event

July 8th 6:30-9:30pm
The Committee for Racial Justice and other community groups are holding a COMMUNITY FORUM ON HUMAN RIGHTS Roundhouse Community Centre of Davie at Pacific

RECENTLY, A SERVANT ADMITTED THAT GORDON CAMPBELL LISTENS TO "PUNK ROCK". (LEADING TO SOME HILARIOUS POSSIBILITIES...)



The APC Newsletter Issue #5

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Editor: Kara

Submissions

The next submission date is July 15th. Please email submissions to: flagsandcrows@ziplip.com or you can drop them off at our office or dictate them to a member of APC. Please say if you do not want your name to be used. We may not be able to use all submissions due to limited space and articles may be edited for clarity and fit.

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