

# the anti-poverty <sup>1</sup> committee newsletter

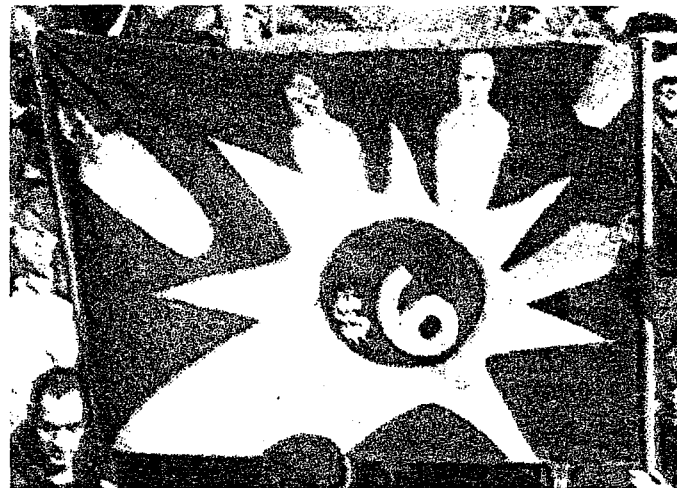
## Campaign against \$6 minimum wage

With the introduction of the \$6 training wage for the first 500 hours of work, the BC Liberal's have demonstrated once again that it is Business, not British Columbians, shaping policy in this province. We know that it was Business that asked for it, and it is businesses that are benefitting from this new pool of cheap, exploited labour. We know it is these policies, and countless others from this government, that hurt our communities.

The \$6 training wage is being billed as a program to combat youth unemployment. This legislation does nothing to address the real problem, which is youth poverty. Young adults are now ineligible for welfare for the first two years after leaving home, foster care is being cut for 16-18 year olds, and tuition at post-secondary institutions is about to skyrocket. All of these policies will force young people into the labour market where they can exercise little choice and wield little power.

The next generation of British Columbians, as well as older workers who have not had experience in the labour market due to family responsibilities and other barriers, deserve meaningful training and a decent standard of living. Businesses that will take advantage of young people from low income families who cannot afford post-secondary education or of single mothers forced to leave their children by draconian changes to income assistance, deserve to be held accountable, by whichever tactics will succeed.

Unions have the capacity to bargain directly with employers and work as a group to curb exploitation in the workplace. Setting a wage rate that falls below the minimum standard erodes an important



aspect of labour protection in this province. Most minimum wage workers do not even have a union to force bosses to act fairly. If workers do not have a union and there are no government standards, we as a community have to protect our workers. All workers deserve to be supported in their struggles and we are going to do precisely that.

The Anti-Poverty Committee wants to make a list of businesses paying the six dollar minimum wage. We want to organize with workers who are employed by these businesses to stop this practice. If you or someone you know is working at a business that is paying six bucks, and you are interested in getting a campaign going to stop this practice at your workplace, please call the Anti-Poverty Committee. We will come to the business and set up an information picket in order to let customers know that they should boycott this business because it is paying its employees starvation wages. We do not want workers to lose their jobs so we want to strategize with workers that are affected. We need to fight together and let British Columbians know that workers are people with rights, and that those rights, even the rights of the most vulnerable, will not be violated without consequences.

**fight the cuts! defeat this government! solidarity is strength!**

## Welfare, Women, and Poverty

Last month when asked what one should do in a world where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, Lynn Stephens our Minister for the State of Women's Equality answered: "Well, then, make more money." Poor women in BC cannot just make more money, for they do not just choose to be poor, as Lynn believes. In fact, women make up the majority of people receiving welfare in this province and as of April 1st, these women just got poorer.

Single employable women and women with partners will now only be allowed to collect welfare two out of five years, and there will no longer be any exemptions for earnings. After two years single mothers will see a drop of \$100 to their monthly cheque and some single mothers could see a drop of as much as \$370 a month due to cuts to earning and family maintenance exemptions. For mothers working or looking for work, the income earnings for subsidized childcare has gone up \$285. And as of April 1st, welfare will take \$20 a month off your cheque if you have received a security deposit until the money is recovered. They claim that women fleeing domestic abuse will be exempt three times but what happens the fourth time?

Lynn Stephens claims that her ministry is not cutting funding for services for women vulnerable to violence and abuse, but the welfare cuts are violence against women. Stephens has not thought about what is going to happen to women who are no longer eligible for welfare, and for single mothers who can no longer earn extra money for their children. The policies of the Liberal government are pushing more and more women into vulnerable positions. In the next couple of years we are going to see more women on the streets and trapped in abusive relationships. Adequate welfare for food, shelter and clothing is a basic right and an equality issue for all women. We need to fight back against the Liberal's abusive agenda!

## Welfare Cuts, Welfare Advocacy.

On March 18th those of us who are still able to be on welfare received a notice from the Ministry of Human Resources informing us of the new welfare policy - the BC Employment and Assistance Act. The ministry wants us to know that we "are truly a resource" and that they "believe in the value of our self-efficiency", as they so degradingly put it. They like us to believe that a brand new era is coming, for "the jobs become available everyday and as the economy is revitalized, job opportunities will grow." And the Liberals want "to assist people to have the motivation and skills they need to get a job and lead more fulfilling and independent lives".

Anyone able to smell the bullshit between the lines will take this notice as a personal insult. They expect us to revitalize the economy by herding us through a "job club", that will humiliate us so that we'll have no choice but to accept sub-poverty \$6 per hour job. Those unable to be installed in an un-unionized exploitative job will be under a time restraint of two years out of five to continue to receive assistance. We at APC do not believe this government is sincere in wanting to help us. We do not believe that they are willing to support a policy of full employment. We know that they are a government that promotes unemployment and then takes away our last shred of security against life on the streets.

It is our responsibility to speak the truth with those who have been made homeless, made to line up at food banks, and force to live in violent situations. We will fight together in solidarity with those opposed to this robber government. **How we will fight?** APC will provide militant and uncompromising advocacy to those in need. Whether its welfare, police brutality, immigration, or landlord/tenant problems. We will take your fight straight to the halls of power. **Together we will fight back and win!**

**Those seeking an advocate can call the Anti-Poverty Committee or find help at the VANDU office, 50 E. Hastings, every Tuesday, 12:00-3:00.**

**no training wage! build social housing! no welfare cuts!**

# take it personally, act politically.

Those who support the goals of the Anti-Poverty Committee may ask themselves if it is really necessary to demonstrate at the Premier's house. Especially since concerns over Gordon Campbell's security have circled in the press recently, to the point of the police asking the media not to show up.

The real threats here, isn't to the wealthy and powerful, but to those already in the most vulnerable positions in our society. The results of

the BC Liberal agenda are going to have severe personal consequences for many people and many communities.

If people are personally effected by something they are not going have debates, they are going to take action.

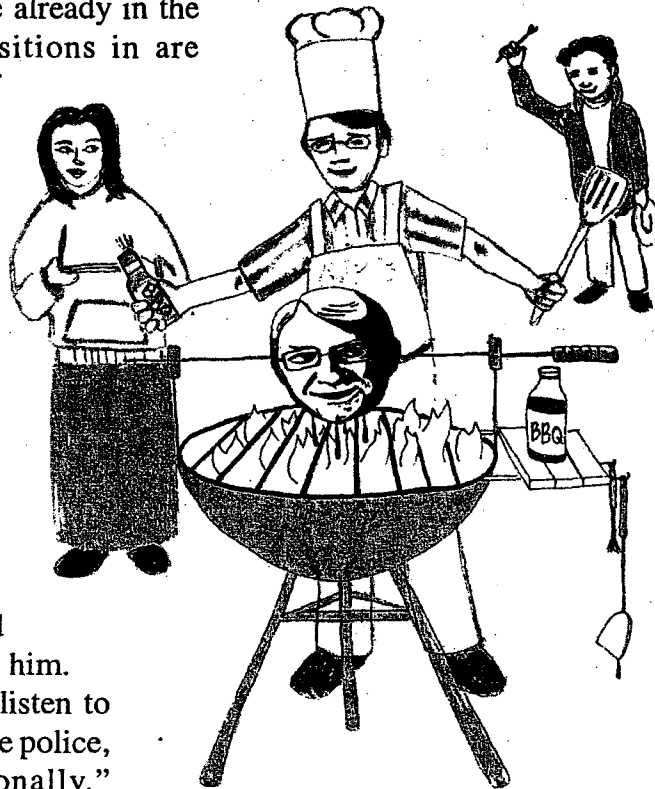
If a thief robs you, you are going to find and have words with him.

You are not going to listen to people who say, like the police, "Don't take it personally."

Same thing with Gordon Campbell, and his gang of thieves. Take it personally, act politically!

April 1st is the day the planned welfare cuts go into effect, and this will soon be followed by the privatization of welfare. The tax cut to wealthy has its results and the results will be in the streets, in the shelters, the food bank lineups, etc. The Liberals calim we will all be lifted into well-paid employment any day now. Keep waiting, and watch the cuts keep coming and the poverty grow worse. It is difficult to pull yourself up by the bootstraps when you cannot even afford work boots for your \$6 slave job.

Campbell complains about his comfort his privacy, and the sanctity of his home. We ll, its hard to have repsect for the sanctity of his home, when you have none. If Campbell and his cronies think that it is too close to home they should come stand in the food bank lines.



What is not mentioned is that the benefits of the Liberal program are also personal. Gordon Campbell himself is now in the position of Premier because he took the hard line Neo-Liberal position, inline with the business leaders - individual's with more than enough - who will derive personal gain at the expense of those who do not have enough. At the same time Campbell bribed the middle strata of British Columbians with their own money in the form of a tax cut. He is now opening up business opportunities in health, education and other public services, which will force British Columbians to hand over their tax cut to

private corporations.

We are told that there is no alternative. It has already been proven that Gordon Campbell is a liar and this is another lie. There is an alternative to people suffering, to be robbed and exploited. We are fighting for our communities, where we can live in dignity and equality. But we are in for a long fight. A lot of people with a lot of power are personally benefiting from this regime and they will not let go of it easily. Of course the struggle extends beyond Campbell and his cronies, but what better place to start then at his front door.

**burn the racist referendum! sovereignty for indigenous people!**

## What is APC?

The Anti-Poverty Committee is a diverse group of activists and organizers that are fighting back against the Liberal's assault on the poor. The poor face constant attack under the current economic system, and these attacks have intensified under this government. The Liberal's brutal policies - the cuts to social programs, the racist referendum, the privatization of public services, the tax cuts - all are designed to transfer wealth from the working people and the poor to the rich and powerful.

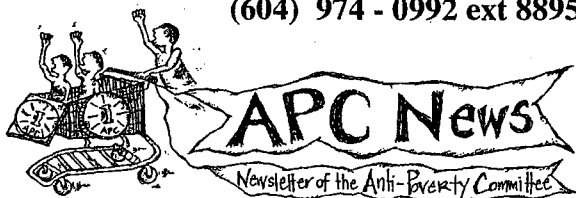
## Want to get involved?

Are you interested in working with APC or think you want to help us out. Please call or come to a meeting. We meet every Wednesday at 6 PM. For the month of April we will be meeting on the 3rd floor of the Carnegie Community Centre, Main and Hastings, Vancouver. If you need help sooner please call and email us at:

vox: (604) 974 - 0992 ext. 8895  
email: a\_p\_c@mybc.com

This newsletter is a monthly publication of the Anti-Poverty Committee. The views expressed do not necessarily represent the views of APC. Submissions and announcements are welcome, but we cannot guarantee publication. Articles should be brief and direct and submitted in electronic format to a\_p\_c@mybc.com.

Questions? Leave a voicemail at  
(604) 974 - 0992 ext 8895



## Calendar of events

### Forum on the Cuts

The Grandview Woodlands Area Council is holding a forum on community responses to the cuts. Saturday, April 6th, 2 PM. Britannia High Auditorium.

### Defeating Gordon Campbell - What's Next?

Speakers, Workshops, and Plenary Discussion.  
Saturday, April 6th  
9:30 AM - 4:30 PM (9:30 Registration)  
SFU Harbour Centre, 515 W. Hastings St., Vancouver.

### Hands Off Iraq!

Join an anti-war picket in solidarity with mass mobilization taking place in Washington, DC, and San Francisco.  
April 20th 1 PM  
US Consulate (W. Pender at Thurlow)

### Listen to MotherDay of Action

Actions across BC, involving local women from diverse communities opposed to the BC Liberal cuts. Called by Women Against Campbell's Cuts and WE\*ACT.

### It's About Our Future - March

May 25th 12 Noon

The BC Federation of Labour is organizing a march through Downtown Vancouver as part of its Campaign BC. Details to be announced.

### Housing Committee Meetings (VANDU)

Help fight for better living conditions for tenants in DTES and Vancouver. Meetings every Tuesday 3PM at 327 Carrall St.

### Fight Police Harassment and Brutality

Collection of Strategic Testimonies of Police Harassment and Abuse in the DTES - Sign a confidential affidavit with a lawyer if you have been the victim of police brutality. Every Tuesday 10:00-12:00 at VANDU (50 E. Hastings St.)

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