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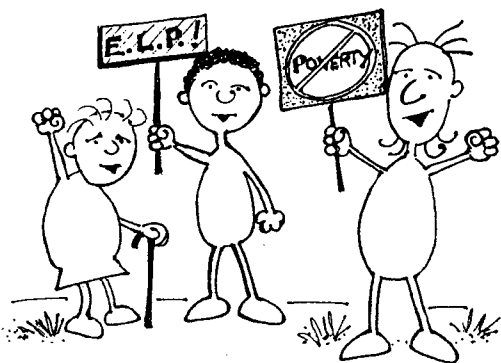
Volume I Issue 7

End Legislated Poverty's Newspaper

October 1994

ELP's first class starts Oct. 19th

End Legislated Poverty's organizing class is about to become a reality! All we need now is you to register. The first class will be on Oct. 19th from 7 to 9 pm. The agenda will include a short film, sharing personal histories of fighting for justice, and



Marcotte chairs anti-poverty caucus from 17 countries

End Legislated Poverty organizer Linda Marcotte attended the second Preparatory Conference of the United Nations World Summit on Social Development Aug. 20 to Sept. 2 in New York City. In the second week, she helped organize a caucus of people who work directly with low income people.

Linda was named co-chair of the caucus which brought together people from 17 countries who work with non-governmental organizations (NGO's). The caucus wanted governments to get serious about ending poverty. The caucus met regularly to talk about how to lobby official government delegations to the United Nations

Economic and Social Council. □□□



Linda Marcotte

Groups ready to fight for social programs

B. C. groups are getting ready to fight for decent social programs. Seniors have scheduled a conference for November 5th. The Women's Social Policy Review Coalition is having a banner making day on Oct. 16th (for women only) at 509 E. Hastings from noon to 5pm. On Oct. 28th and 29th the group will take their banners along with a leaflet about social programs to places like shopping centres.

The Gay and Lesbian Community will have an event on November 19th, and the B. C. Federation of Labour is considering an action on unemployment and unemployment insurance for sometime this fall. All these groups are concerned about cuts and changes to social programs planned by the federal government.

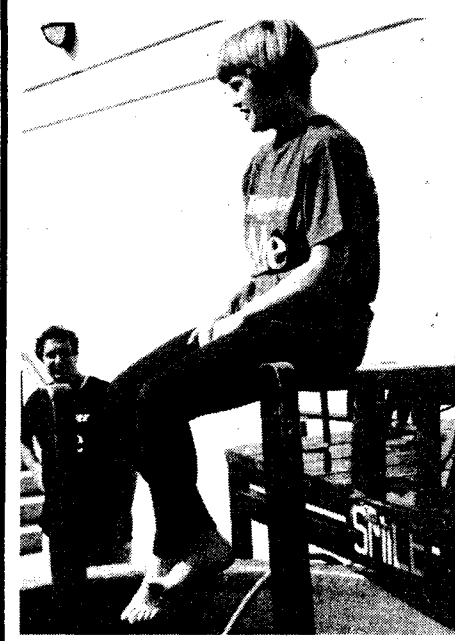
planning for future classes.

Classes will happen every second week. If you are a low income person who wants to get involved in working for justice, this class is for you. People who attend should try to make a commitment to attend all nine classes. People who attend the class will participate in discussions, share their experiences, and guide future classes. A talking head at the front of the room won't dominate the class.

Future classes will be on topics such as alternative economics, the international picture, grassroots organizing, how our society is set up to make it appear that poverty is a necessary outcome of economics, how false beliefs can be presented as truth, classism (discrimination against low income people), how language is used and misused.

Money for childcare and busfare will be provided to people who attend. □□□

Going...



Going...



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How to get involved in saving social programs

- Women's Social Policy Review Coalition. Banner making on Oct. 16th and leaflet distribution on Oct. 28th and 29th. For info, call Miche Hill at 255-6554
- Gay and Lesbian Community action Nov. 19th. Call Ellen Woodsworth at 253-3395
- B. C. Federation of Labour, call Dennis Blatchford at 430-1421
- Seniors conference Nov. 5, call Ben Swankey at 433-8323
- End Legislated Poverty, call 879-1209

Gone!



Social Services Minister Joy MacPhail gets dunked at Burnaby Family Life community event on Sept. 17th.

Michelle Des Lauriers photos

What about training programs?

By Linda Zayac

As a recipient of social assistance, I have needlessly tried to secure a job through various training programs offered through government funding. We are told over and over, GET A JOB!. No matter if you like it or make enough money. A social worker can and often does decide whether you should return to school or not. That is not our decision to make.

You are then threatened with file closure and cut off payments if you do not attend your training or aren't looking for work.

The training programs are repetitive and consist of resume writing, the hidden job market, career choices and interviews. After courses are completed you are on your own streetwalking, answering ads and cold-calling. Yes, employers occasionally call into these programs, but out of approximately 25 students in a class, an elite 2 or 3 may be chosen

for an interview. Opportunities are scarce and not every welfare person able to work will find a meaningful job. We need job creation, not job training!

Currently the government just wants people off the system, no matter what the cost. There are short term work placement and volunteer positions that end in six weeks to six months. These are low or unpaid positions that we hope will lead into a job when completed. If no employment is secured from this, then what?

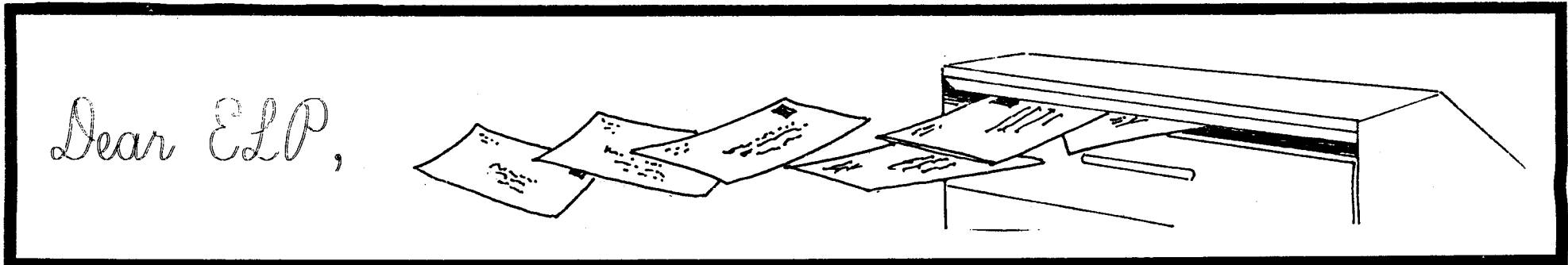
Why do we always seem to be on a trial basis when looking for work? I feel that we can and should be trusted to get a real job with the rest of society, and not be so disposable.

I do have long term goals that consist of wanting a real job and a living wage, to feel secure financially with a decent standard of living and manage without any charity at all. As I am a single mother on welfare, you have no

right to assume that I don't want to work. If I can support myself I will do so.

Thank you for allowing my opinion to be read, heard, and seen. It means a lot to me. ☐☐☐

Linda Zayac made this presentation to the executive of the National Anti-Poverty Organization in Calgary on Sept. 10th.



Long Haul validates existence

I wish to thank you for *The Long Haul*. *The Long Haul* has validated my existence on welfare. It's great to know that people care about me.

Eric T. Wolfe

Long Haul prints Legal Services propaganda

I read the two articles on legal aid in your September, 1994 edition. Both of them appeared to be propaganda pieces for the Legal Services Society.

The government is concerned about the cost of legal services to the poor. The cost has grown because of the recession, and because legal aid lawyers were given a long overdue increase 2 years ago. Even so family legal work is so underpaid that the Legal Services Society has a hard time finding lawyers to take legal aid clients, particularly in the North.

The system proposed by the Legal Services Society would involve setting up legal aid clinics

all over the province. Legal aid clients who are not referred out to a lawyer would be dealt with by paralegals and staff lawyers at the clinics. The Legal Services Society intends to have much of the work that is now done by lawyers done by paralegals. This means that clients will probably have very little contact with their lawyer. It is likely that a client will have no more choice of who their clinic lawyer is, than they would have of who their social worker is. Choice is not usually a feature of government bureaucracies.

The Association of Legal Aid lawyers is also concerned that the clinic system is a way of cutting back legal services to the poor. We are concerned that as the need for legal aid continues to grow, clinic lawyers will be given more and more cases as a way to deal with the growth without spending more money. This will probably mean that special needs clients, clients with disabilities, clients who do not speak English will not get the time they need for their cases.

The clinic system sounds good on paper. So did the Family Maintenance Enforcement Program. So did the Workers

Compensation Board. Yet anyone who has dealt with these bureaucracies knows what getting lost in the shuffle means. When getting lost in the shuffle means losing custody of your children, not getting a restraining order, being deported or going to jail, it is a shuffle that the poor cannot afford.

We encourage you to recognize the new changes for what they are: a cutback to core legal aid services.

Megan R. Ellis

Long Haul needs popular history column

I've been thinking it would be a good idea to start a regular column in *The Long Haul* about popular history: the struggles and victories of labour, women, the poor throughout time--our history. We could call it something like "No Power Greater, Hidden from History" etc.

It's important to show people examples of winning, besides pointing out all the problems, of which we're well aware. There are plenty of such examples, buried away; it's up to us to re-

surface them.

Kevin McNamee-Annett

Editor's note: Great idea and thanks for the first installment on page 7. OK, readers, we need those stories.



Published monthly by:
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Let's get free recreation

By Michelle Des Lauriers

Everyone on GAIN and others in need who live in Vancouver are entitled to get a Leisure Access Card from the Vancouver Park Board.

Low Income people with the card are entitled to free admission to regular swimming and skating sessions, free skate rental and a 50% discount on admission fees to other recreational activities.

Public awareness of the Leisure Access Policy is low. End Legislated Poverty wants to change that. ELP is starting a Leisure Access Campaign to put these cards into the hands of more low income people. Our aims are:

- to have Leisure Access Cards inserted in GAIN cheques for Vancouver residents
- to convince the Park Board to advertise Leisure Access Cards for all low income people, including the working poor
- to increase discount rates for other activities with a sliding fee starting at zero.

Please discuss the Leisure Access Campaign with your group and let ELP know how you are prepared to help make this a successful campaign. Call Michelle at 879-1209 for more info. □□□



Hope lifts off in Port Alberni

By Kevin McNamee-Annett

What a night! The largest anti-poverty rally in living memory filled the Port Alberni Friendship Centre on September 15, bringing together 150 people, most of us low income. We were native and white, young and old, men and women. And we all wanted to be heard.

"I got to finally speak tonight about what I've been going through, and I feel like maybe we can do something now, together," said one older woman after our small groups discussed our concerns over poor housing and struggling to feed our children.

After getting only ten or so people to our monthly meeting of LIFT (Low Income Folks

Together), we were delighted with the sudden mass turnout, and with large numbers of local residents. Lots of door-to-door work helped pull people out, along with extensive media coverage. But the main reason for the filled hall was that things had gotten so bad, people know it's time to fight back. I could see this in their eyes.

We were warmly fed and welcomed by the native community, whose leaders offered us the regular use of their Friendship Centre for any future meetings. As elder Charlie Thompson said to us, "We're all facing the same poverty, and we need to get together. When you're poor, it doesn't matter if



you're white or native; it's the same struggle to survive."

But we didn't stay confined to bread and butter issues. During the reporting back from our small group discussions, many political and social concerns were raised. My favourite was when one group demanded that the land titles held by multinational corporations like MacMillan-Bloedel be expropriated, and returned to the people. The crowd exploded in applause and cheers.

Housing was a constant issue raised by people, and we were bolstered by the news of a successful arbitration hearing that same day which forced a notorious slum landlord to begin fixing conditions in the "ghetto" right next door from where we were meeting.

The rally ended hopefully; we will be gathering again soon to form a permanent organization of low income people to fight for jobs, decent income and proper housing in the Alberni Valley. We're off to a great start. Solidarity forever! □□□

Introducing Michelle...

Hello folks! I'm Michelle Des Lauriers, the new Vancouver Organizer with End Legislated Poverty. By way of introduction, I'm a long time volunteer on ELP campaigns and have worked with the B. C. Coalition of People with Disabilities in media relations. I'm Metis, a solo parent and I've lived well below the poverty line for a number of years. The focus of my work over the next months will be to organize anti-poverty groups in Vancouver and to raise poverty issues with the City's government. I'm looking forward to meeting ELP's old friends and reaching out to new friends in the Aboriginal and multicultural communities to work to bring positive change around poverty in Vancouver.



Michelle Des Lauriers

Feel free to call me at the ELP office at 879-1209 if you want to join a group, lead a group, or if you have ideas to share. □□□

ELP gathers groups to learn about federal cheap labour strategy

On Sept. 14th End Legislated Poverty gathered over 30 people representing students, seniors, anti-racism groups, gays and lesbians, teachers, unions, community groups, people with disabilities, Aboriginal groups, and churches to discuss actions we can take together to stop the federal attack on social programs.

ELP's Jean Swanson told the gathering that leaked federal documents show the government is planning a massive attack on social programs like UI, welfare, and post secondary education.

The federal government wants to cut programs to save money and change programs to promote cheap labour. "The social security review is like a structural adjustment program imposed on Canada by the Liberal government to make sure that more people have to take low paying short term jobs," said Swanson.

Margi Sloan of the Public Service Alliance whose members work in the federal service, said the government is planning to privatize airports, make lifesaving in the coastal waters a volunteer

job, and replace human workers who provide government services with touchtone phones.

Rosanne Moran of the College Institute Educators Association said that the government's plan to end federal funding for colleges and universities is a "disaster."

The government is "trying to change the basic assumptions of social programs to make us responsible for the collapse of the economic system," said Mary Rowles of the B. C. Federation of Labour. "There are a lot of programs to 'fix the poor'," said

ELP's Dave Ross. "We need to get stronger with our peers and reach out to allies." Dan Smith of the United Native Nations said that we need 'justice and equality' for Aboriginal people.

The group agreed to meet again to consider actions such as drastic actions now, educating our members about the impact of the government's proposals, demonstrations and lobbying municipal, provincial and federal governments. □□□

Organizing around the province

Listening survey involves Downtown residents

Alison Cameron and Verna Beaudin are doing a new kind of research. It's research that happens in bars and community centres, not ivory towers. It's research that you don't need a fancy degree to be able to do.

Alison and Verna are part of the Listening Survey in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. "We want to find out what people in our area think about health and give that information to the Minister of Health," says Verna.

"We're making our own community health council based on what we've learned in the survey," adds Alison.

The Listening Survey is sponsored by the New Directions in Health office in the Downtown Eastside. Five teams of two people each were trained to go out into their own community, listen to what people had to say about their health, and take notes. "We made sure they knew that their names weren't being used," said Verna.

The listeners were trained, given notebooks and an honorarium. They asked people if they wanted any changes in health care. "Is there anything you're getting that you don't want or anything you're not getting that you need?"

explained Alison. "We didn't limit it to strictly 'health'. Any living condition, any attitude, housing, the streets, doctors, counselors are all included because they all cause stress. Whatever your environment is, is a health issue," she said.

Each team would go to a place where people are and introduce themselves. "It was easy," said Alison, "Because Verna knows everyone."

The biggest issues for people in the Downtown Eastside seem to be safety and communication, said Alison. "The streets are unsafe. People are afraid of each other, traffic, and drug users." Communication has to be good or "people can't make informed decisions about their health and don't understand what doctors and medical professionals tell them."

"There's a lot of angry people," added Verna. "They think the system is letting them down." The summary of the Listening Survey lists a lot of poverty issues as health problems: people want employment and training, good and affordable housing, not to be judged because of their poverty, higher wages, safety for sex trade workers, higher welfare rates

instead of food banks and similar services, respect, and dental care, to name a few.

Each week the Listening teams would report back with the other teams on what they had discovered. They would write the issues and suggested solutions on flip chart paper taped up on the walls. "The walls were getting

filled with sheets," said Alison. "It gave us an idea of the major issues."

Summaries of the Listening Teams' work should be available soon. In the meantime, Listening seems like a good way to find out what people are thinking, and what ideas they have for improving things. □□□



Alison Cameron (left) and Verna Beaudin (right) were "listeners" for the Listening Project.

VSCA barbecues to save funding

By Scott Kerr

The Victoria Street Community Association has recently been referred to as a "lifeline." Indeed the rope has almost been cut to this line.

Funding that kept the VSCA storefront within easy walking distance of the heart of our Downtown was threatened. The RISE (Regional Incentive for Special Employment) that funded the VSCA was transferred to another Ministry, Skills, Labour and Training. Unfortunately, we did not meet the requirements of SLT. So we had until the end of October to find additional funding and support, or go under.

But people from all walks of life, low income, homeless, transient and Victorians in general, all rallied to support VSCA.

On September 7th coloured balloons flew above the VSCA. The windows were painted with our achievements and a giant pair

of scissors cutting a ribbon read "Our funding's cut".

Over 100 people turned out at our barbeque. Speakers included Nancy Parker, our volunteer and centre coordinator; James Mullen, the Outreach and Housing coordinator; Patrick Stephenson of the Greater Victoria Housing Registry and Rev. Allen Tysick of the Open Door and Counselor Laura Acton.

A petition was handed around and signed. Bruce Wallace talked to the media, gave his speech, and then ran off to a meeting with Heather Dixon of the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour and Larry Pond of the Ministry of Social Services. When he returned several hours later he told us funding would be extended from October 31st until December 31st. This means that three jobs, woodworking shop volunteers, an incentive program and an office for the street press and several other programs, will keep their home for an extra two months.

The Ministries of MSS and STL and other supporters have agreed

to help us find funding. So until we have the meetings, write and submit our new proposals through the right channels, there is only

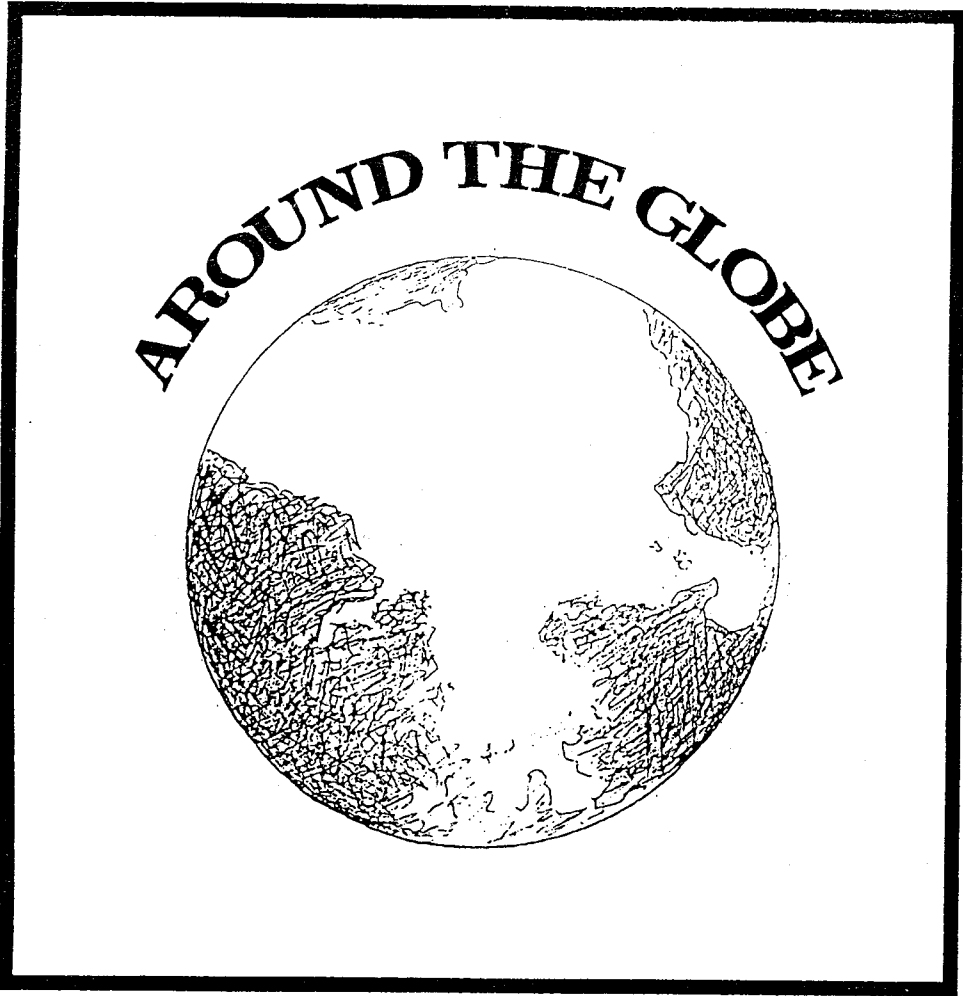
one thing to do. Wait for December 31st and see what happens. Watch for an update on the funding woes of VSCA. □□□

The Long Haul's

Self-esteem questionnaire

How many self-esteem courses does it take to become fully employed and fairly paid?

- One
- At least 4
- Enough to keep one self-esteem teacher employed full time
- Other (write your answer here and send to *The Long Haul*, c/o ELP, 456 W. Broadway, Vancouver, B. C. V5Y 1R3. We'll print some of your answers in the next *Long Haul*)



Ottawa

Pensions don't have to be cut

The government doesn't have to cut pensions to seniors. That's what a report to the National Advisory Council on Aging says. Monica Townson, who wrote the report, said that government deficits are not too large to maintain social programs. She doesn't think there should be a struggle between seniors and young people that has been suggested by Human Resources Minister Lloyd Axworthy. □□□

Source: *Vancouver Sun*, Sept. 8, 1994.

USA

Women on welfare may be paid to use contraceptive

Mothers on welfare in the U. S. face cuts in their benefits and may soon be paid to have Norplant tubes implanted in their arms. These tubes prevent conception for up to 5 years. In late April both Arizona and Nebraska prohibited Aid for Dependent Children (welfare for families) increases for mothers who have additional babies while still on welfare.

Bills were introduced in the legislatures of Florida and Connecticut that would have paid welfare mothers who have Norplant tubes put into their arms. Similar ideas are being considered in 21 states even though people on welfare average less than two children per family. □□□

Source: *The Nation*, July 18, 1994.

USA

Families need three jobs

In the US the number of "three-job marriages" (with both spouses working and one moonlighting besides) is growing. No other nation has as many families who hold so many jobs.

Long Haul comments: If minimum wages were higher, people wouldn't be forced to slave like this to exist. □□□

Source: *Globe and Mail*, August 24, 1994.

Quebec

Having problems with banks?

Are you having problems with banks? If so, the ACEF centre in Montreal wants to hear your complaint. They have formed a working group with representatives of financial institutions, provincial and federal governments. Have you experienced any of these or other problems: refusal to cash a government cheque, refusal to open an account, freezing funds, refusal to give an automatic teller card.

If so, write to ACEF at 1215 rue de la Visitation, Montreal, Quebec,

H2L 3B5 or call 514-598-7288. □□□

Alberta

New anti-poverty newsletter

Congratulations to Louise Rusinek of Red Deer Alberta who has just published edition number two of *Street News*. "Street News will attempt to bring to public scrutiny the reality of what is happening to people who have no power and are subject to the whims of the establishment. It is hoped that this newspaper will become a vehicle for the voice of the voiceless. People in this society are being discounted and discarded daily by the establishment," the newsletter reads. For more info, contact Louise at 403-342-2640. □□□

Philippines

Women's center resists 300 years of colonization

Low income people in the Philippines are working for real

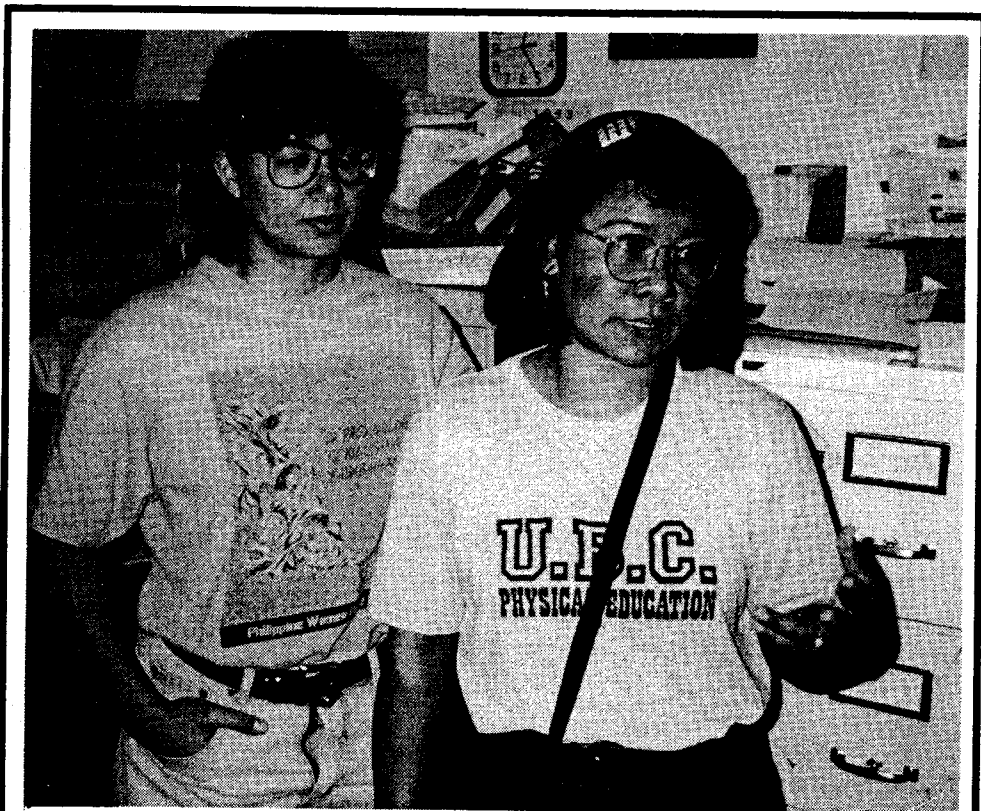
democracy in their country. That's what Irene Donato, who works at

the Centre for Women's Resources in the Philippines, told some of the ELP staff at an impromptu meeting on August 17th.

Mable Elmore of the Vancouver Philippine Women's Centre introduced Irene to the ELP staff. Irene said that people in the Philippines have been struggling to resist Spanish, American, or Japanese colonization for 300 years. "In a real sense we are not free," she explained. "Economically, politically, and culturally, we are under American influence."

Irene said that some organizations are engaging in armed struggle in the countryside, while other groups are working for reforms. Problems in the Philippines include poverty, debt, militarization, and human rights violations including killings. "It's hard to talk openly against government policy," she said.

"The government is turning agricultural land into factories and driving peasants out. Women are driven to prostitution to serve an influx of tourists." The Centre for Women's Resources investigates how government policies are affecting women. They also help other centres with research and skills training. They have developed an education series called How do we liberate ourselves? It includes sections on our body, our socialization, being poor, the history and heroines of colonization, how we can act together, leadership, and what are our visions and programs? These are some of the same themes End Legislated Poverty deals with in workshops for low income people. ELP plans to keep in touch with Irene so we can share stories of organizing and learn from each other. □□□



Mable Elmore (left) and Irene Donato (right) visit the End Legislated Poverty office.

Reflections on ELP's meeting with Joy MacPhail

By Dave Ross

I thought it was good that End Legislated Poverty set up the meeting with Social Services Minister Joy MacPhail on August 19th. ELP provided good leadership and ELP's Wages and Welfare Committee, which attended the meeting, provided a wealth of experience. MacPhail sounded responsive to some of our concerns but we need to wait and see whether she means it.

MacPhail said that she saw herself as an advocate for people

on welfare, when asked about this. But it disturbed me when she kept saying that she also had a responsibility to "taxpayers" as though people on welfare don't pay taxes. I think the public should recognize that many "taxpayers" receive money for counterproductive activity (like land speculation, for example), that they can draw more wealth from society than they put back, and that they consume a lot of non-renewable resources.

On the other hand many people who use social services work hard,

use very few financial and environmental resources and contribute more to society than they use up.

I would have liked to see more openness to the idea of helping people improve themselves, rather than providing an environment for the business elite which is really economic slavery for the poor.

Overall, I was optimistic about ELP strategies and savvy and encouraged that Joy was willing to meet with us and candid on some topics. But I think we'd better get damn good at organizing because

few politicians have demonstrated an understanding of bottom up social change or any other process that can move us from the self-defeating state of our social structure. "WHEN THE PEOPLE LEAD THE LEADERS WILL FOLLOW." In the future we need to expose myths and increase awareness and support for progressive policies and structures. □□□



Meeting MacPhail

By Barbara Sutherland

End Legislated Poverty had a meeting with Joy MacPhail on the social policy review. I was there.

A few days later I was sitting in a bagel shop and guess who walked in? You are right! Joy MacPhail.

I had seen her on TV the day before telling people to go to the PNE and eat their delicious hamburgers. Being as poor as I am, I said, "We on welfare can't afford it."

"Not even 98 cents to get in?" was her remark. "No," I retaliated. "We are eating out of dumpsters."

Then I asked her for a job. They are full to capacity. When will we win? Altogether she is a good MLA but as far as the social policy review goes, I don't know if she understands the facts as they really are. □□□

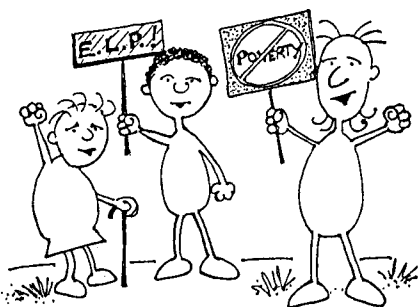
United Nations

NGO's push for action on poverty and jobs

By Linda Marcotte

Remember hearing about the United Nations World Summit on the Environment in Rio? Ambassador Juan Somavia from Chile has called for and is chairing the World Summit on Social Development in Denmark in March, 1995. In August, for two weeks, I was one of the Canadian NGO (Non Government Organizations) delegates to the preparatory conference of the World Summit in New York City.

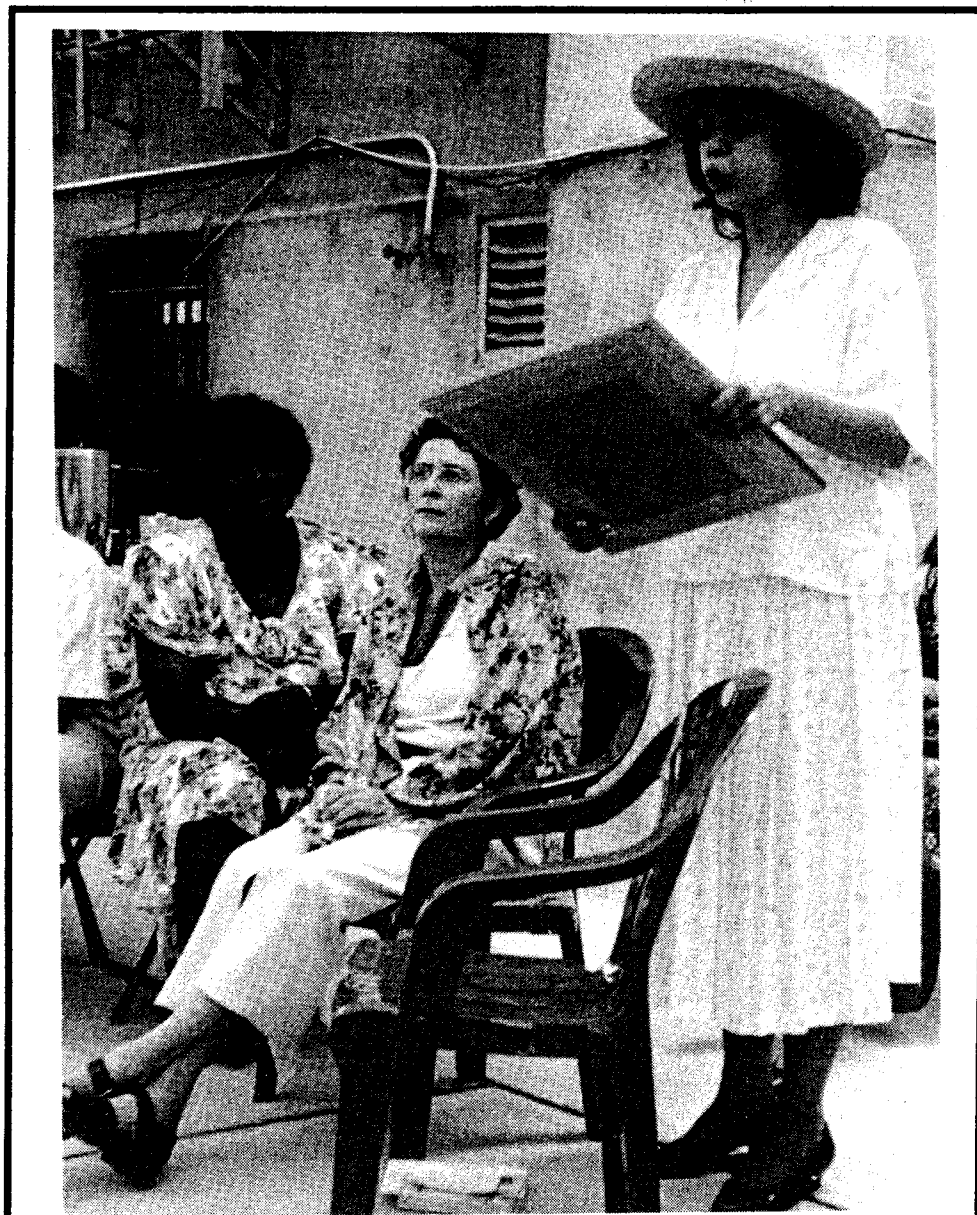
The three issues that the World Summit is working on are poverty, unemployment and social integration. The goal of the Summit is to have all 184 countries in the UN produce a Plan of Action, and a Declaration to deal with these issues. There were hundreds of other NGO representatives there



lobbying their country's official delegates and forming working caucuses to lobby for changes to the wording of the two documents.

We did all this work to help each country's citizens hold their governments accountable to the promises they make in the documents. It was very interesting to hear that Canada has a progressive and liberal reputation internationally. End Legislated Poverty has been educating people here in Canada about the evils of the Federal Social Security Review. There's a contradiction between the promises in the United Nations documents and the Social Security Review that is ripe for exploiting.

Canada is one of the few countries that provide money so that NGO's can participate at these summits. The government is also funding consultations nationally to bring recommendations from low income people to the Summit. ELP and the BC Council for International Cooperation will be working on the B.C. consultation. If you want to get involved, phone our office at 879-1209. □□□



This is Yolanda Rivera who is presenting a proclamation to Ambassador Juan Somavia, the chair of the United Nations World Summit on Social Development. Yolanda is the chairperson of Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association in The Bronx, New York City.

Workfare hurts people with jobs

We're seeing the evidence now

By Jean Swanson

Workfare not only demeans those who are forced to work as cheap labour, but it hurts people with jobs as well. This became very clear to me during the weekend of Sept. 10th when I attended a National Anti-Poverty Organization executive meeting in Alberta and got to meet with low income people and people who work in agencies that serve low income people. I heard three stories which give a good picture of what is already happening with workfare programs in Canada.

Workfare in Newfoundland

Bob Evans, past president of the National Anti-Poverty Organization from Newfoundland, explained one of the effects of the government's benefit program for ex fishers. The ex fishers get a government benefit cheque of about \$200 to \$382 a week. In order to receive the cheques people must participate in training, upgrading or work on various projects. The program also gives bonuses for ex fishers who get jobs outside the fishery. So predictably enough, some of the workers are building houses for a

job or working in other trades. They can afford to undercut the wages of the people who usually do this work because they get the extra benefit. Some of the people who used to have work building houses or working in other trades are unemployed or accepting lower wages, but they don't get a government subsidy.

Workfare in Alberta

Louise Resinek, a NAPO board member from Red Deer, Alberta, told of a notice posted in the Red Deer social services office. The notice advertised two ACE jobs for nursing assistants. ACE stands for Alberta Community Employment. It's a workfare program where the Alberta government pays people \$6 an hour to work for 6 months. The jobs were at the Red Deer General Hospital. While you do have a choice of which job you apply for, says Louise, you must apply for some or you'll be cut off welfare. Alberta has cut 30,000 people off welfare in the last year. Because of funding cuts many hospital workers in Alberta are losing their "real" jobs.

Marjorie Benz, director of the Edmonton Food Bank explained

how a couple on welfare had begged her to create an ACE job for the husband. They were under extreme pressure from their worker to get jobs and feared that they'd be cut off and have absolutely nothing. The wife said that if the Food Bank created an ACE \$6 an hour job for her husband, she would work there for free.

"Part of the terrible consequences of the (Alberta) cuts," explained Colleen Dennehy, a Red Deer activist, "is that people are pitted against people."

These stories made it very clear for me that workfare and wage subsidies are being used by government to pit worker against worker and to promote more cheap labour. They reminded me of the part of the leaked public relations strategy for the social security review that says, "To gain acceptance by the public at large, the action plan must

demonstrate...an indication that the system will encourage participation and contribution (work for government cheques for those who are able)."

There is a reason why Lloyd Axworthy, the federal politician in charge of welfare, hasn't enforced the Canada Assistance Plan Act in Alberta and is thinking of

abolishing CAP for the whole country. CAP says that workfare and forced work activity projects are illegal. The government must want workfare. And they think the public supports them.

I'm hoping we can use stories like these three to prove to people with paid jobs that workfare hurts workers. Decades of welfare statistics show that when decent jobs at decent wages exist, people on welfare take them freely and voluntarily. As a country that still has about ten percent unemployment, we have no business threatening people with starvation if they don't furiously compete for the jobs that other people already hold. □□□



Sound familiar?

"...measures to reduce unemployment should focus on facilitating rapid job search and increased job holding, rather than on increasing the number of available jobs."

Source: Macdonald Commission Report, 1986

The history they forget to mention

What workfare was like in the old days

In 1978 Kevin MacNamee-Annett interviewed Don Eperson, a veteran of unemployed workers struggles and workfare in the 1930's. Don lived in Hamilton, Ontario. Kevin is on End Legislated Poverty's Board and works with Low Income Folks Together in Pt. Alberni.

"In the '30's I was on welfare myself. We used to have work when our turn came around, three days a week on city projects. We could get \$13.20 a week. This was somewhere around '37 or '38. You had to work, or they'd penalize you. They would shut you off for three or four weeks. It was a way of exploitation.

"At that time they'd have you sweeping the streets. There was nothing mechanical then, no bulldozers, no lift-trucks. So the unemployed would have to take brooms and reports to the various yards.

"Back then you couldn't have anything if your were on relief. You couldn't have a radio. If you owned your own house, they

would add up the amount of welfare you received and you'd have to pay that back through your taxes. You couldn't have two of anything. There was plenty of people who had only one pair of underwear. And the welfare people would come right into your home and snoop around, interrogate you.

"People resisted this kind of thinking, of course. There was open air meetings in the market and there were leaders of the unemployed then who tried to organize people. But the establishment shot them down. Not with bullets, but by discouraging them.

"Back then the unemployed organizations in Hamilton were something similar to what you've got now, just a beginning. They had meetings and so on but they weren't any bigger than nowadays.

"They had the same problem then as you have now: getting the public interested in the unemployed, getting the support

of the working man for your demands.

"There wasn't much picketing or strikes back then. The boss had the power to say, 'Here, you're fired.' There was no seniority and the work week was whatever they wanted to set.

"Around then the government implemented relief camps for young single people. Sent you up north and paid you \$5 a day to break stones.

"I'd have to say that the unemployed movement in Hamilton back then didn't win many points. The big problems was that the powers that be made work so hard that the workers couldn't attend meetings. A man would go home and lay down, he was beat. He just couldn't come out to a rally. So the movement never really materialized. We couldn't bring out the numbers.

"There isn't that much that's different nowadays. Politicians say one thing and mean another.

"The biggest percentage of the boys in the army in '39 were the

unemployed, because they had no money. And then the movement faded out suddenly, cause there were jobs. A lot of them got shot down and never came back.

"I thought after the war, there'd be no more welfare. We thought the war would end it, there'd be jobs for everyone. No way. It slipped right back, just like a cycle." □□□



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FLAWLINE

FRONT LINE ADVOCACY WORKERS

Telephone increase hurts low-income people

~ by Joanne Shaw

BC Tel recently announced plans to raise the price of telephone basic rental charges by 2 dollars per year, starting January 1, 1995, and again, each January for the following two years. This will bring the basic phone cost from \$14.55 in Vancouver to \$20.55 on January 1, 1997. That will be an increase of 41.2% over three years. Welfare rates were only raised by 2% last year.

Double the welfare rates to the poverty line and increase minimum wage to \$10 an hour and there won't be a problem with a \$20 per month phone bill. But as they are, even a \$14.55 phone bill is difficult and the \$2 increase upcoming in January will force people to take from their food-money to keep their phones - if they have a phone; many don't.

BC Tel has been competing with long-distance companies for awhile. They plan on lowering

their own long-distance rates and make up for lost profits by increasing their basic rate. "For the increases in local rates, there will be corresponding decreases in long-distance rates," says Don Calder, spokesperson for BC Tel. But you can't save money from zero which is about the amount of money many low-income people spend now on long-distance calls.

"Cheap long-distance rates will not help people in poverty; enough jobs and money will."

It's a problem that corporate profits become more important than someone else's need to eat. Especially when over half a million British Columbians are in poverty.

Low income people probably need phones more than non-low income people. People have to look for jobs. There are safety concerns for many who are forced

to live in high-crime areas or scummy apartments. Many people have to make frequent medical appointments regarding health problems which are direct result of

poverty and not having enough nutrition. Cheap long-distance rates will not help people in poverty; enough jobs and money will. □□□

TIP

Remember that phone, heat, electricity, water and house insurance (not apartment insurance, although we're working on that) can be included as shelter expense.

From:

The British Columbia Welfare Joke Book

It took six years to persuade the Ministry of Human Resources that a telephone is not a luxury item. One worker disagreed with this change in policy, maintaining that not all welfare recipients need telephones. An advocate had the following conversation with her:

- Advocate:** So who doesn't need a telephone? Do you think single parents need a phone?
- Worker:** Well, yes. Most of the single parents have young children. It's hard for them to get out and around, and they might have a medical emergency.
- Advocate:** Okay. What about unemployable people?
- Worker:** Well, you have to be sick to be unemployable, so I guess they would have to have a telephone, because they're sick.
- Advocate:** Okay. What about handicapped people?
- Worker:** Absolutely. They have medical emergencies, and they have to do a lot of their business by telephone, especially if they're house-bound.
- Advocate:** And what about employable people?
- Worker:** Well, I guess it would be pretty hard to look for a job without a telephone. How would someone get in touch with you about a job if you don't have a telephone?
- Advocate:** So that's single parents, the handicapped, unemployables and employables on welfare, that all need telephones. Who's left?
- Worker:** (after a moment's reflection) Uh — no one.



TIP

Many FAWs recognize that a phone is a necessity. GAIN clients have received crisis grants for phone bills to keep their phones from being disconnected. Someone can ask their FAW for this and appeal if turned down.

THE LAW
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The Law Foundation of British Columbia funds the FLAWline section of The Long Haul.

Justice,
not
charity!

FLAWLINE

FRONT LINE ADVOCACY WORKERS

Welfare clients regularly refused money to attend family funerals

~ by Joanne Shaw

Vancouver advocate, Barry Morris of Long House Council of Native Ministry, twice within two weeks was denied client assistance from Social Services. MSS refused two different families money to attend the funerals of immediate family members. The Ministry of Social Services regularly refuses this type of assistance, shifting their legal accountability onto families and churches.

"We can change this so that people will receive the dignity and support they deserve. It's a strong issue that I suspect the general public would support."

Section 21 of the *GAIN Act* allows the director to authorize payment for "the necessary costs of transportation, burial or cremation of a deceased individual's body when there are no other immediate sources of funds or assets," and then, make a "claim by the ministry against the person's estate." It appears that they're willing to transfer the body to the family, but not the family to the body.

Karen Johnston, Ministry of Social Services Communications spokesperson did not have an explanation for these refusals except that their policy specifically says that they do not give out money for transportation to funerals. Policy is not law; it's only one interpretation of the law - and not always, as in this case, a sensible interpretation.

The basis of the *GAIN Act* is to reduce poverty, neglect and suffering. You don't end someone's suffering by making them go out and borrow or beg money, especially when they are trying to cope with the immediate shock and loss of someone they care about. This all happens under a time pressure of having to get to the funeral. It makes a difficult situation chaotic.

Being refused money to attend a funeral is appealable. It would probably easily win at tribunal as a health benefit. But by the time the tribunal happened, the funeral would be over. Also, people should not have to prepare for a tribunal when they should be available for their grief.

According to Advocate, Robin Loxton, a welfare recipient once borrowed money to attend a funeral. On his return, he asked MSS for and was refused a reimbursement. He appealed and lost. One of the problems was that the item was retroactive. The trip was paid for, so he no longer needed money for the trip. He instead had a loan which they refused to pay. The Ministry also said during tribunal that even if it was not retroactive, they didn't see how it would be covered under the *GAIN Regulations*.

According to Loxton, another client used her rent money after being refused money to attend a funeral. When she got home, she showed her Financial Assistance Worker her eviction notice and the FAW paid her rent. That was a big risk; she could have been evicted.

An FAW offered a different client five dollars, the price of the ferry to Victoria to attend her

uncle's funeral, but refused her bus money to get to the ferry terminal. She didn't get to the funeral and instead had her own ritual at home.

"The Ministry of Social Services regularly refuses this type of assistance, shifting their legal accountability onto families and churches."

Though the MSS policy states that it won't help with costs, it will help the client find "other means" to obtain money, such as relatives. But what if their relatives are in poverty and can't afford their own way to the funeral? What if there are no relatives? What if there are no "other means"? Often there are not.

BC's Ombudsperson is not necessarily able to help, according to Dianne Johnston, Intake Officer at the Ombudsperson's office. She recommended that people call their MLAs instead.

MLAs are able to sometimes influence welfare policy, especially if they are high profile. They have contacts with people in Social Services and may be colleagues of the Minister of Social Services.

You can contact your provincial MLA in your own constituency and tell her or him that you want MSS to give people money when they need to go to a funeral — any funeral, including extended family, friends and significant partners not necessarily acknowledged, such as in common-law and homosexual relationships. People don't go to funerals for entertainment or a vacation. If someone wants to attend a funeral, it's important to them. The Ministry of Social Services should help, in order to relieve the "poverty, neglect, and suffering" it is required to.

MLAs were elected into government to serve your community and make sure your issues get brought to Parliament. They need to hear your concerns. When I phoned the office of my

own MLA, Mike Harcourt, premier and MLA of Vancouver / Mount Pleasant constituency (253-7905), a Constituency Assistant of Mike Harcourt's immediately phoned Joy MacPhail's office with my complaint.

We can work to change the regulations about attending funerals so that people will receive the dignity and support they deserve. It's a strong issue that I suspect the general public would support. Our MLA's phone numbers and addresses are in the blue pages of the telephone book. □□□



**"Poor people gonna rise up
And get their share.
Poor people gonna rise up
And take what's theirs."**

~ Tracy Chapman

THE  LAW
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The Law Foundation of British Columbia funds the FLAWline section of The Long Haul.

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Double standard department

Over 2000 rich escape income tax payments

While Joy MacPhail and Ralph Klein were busy tracking down 90 people on welfare who claimed benefits in both Alberta and B. C.,

Revenue Canada announced that over 2000 Canadians who earned over \$100,000 in 1992 didn't pay any income tax.

MacPhail, the B. C. Social Services Minister, and Alberta's Premier Klein said that their sleuthing had discovered a tax payer rip off of \$452,000.

This makes us ask the question: what is really fraud? Single people who collect even two welfare cheques from B. C. and Alberta would still be living in poverty.

Yet if all 2000 of the rich people had paid the average rate for people who get over \$100,000 (22 percent), the government would be \$44 million richer. These 2000 rich people could hardly use "need" or "poverty" as an excuse for their RRSP's, carrying charges, interest expenses, and lifetime capital gains exemptions. □□□

ELP's column on



Hope in spite of the New World Order

Thanks to Sandy Cameron for finding this quote

"They do not want to see that in the heart of every nation there are men and women who fight against any form of oppression, marginality, and exploitation, and that defying injustice has always

brought great changes and progress for humanity.

"Therein lies our optimism that changes are possible. People are struggling for them, and without doubt they will be attained. In every nation some lights remain. They may seem weak, but history has taught us that these flames are the ones that light up consciences and warm the will to continue. When they become more intense, they move peoples and nations."

Cuahtemoc Cardenas, Mexican leader of the Party of the Democratic Revolution



This month's thanks

Thanks to the following volunteers at End Legislated Poverty this month: Lynne Melcombe, Bill Den Hertog, Barbara Sutherland, Sandra Pronteau, Denise Brown, Teckla Henderson, Maureen Davis, William Kay, David Jaffe, Dave Ross, Antoinette Saleh, Irene Schmidt, Jim Pence, Joan Holloway, Erika Aumueller.

Thanks also to the Hospital Employees Union, Vancouver and District Labour Council, Vancouver Public Library, and First United Church. □□□



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Readers respond to Billionaire Contest

Last month *The Long Haul* reported that there were 358 billionaires in the world. If they each were left with a mere million dollars, \$764.4 billion worth of wealth would be left. How would you use this money, we asked. This is what you said:

Help volunteer group, build housing, buy land

From E. A. Douglas

The money could be set up in several ways such as

- A trust fund to help volunteer groups who assist others
- Funds for better housing
- The chance to purchase large acreages for those who wish to provide their own food naturally
- Setting up good clean drop-in centres and transportation to these places for weekends away from cities. That way everyone would have the

chance for relaxation or discussion or just a place to be by and for themselves.

So much could be done for everyone. I know the pitfalls and trials as I raised my own four plus had umpteen dozen extended family members desperately needing a person/place to talk or be a guest. We all need someone/something to help find ourselves. Just some ideas. I feel others will add generously to these so put your thinking caps on and be free with your ideas. Take care all. God bless.

Increase purchasing power of the poor

From Mezei Istvan...

In response to your Billionaires Contest, here are my thoughts on how to get rid of poverty and end the unjust way wealth is distributed.

Take the \$764 billion owned by the earth's 358 billionaires. Divide this money equally among all the people and everybody would have \$130 a piece.

In some countries \$130 is equal to two weeks wages or more. I would venture to say that 99.9 per cent of the people would immediately spend this month on food or clothing. Just imagine the jolt the food and garment industry would receive.

You see, industrialists and entrepreneurs don't create jobs. They only hire people when more people demand more goods and services. So if we're to end poverty and unemployment around the world, give money to those who have none. They'll spend it and more jobs will appear.

The less money a person has the quicker they'll spend new money on basic necessities. If a person earns \$100,000, they won't spend another \$5000, they'll hoard it. But give \$5000 to a person who only earns \$25,000 a year and that person will quickly spend the money.

We must also make sure that people who work around the world earn good wages. One way to do this is to raise the minimum wage immediately to \$15,000 a year.

Our exploitationist compatriots, upon hearing such ideas start screaming that higher minimum wages cause even higher unemployment. They conveniently forget to observe that in countries with no minimum wage like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, there are much higher rates of unemployment than in Canada; or that in the forties and fifties wages were higher than today, yet there was full employment.

Ronald Reagan and his business friends want to take us back to the 19th Century. They want to drive down wages and our standard of living. "Nothing is too good for the employer," they say. "Anything is good enough for the employee."

We must set up an economic or political order in which people earn enough money to buy homes, food and clothes, pay for the education of their children and take care of their aging parents. My proposal of what to do with the billionaires fortunes takes us some distance toward these goals. □□□

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ELP HELPS - information for low income people

New law helps tenants get security deposits

A new law about security deposits went into effect on Sept. 15th. This law says you must get your security deposit back within 15 days after you move out. The landlord can only keep you money if

- you agree in writing to give the landlord some or all of your deposit to pay for damages or unpaid rent
- the landlord has asked for an arbitration hearing to make a claim for damages or unpaid rent
- the landlord already has

an arbitrator's order saying you owe the landlord money.

If the landlord keeps your deposit

You should be able to get it back if

- fifteen days have passed since you moved out, and
- you have not received a notice that the landlord has asked for an arbitration hearing.

The first thing to do is ask the landlord for your money

back, either verbally or in writing.

If the landlord does not give your money back, you can go to the nearest Residential Tenancy Branch in Victoria or Burnaby or to the nearest B. C. Access Centre or Government Agent and fill out an **Application for a Registrar's Order-Return of Security Deposit.**

If you need help with this, call the Tenant's Rights Action Coalition Hotline at 255-0546 or toll-free at 1-800-665-1185.

The Tenants' Coalition wanted government to abolish security deposits altogether, "but this is the next best thing," said TRAC spokesperson Tom Durning. □□□

Thanks to the **Legal Services Society** for funding for pages 11 and 12 of *The Long Haul*.

Free law classes

Here are some free law classes you can go to. To register or get more information, call the number in brackets.

Federal benefits for seniors. Barclay Manor (689-0571). Oct. 6. 10:30 AM to noon.

Living wills. Kyle Centre (937-5541). Oct. 5. 1:30 to 3:30 PM.

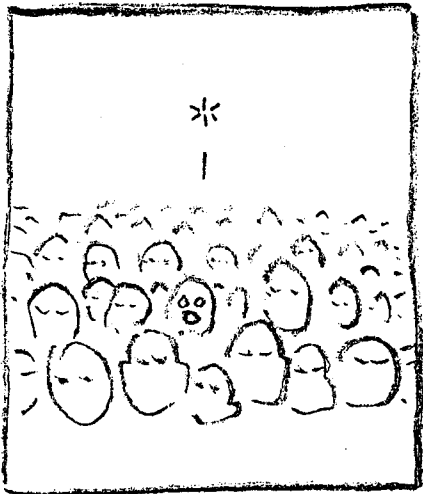
Loans to family and friends. Trout Lake Centre (879-6222). Nov. 22. 1:00 to 2:30 PM.

Property rights in a relationship. 411 Seniors Centre (684-8171). Oct. 11. 1:30 to 3:00.

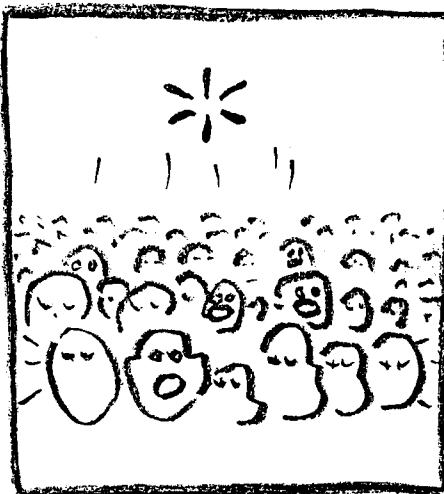
Scams and schemes. Dogwood Pavilion (933-6089). Nov. 17. 10:00 to noon. Also Edmonds Centre (525-1671). Nov. 18. 10:30 to noon.

Seniors benefits: am I getting them all? Champlain School (257-8315) Oct. 12. 12:30 to 2:00. Also New West Library (521-8874). Oct. 12. 2:30 to 4:00.

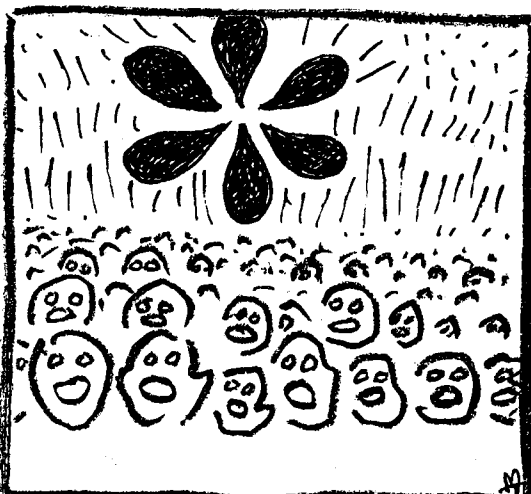
Other classes are available. The People's Law School also has free booklets available on legal issues. Phone 688-2565 for info or to get the booklets. □□□



When one person shouts.



When a few shout.



When we all shout together.

Free student legal advice available

Once again this fall, UBC law students are offering free legal advice to those who cannot afford a lawyer. The program will hold twenty neighbourhood clinics throughout the Lower Mainland.

This service is provided by students with the Law Student's Legal Advice Program (LSLAP) with the help of the program's supervising lawyer, Brian Higgins.

Advice is offered on a variety of subjects, including small claims actions, landlord-tenant disputes, welfare, UIC claims and appeals, WCB, wills, employer-employee relations and criminal matters. LSLAP also offers a Do-Your-Own Divorce program which

provides low cost divorces for those seeking uncontested divorces.

The program also has specialized clinics for First Nations persons, women, seniors, Persons with AIDS, and Cantonese speaking people.

LSLAP has been working in

the community for 25 years and is today B. C.'s second largest legal aid organization.

For information regarding clinic times and locations, call 822-5791. For more information contact Nikos Harris, LSLAP public relations officer, at 822-5791. □□□



ELP HELPS - information for low income people

Get help with welfare problems from these groups

These groups have advocates who will help you with legal and other problems. The advocates are people who will stick up for you. They are not lawyers, but they have experience getting people their rights.

In the Lower Mainland

Downtown Eastside Residents Association. 9 E. Hastings, Vancouver. Phone 682-0931. Open Monday through Friday.

First United Church. 320 E. Hastings. Come on Monday through Friday, 9 to 11:30 am. Phone 681-8365.

B. C. Coalition of People with Disabilities. #204 456 W. Broadway, Vancouver. Phone 872-1278. Open 9 to 5 Monday through Friday.

Law Students Legal Advice Program. For help with a wide variety of legal problems. Locations throughout the Lower Mainland. Call 822-5791.

Tenant's Rights Coalition Hotline. Phone 255-0546.

Legal Services Society. 191 Alexander St., Vancouver. Open 9 to 3:30 weekdays except Wednesday. Open 12:30 to 3:30 on Wednesday.



If your group would like to be listed in this section, call ELP at 879-1209.

For help with welfare, serious criminal problems or urgent family problems related to the law.

Federated Anti-Poverty Groups of BC. Phone 533-4818 for information and referral.

Battered Women's Support Services. Crisis line is 687-1867. Support groups, legal advocacy, counseling.

Langley Legal Assistance Centre. Phone 530-5811. Appointments preferred. Drop-ins welcome. Welfare, landlord-tenant, small claims, wills, etc. #204 20189 56th Ave., Langley.

United Native Nations. Phone 688-1821. Appointments preferred. Help Aboriginal People apply for status, get documents, medical services. Help with welfare, child apprehension, etc.

Welfare and Handicapped Persons Rights. Welfare, UI, CPP, etc. Call 852-3744 for appointment or drop in at #61 2800 Allwood St., Clearbrook.

Downtown Granville Tenants' Association. Tenant, CPP, UI, welfare rights. Drop in at 1067 Granville, Vancouver. Open 9 to 5 Monday through Friday.

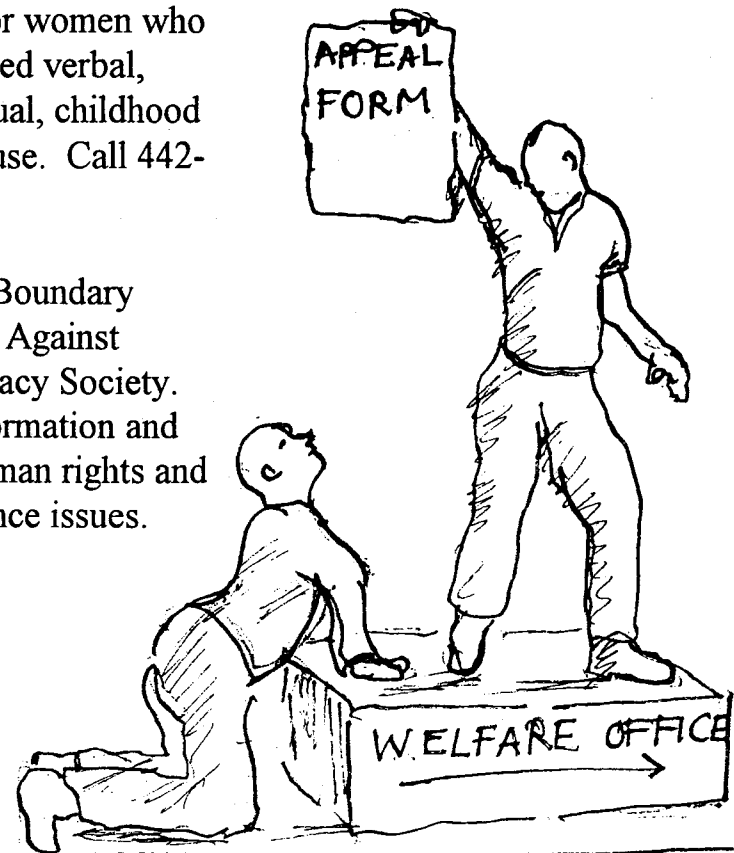
Outside the Lower Mainland

Grand Forks: Boundary Family and Individual Services Society. Counseling and legal support services for women, families, and youth. Call 442-5355.

Grand Forks: Women's Support Services. Advocacy, counseling, support groups

and referrals for women who have experienced verbal, emotional, sexual, childhood or financial abuse. Call 442-5355.

Greenwood: Boundary Creek Fighting Against Poverty Advocacy Society. Advocacy, information and referrals on human rights and income assistance issues. Call 445-6726.



DON'T KNEEL: APPEAL!

Victoria: Together Against Poverty. Phone 361-3521. Appointments preferred. Help with welfare, UI, tenant problems. Public education and organizing on poverty issues.

Terrace: Terrace Anti-Poverty Group. Drop in to Room 200, 4721 Lazelle Ave. Welfare, UI, tenant, etc. Phone 635-4631.

Gibsons: Sunshine Coast Advocacy Action Group. Welfare, UI, and other advocacy and education about poverty. Phone 886-2425. Open Monday and Wednesday 10:30 to 12:30.

Smithers: Bulkley Valley Anti-Poverty Group. For welfare advocacy. Contact Ruth Milne at 847-2840 or Vince or Diana at 847-8959.

Pt. Alberni: Pt. Alberni Women's Resource Society. Call 724-7111. Prefer appointments. Help with family court, women and children's counseling, transition house.

Nelson: The Advocacy

Centre. Phone 352-5777. Prefer appointments. Open Monday through Thursday 9 to 4 at #4 560 Baker St., Nelson. Welfare, handicapped, custody and access, separation and divorce, child apprehension, sexual abuse, wife assault, etc.

Powell River: Legal Services. Legal info, assistance with welfare, pensions, small claims, landlord-tenant problems, etc 4746 Joyce Ave. Call 485-9871.

Penticton: Legal Services. Legal info, assistance with welfare, pensions, small claims, etc. #103 304 Martin St. Phone 493-0210.

Prince George: Active Support Against Poverty. Phone 562-6112. Welfare, resumes, filling out forms. Tenant drop in clinic. Free clothing.

Tenant's Coalition Hotline: 1-800-665-1185.

B. C. Coalition of People with Disabilities Hotline: 1-800-663-1278.