

# Anti-Poverty Committee News

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## APC Out to Get 'Em

APC has been pounding the pavement the last few weeks. Amidst the unofficial opening of the Olympic gentrification, the APC has been organizing tenant unions within Hotels that the city is closing down to make room for condos and luxurious hotels. In the agreement signed by COPE and the IOC, the DTES is to be revitalized by throwing tenants out of the rooms they have occupied for decades. The city has granted demolition permits to development corporations who subvert city bylaws and trample the anti-conversion by law.

The back drop of the DTES in the early fall was to make for an ideal photo opportunity for Canada Governor General. Unfortunately the city and police were unable to power wash away the dissent of poor people when they swept through the ghetto, arresting and red zoning people so as to roll out the red carpet.

The GG's tour down one street, from a café to an art gallery, was led by Mayor Larry Campbell who sits as chair of the police board and councilor Jim Green who recently informed us all that there is in fact no homeless people in the DTES. Needless to say we don't approve of politicians using our poverty, the poverty that they created, as a chance to score political points. About 30 of us swarmed the Governor General and her entourage and told them loud and clear that they are not welcome, even if she is the queen's representative.

Sadly we missed our chance to enforce our red zone order on Stan Hagen for due to growing public disgust he was replaced as Minister of Human Resources by Suzan Brice. With the threat to run them out

of town again, the Liberal's DTES speaking tour was quickly cancelled following posters on every pole that depicted Hagen's head in a guillotine with the statement above "one cut they forgotten."

We did have a chance to re-group days later when we rented a school bus to take us to City Hall. City staff was to make their final recommendation to city council as to what proposal for the Woodward's building to approve. Seeing as all three proposals only offer 100 units of social housing, we felt it our place to remind the city of the Woodsquat's demand that all of Woodward's be converted in to social housing now!

Fifty very pissed off poor people piled into city chambers and unleashed a verbal assault. Demanding COPE respond to the disaster of homelessness we called on all empty buildings owned by the city to be opened as emergency shelter. We stressed that instead of the city closing buildings and relocating people into the streets, that they must buy the buildings and keep them open.

Now we are preparing for our Rise the Rates campaign that will be bringing us to welfare offices and government meetings across BC. We will continue escalating our movement and working with more and more groups to bring the struggles of our lives into the streets and halls of power.

## No to Social Cleansing!



The Safe Streets Act is the latest proposed tool to be used in the war against the poor. By criminalizing acts such as panhandling and squeegee work the Liberals are outlawing the last resorts used to subsist in a life of day-to-day-survival.

This is a social policy the Liberals excel at: take away your livelihood then ensure there is no way to survive. This is a campaign of social cleansing.

When a person is forced off welfare they are thrown into a job club by the ministry. If they or any of the other thousands of people in the same club are unable to secure employment in a limited amount of time they are refused all income assistance and are unable to reapply to welfare for three years.

The Safe Street Act and two year time limit are only a couple examples of how poor people are subjected to a life that you must fight in order survive. The slaughter of women in the sex trade here in Vancouver displays to what extent the horror of social cleansing has been allowed both by government compliance and public complacency.

Placed in the proper context of social cleansing, the SSA reveals the ongoing strategy of the Liberals. Creating such a climate of destitution leaves poor working people with little hope or choice. As we have seen with the implementation of the \$6 training wage and workfare, people in the cheap labour pool are begging for the opportunity to feed their families.

In this province where schools and hospitals are being closed while millions are invested in supplying a shelter system to warehouse the homeless, all working people must ask how far are we willing to go. When will enough be enough?

## Sun Peaks Arrests



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**we'll only get what we organize to take!**

## Restore Legal Aid for Immigrants and Refugees in BC

Given the increasing incarceration and deportation of refugee communities, the cuts to legal aid will only serve to perpetuate the process of criminalization and exploitation of vulnerable and oppressed peoples.

The Legal Services Society is an independent society that provides legal aid and community training. Refugee communities, already the most vulnerable and marginalized communities who have lived through indescribable horrors, will lose fundamental legal protection and will not be able to exercise equal rights under the law.

In the year 2003-2004, legal aid funding for immigration cases totaled \$4.9 million. However, provincial Attorney General Geoffrey Plant told LSS that funding for these cases is a federal responsibility and the LSS and Attorney General signed a Memorandum of Understanding on March 5, 2003 that all provincial funding for immigration and refugee cases would be \$0 as of February 28 2004. Earlier this year, an agreement between the provincial and federal governments has provided a token dismal \$1.7 million, resulting in catastrophic effects including implementation of a profiling-based, pre-screening process for refugee cases and judicial review.

The Anti-Poverty Committee working with No One Is Illegal continues to demand the restoring of legal aid to \$5 million to maintain adequate access to legal services and call for a repeal of any profiling-based screening process.

### Arrests at Sun Peaks

Sept. 21, 2004

Dear Friends:

It was a very sad day today, I was at the Kamloops Law Courts listening to an appeal regarding previous arrests, and during the break I listened to my messages and one was from the RCMP telling me that they were on their way to Sun Peaks to execute the enforcement order. Apparently they felt that nothing was being accomplished for their advantage between our talks with the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council.

I therefore left to Sun Peaks and made it before the police acted on the enforcement order. Our people and our non-indigenous supporters packed their personal belongings, I then made arrangements to bring my truck to the camp location. Janice Billy also drove her vehicle to our camp area. We then loaded our vehicles with our stuff and waited the police to come down the hill. They did and they read out to four people the court order and proceeded to arrest people. The first person left and therefore was not arrested. The remaining three were arrested and brought to Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada.

One person did give their name and was released immediately. Two of our people would not give their name. One person who was identified this evening by another prisoner not related to this situation. But one person is still in custody and is in the process of taking a fast.

It is very clear that the courts system and police force do not take us into consideration. The legal system is basically corrupt and is set up to steal our land and use it without even thinking about what we feel about our land. The system only thinks about what the settler or investor feels toward our land.

That kind of thinking is from Pre-Delgamuukw or before Aboriginal Title was judicially recognized because that kind of logic cannot work now, despite the fact that British Columbia judges still think it can. In this case they looked at Frank Quinn's \$36 million dollar condo and townhouse sales and said that he was suffering irreparable harm, but they did not take into consideration that he was building those condos and townhouses on our land. I know we are actually suffering a bigger loss than Frank Quinn because we lose our land through third party alienation, and he gets to sell it and become a millionaire, but we lose our culture and land. That is a real rip-off.

I know judges are scrambling to try and rethink how to keep the economic status quo and sound legally logical but I really think they cannot. The fact we own the land means that certain things are going to change. I suppose we need to keep the pressure up and hope that more indigenous peoples here in BC get with the fact that now is the time for change and put pressure on the system.

We own the land, they cannot deny that, they can only get us to extinguish our rights, but if we stand up we can defeat them. It is all a matter of belief in our rights that counts. I saw that today in the strength of our men who stood up to a century and half old system of genocide. The use of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for political purposes by using them as an armed force to settle outstanding Aboriginal Title issues about Sun Peaks expansion.

Clearly the federal and provincial government policies have failed therefore they are using armed force to allow Frank Quinn, Darcy Alexander and Sun Peaks to go on their merry way in an Secwepemc free zone inside our Secwepemc territory of Skwelkwel'welt.

We need your help to boycott Sun Peaks and Delta Hotels. Also get after the federal and provincial governments to get their policies in line with recognizing our Aboriginal Title now.

- Arthur Manuel

For more information see: <http://apc.resist.ca/skwelkwelwelt>

**no justice on stolen native land!**

### What is APC?



The Anti-Poverty Committee is an organization of poor and working people, who fight for poor people, their rights, and an end to poverty by any means necessary. The poor face constant attack under the capitalist system and these attacks have only intensified under the BC Liberal government.

The BC Liberal's brutal policies - the cuts to welfare, the six dollar training wage, the privatization of public services, the cuts to social programs, the restriction of democratic and human rights - all are designed to transfer wealth from poor and working people to the rich and powerful.

APC is committed to fighting the brutal policies of the BC Liberals through direct action, mass mobilization, and casework. We oppose racism, sexism, homophobia, and all other forms of oppression. APC is an independent and democratic organization open to anyone who agrees with our basis of unity. We are committed to working in solidarity with the struggles of other progressive movements, locally, nationally, and internationally, to end poverty and injustice.

### Get Involved in APC

#### APC General Meetings

Every Tuesday, 6pm, top floor,  
251 Union Street, buzz 900

#### APC Community Meetings

First Tuesday of every month  
Starting Tuesday, Oct 5th, 7pm  
251 Union Street, buzz 900

<http://apc.resist.ca>

