



Anti-Poverty Committee News

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2005

People's Inquiry into Police Violence

We Declare War on this Government!

On January 27th, 2005 the Anti-Poverty Committee hosted the first People's Inquiry into Police Violence and Compliance. This event was the first in a series of public forums to discuss the reality of police violence in Vancouver and beyond, and the lack of justice available to people whose lives have been brutalized by police.

This is an issue that has persisted in local and international headlines for years. Police forces here in Vancouver and abroad continue to kill our brothers and sisters with impunity and we continue to demand and fight for justice. We know now better than ever that this justice will never be forthcoming from the system

these cops are sworn to protect and uphold. Police violence and murder and not accidents or occasional excesses—they are clear attacks against all people oppressed under the imperialist ruling classes.

We believe that police violence must be exposed and stopped. Right now, all the bureaucratic and juridical institutions who have been charged with this responsibility work only to protect and insulate the police. We do not believe that either the Public Complaints Commission, and certainly not other police forces, have any other class interests that the protection of the police and the maintenance of the status quo. We refuse to look to a government that uses law only to further criminalize and punish poor people for any retribution against these thugs.

Speakers at the event on January 27th were Julie Berg, sister of Jeff Berg who was killed by the VPD; Megan Oleson and Wynn Buchwitz, volunteers from the 327 Carrall Street Safer Injection Site; Kat Norris, from the Indigenous Action Group; Rob Morgan, president of the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users; and Anthony Fenton, who spoke about the RCMP's involvement in training Haiti's police forces, most of whom are former death squad members.



ness around International Women's Day, the International Day Against Police Brutality and the International Day Against Racism. The second forum will take place on Thursday, March 17th and will focus on police violence as it affects women. On March 24th our third People's Inquiry will focus on how these issues affect people of colour and the fourth forum, on Wednesday, March 30th is titled 'Policing Poverty.' All of the forums are taking place at SFU Harbour Centre (515 W. Hastings St.) and will begin at 6:30pm.



"What's the solution?... REVOLUTION!!!" screamed over 200 pissed off poor people as they pushed past Victoria police officers and stormed the front steps of the BC Legislature. As the cops stood by

powerless, the front of the Legislature was occupied by militant demonstrators. Meanwhile, the Liberals were locked down inside, while Finance Minister Colin Hansen delivered the budget speech.

The demonstration was called by Vancouver's Anti-Poverty Committee (APC) and the Victoria-based Communities Solidarity Coalition (CSC). From the Downtown Eastside (DTES), where the Liberals campaign of social cleansing is most pronounced, 3 buses holding 150 welfare recipients, homeless persons, students, immigrants, sisters and brothers ferried across the Georgia Strait and onto the Liberals' home turf.

There the APC was greeted by our comrades, who have been waging their struggle under the shadow of the Legislature. Met by food and friends we soon took to the streets. The police, who thought we would just take a stroll directly to the Legislature, were caught off guard when the loud and angry march veered in the opposite direction and snaked through the streets of downtown Victoria.

The angry mob stopped only to paste our demands onto government buildings. Throughout the march it was made clear time and time again that we were not the shock troops of the NDP and by no means are we asking for more progressive rulers. We have forgotten neither Gustafsen Lake nor the NDP's welfare cuts. When we

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we'll only get what we organize to take!

We Declare War on this Government con't



immediate increase of welfare it is so our sisters and brothers can survive day-to-day struggles. Demanding food and shelter is not conceding to our government; it is addressing the economic inequality that sustains the system. If we cannot take shelter and food from the government who refuses to provide, then our struggle is not strengthening our communities. If we are not strong then we cannot defend one another.

To fight in solidarity, in order to win, we must be strong.

With this united strength we began the final stretch of the march, heading directly toward the looming legislature. While chanting "raise the rates now!" we made our way to the police lines that had formed along the front steps. Wasting no time we pushed past the police and took over the front of the building. With the Liberals covering behind the locked gates of the colonial fortress that is the BC Legislature, we held our ground and were not intimidated by police.

The success of this demo was not in its economic or political disruption, but in the increased ability of poor people to fight back. When the Liberals replaced the NDP 4 years ago, most poor people felt "if its not a kick to the teeth when you're down, it's a kick to the teeth when you're down" but in the long run the Liberals have succeeded in trumping the NDP in ruthlessness.

For the first year of the Liberals reign, organized labour launched what their leaders called a 'fight back.' After 3 years of backing down, the fight back that had initially mobilized tens of thousands of people is now known as the 'sell out'. But not everyone has chosen the cowardly route of throwing their chips in with the NDP. Groups like the APC and Communities Solidarity Coalition, working in solidarity with other grassroots organizations, have refused to retreat! The budget day was for us a declaration of our strength and commitment to continued struggle. We will not be bought off or sold out. We will fight by all means and united we will win!

People's Inquiry: Speech made by Rob, President of VANDU

... One of our brothers of the DTES was brutally murdered on Boxing Day. His name was Gerald Chenary. Different stories come out of that situation. What is the most likely scenario is that Gerald was in the ally shooting up when the two rookie police officers showed up and they demanded that he drop his rig. When a person is flying high on their drug of choice, it is hard for that person to stand still.

One version that I heard an officer of the VPD state is that Gerald was actually on top of this female officer stabbing her, yet the only thing is mentioned is that they both received traumatic counselling, not receiving medical attention.

What about the traumatic counselling that the residents of the DTES need after each brutal attack that the VPD is responsible for? The fear of the lethal attacks that the VPD is using without punity is causing panic and distrust amongst us. Who is going to be next? That question is common amongst not only us drug users but the rest of the residents of the DTES. . .

demand justice it is not their justice we want to die by.

We are well aware that under this colonial system no government will ever be able to provide justice or dignity for poor people. We mobilize because we understand we will only get what we organize to take! When we demand an

What is APC?



The Anti-Poverty Committee is an organization of poor and working people, who fight for

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

Upcoming Events...

People's Inquiries into Police Brutality

March 17th

Women and Police Violence
6:30pm, SFU Harbour Centre

March 24th

Racist Police Violence
6:30, SFU Harbour Centre

March 30th

Policing Poverty
6:30pm, SFU Harbour Centre

APC Fundraiser
April 1st, TBA

Safe Streets Action

2pm, April 9th
Victoria Square

Check out our website: <http://apc.resist.ca>