

Anti-Poverty Committee News

50 E. Hastings, Vancouver BC, Coast Salish Territory
604-682-2726 apc@resist.ca http://apc.resist.ca

March/April 2004 #17

Storming Our Way into the Month of Disruption



centre's on April 1st. They have escalated their legislated class war on the people of this province to the point where the people have no choice but to counter attack. Our sisters and brothers in HEU are gearing up to strike back against the government that is privatizing their workplaces. CUPE is mobilizing for a day of protest that will shut large sectors of this province down. And grassroots organizations are stepping up their struggle and working to strengthen solidarity.

Refuse to Retreat Demo and Conference

The Anti-Poverty Committee has been fighting tooth and nail to raise the pitch of disruption. On February 20th, we assembled the largest anti-poverty demonstration in over a year. Close to two hundred poor people marched to an abandoned welfare office to protest the ongoing displacement of people from assistance to the streets. The office was opened as a community center for the weekend where we held our "Refuse to Retreat" conference. Over 25 different organizations, representing the diversity of the movement, participated in a series of strategizing workshops. The conference ended with the almost unanimous decision to create a BC direct action orientated common front.

National Day in Support of Mohamed Cherfi

On March 12th, sixty people gathered in front of the Canadian Immigration Center in Vancouver to denounce the sanctuary violation that led to Mohamed Cherfi's arrest and deportation from Montreal. Mohamed Cherfi is an Algerian refugee and an

outspoken organizer with the Action Committee for Non-Status Algerians. He had taken refuge in a Quebec City church when police officers violated the sanctuary of the church and took Cherfi into custody.

APC along with No One Is Illegal and others stormed the CIC office and demanded that Mohamed Cherfi be brought back home from America here he is to be deported to Algeria.

International Day Against Police Brutality

March 16th marked the International Day against Police Brutality.

April promises to be a month that may end the Liberal's rule once and for all. The Liberals are still cutting welfare and the funding for all women

APC Stands in Solidarity with Gustafsen Defenders

On March 20th, Noam Chomsky came to Vancouver and the city marched to show their opposition to the war and occupation in Iraq. That evening the Anti-Poverty Committee stood with the Native Youth Movement, the Native Solidarity Network, No One Is Illegal-Vancouver and others, in solidarity with the defenders from Gustafsen Lake to remind the Vancouver "progressive" community of the war and occupation closer to home.

Several Gustafsen defenders and their supporters distributed information about the 1995 siege at Gustafsen Lake at the NDP/Svend Robinson fundraiser where Chomsky was speaking that evening. The information was to remind those attending the talk of the role the NDP played in the largest paramilitary operation in Canadian history. The unceded land at Gustafsen Lake which has long been the Sundance grounds of the Shuswap, was being used by a local rancher who in 1995 began to threaten those gathered for the Sundance. The conflict escalated, with the help of the media and the political agenda of the government, to involve the RCMP, the Canadian Military, as well as the provincial and federal governments.

During the stand-off, the police and military fired automatic weapons and 77,000 rounds of ammunition against about a dozen members of the aboriginal community and some supporters, who had taken up arms to defend Shuswap land.

The defenders were subjected to a coordinated smear campaign and were later put on the longest criminal trial in Canadian history. The trial, however, did expose the false information and allegations that the provincial government and the RCMP fed to the public. This information has yet to be presented to the public by the Canadian media which was complicit during the siege and to this date there has been no public inquiry.

By demanding a call for the public inquiry and demonstrating on March 20th, supporting organizations in Vancouver continue to strengthen their



con't on the next page

con't on the next page

refuse to retreat!

Storming Our Way into the Month of Disruption

con't from the front page

Pairing up with the Housing Action Committee we went right to those responsible for supporting and encouraging police brutality. The first stop was the DTES police station where we added our voice to the raising demand that there be an independent inquiry into the VPD's acts of brutality and murder.

Then we delivered a letter to a Vancouver Agreement office. The tragic City Wide Enforcement Initiative (a.k.a. Operation Torpedo) is reaching its 1st year anniversary. Seeing as it has only intensified the catastrophe of poverty in the DTES, city hall will no longer fund the initiative, so now the police are begging hat in hand for the money from the Vancouver Agreement to fund their brutal crackdown on poor people. We demand not one cent of the money meant to be spent on the people be allocated to the police.

Our last stop was the office of the Business Improvement Association (BIA) who is currently lobbying for a safe street act. The Safe Street Act was first introduced in Ontario in 2000. It is a series of laws that collectively outlaw street work such as panhandling and squeegeeing. The enforcement of the act has lead to an increase of overdoses, homelessness, dependence, and displacement. We warned the BIA that we will do what ever it takes to shut them down if they continue their attempts to further persecute poverty.

The War at Home:

International Day of Action Against the War and Occupation

On March 20th for the day of global action against the war, the APC threw in our lot by assisting in raising awareness to the ongoing war here in British Columbia. Working with the Native Solidarity Network, we helped bring down car loads of indigenous sovereigntists who fought to defend their rights at Gustafsen Lake. After the peace rallies there was a benefit event for the NDP. With the defenders of Gustafsen Lake and a fist full of supporters we aggressively reminded those financially contributing to the NDP, of the party's role in the siege of Gustafsen Lake. We denounced the NDP for the war

criminals that they are.

The following day, APC rented space at the Aboriginal Friendship Center so that the defenders would have an opportunity to discuss their struggle and for us working in the city to strategize how we can strengthen our solidarity with the sovereignty movements being



carried out across every inch of this province that still remains unceded indigenous territory.

The Month of Disruption

The momentum of the last month is now leading us into April. The APC declares April to be the Month of Disruption. We will support to the best of our militant abilities all people fighting this government; those who want to replace the balance of power and put it in our communities. We know that strength is growing through the struggle. The APC refuses to retreat and we will do what ever it takes to defeat this government!

APC Stands in Solidarity with Gustafsen Defenders

con't from the front page

solidarity with aboriginal communities fighting for justice on occupied land. Support will continue on March 25th at the "Down with the Delta" rally in support of the Secwepemc people's struggle to defend and protect their land from the Sun Peaks Ski Resort and Delta Hotels. Much like the events at Gustafsen Lake, this is continued aggression against the indigenous people of this land. The people's struggle must and will be supported.

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 case-work. 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, 327 Carrall in the DTES beside Pigeon Park Childcare and coffee provided

Donate

APC relies on donations from individuals & organizations. You can make a cheque out to the Anti-Poverty Committee.

New APC Office

The APC Office is now located at:
50 E. Hastings
Vancouver, BC
Coast Salish Territory
V6A 1N1
Office hours are Mon-Fri 10-5

New APC website:
<http://apc.resist.ca>

no justice on stolen native land!