



## VANCOUVER and DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL

### REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2015

1. **LOCATION:** Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph Street, Vancouver, BC

2. **CHAIRPERSON:** Stephen Von Sychowski, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

3. **ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

*MSC that the minutes of the March 17, 2015 meeting be adopted.*

4. **CREDENTIALS:**

The following credentials were received since the last meeting: (\* = recredentialled, A = alternate)

COPE Local 378

Richard Stangeland

IAFF Local 18

Geoff Heibert

CUPE Local 454

Richard Carter

Hugh Cullinan \*

Nancy McLean

*MSC to obligate/seat the delegate(s).*

5. **GUEST SPEAKER:**

a) Aaron Ekman, BC Federation of Labour Treasurer - \$15 Minimum Wage

Brother Ekman thanked Denise Moffatt, the Director of Campaigns at the BC Fed, who works tirelessly on preparing these presentations, campaigns, and materials.

The Fight for \$15 Campaign came out of the Convention. VDLC delegates were provided packages which included information gathered from initial polling and information from a report released by the CCPA. Income inequality is one of the fiercest issues of our time. Wealth is being concentrated into a smaller and smaller group of hands – the top 10% of the population controls over half of the country's wealth; and the numbers are higher in BC. When this happens, the foundations of our economy start to shake. We haven't seen this degree of income disparity since the 1920s. When a growing number of people can't participate in the economy it's a problem.

Brother Ekman presented a graph depicting union density in Canada; the graph shows an alarming rate of de-unionization, faster still in BC. There is a direct relationship between the decrease in unionized workers and the concentration of wealth into fewer and fewer hands. The call across the country is for more than just \$15 minimum wage, it is a call for \$15 minimum wage and a union. The fastest way to lift people out of poverty is to lift the minimum wage, but the best way to keep them out of poverty is to provide unionized jobs.

The book *Our Daily Bread* by Geoff Mann examines the wage structure while economist David Grey looks at the social contract; the old adage of “an honest day’s work for an honest day’s wages”, but Mann says that contract isn’t being honoured and when social contract is broken the economy suffers. Raising the minimum wage above the poverty line is good for the economy especially in smaller communities. The government says that only a fraction of the workforce earns minimum wage (110,000 out of 2 million), but those numbers don’t include employees at Walmart, or any of those big box stores. Why? Because those big box stores pay pennies over the minimum wage, so their employees are no longer included in those numbers. When you look at how many workers make under \$15 an hour – it gets scary, approximately 25% of all workers don’t make it. They are earning poverty line wages. It threatens our economy because a growing number of workers and their families can’t participate in the economy.

According to CCPA statistics, 82% of minimum wage earners aren’t teenagers gaining experience as the government likes to say.

- most are 20 year olds
- 39% are 35 year olds
- 60% are women
- 58% work full-time, and
- 68% don’t live at home with their parents

The government says that increasing the minimum wage will hurt small business:

- 51% work for corporations with over 100 employees
- 31% work for companies with fewer than 20 employees, and
- 18% work for companies with between 20 and 99 employees.

The majority of minimum wage employers aren’t “small” business.

This is absolutely a gender issue. Most single parents are women and over half of single parent families in BC are living below the poverty line.

A \$15 minimum wage brings workers’ wages up to \$3000 above poverty level, as opposed to the nearly \$18,000 below poverty that they earn now. Remember this is ¼ of our workforce working, just to remain in poverty.

The BC Fed has asked:

Should BC workers be able to earn enough to live above the poverty line?

- 4 out of 5 people believe that every working person should be able to earn enough to live above the poverty line

This breaks down further to:

- 85% of women: 71% of men
- 82% of those 55+ years: 78% of those 18 to 34 years: 74% of those 35 to 54 years, and
- 67% of Liberal voters: 90% of NDP voters.

Should BC workers earn a minimum of \$15 an hour?

- 2/3 of British Columbians think workers should be earning a minimum of \$15 an hour; that is 68% of people polled.

This breaks down further to:

- 75% of women: 60% of men
- 78% of those 55+: 78% of those 18 to 34 years: 64% of those 35 to 54 years, and
- BC Liberal voters were split 49% of voters agreed; 49% of voters disagreed: 1% didn't care; BC NDP voters were 86% in favour

There is overwhelming support for this campaign. With the way that BC's economy is moving and with the minimum wage indexed to the rise and fall of the consumer price index minimum wage is increasing at an extremely slow rate (at this rate the minimum wage won't reach \$15 an hour until 2034). The work being done on so many different levels to keep this issue in the forefront is invaluable. The federal NDP have made the minimum wage a campaign issue for the federal election in the fall. Brother Ekman encouraged delegates to get involved.

The VDLC has endorsed the \$15 minimum wage campaign, as well as the Living Wage Campaign which is now \$20.63 an hour each for 2 working parents with a 1 child in daycare and 1 school aged – this also assumes that benefits need to be purchased. VDLC President Joey Hartman sees our job as being to fight for \$15 minimum wage with an eye to the living wage as the ultimate goal.

b) Garth Mullins, CAPE Local 301 (Canadian Association of Public Employees) - Coast Guard Closure at Kitsilano and the effects on the oil spill

In line with the Fight for \$15 – this is another issue where the labour movement is fighting for all workers, not just those that are unionized.

Kitsilano Coast Guard Station was closed due to budget cuts in 2014. This budget announced further cuts to CAPE, not through bargaining but through legislation.

Two years ago Stephen Harper changed all the environmental legislation and fired approximately 30,000 federal workers, including emergency environmental response scientists. Those scientists determine where oil would go and how to deal with it in the event of an oil spill.

This oil spill has made it very clear as to why it is so important to maintain that funding. When CAPE raised the issue of the closure of Kits Coast Guard and the inadequate response time for the English Bay oil spill, they were told that it would have made no difference as the Kits station was search and rescue and not environmental response; working the docks at Kitsilano Coast Guard, Brother Mullins knows that this is simply not true.

CAPE wants is to use this issue to open the conversation with people about what safety means. When Stephen Harper talks about ensuring the safety of the people, he means militarily, not safety at work, not economically or environmentally, and not by reducing funding and safety protocols to ensure the safety and security of communities. Through this government's cuts and negligence we have had to suffer events like the tragedy in Lac Megantic, the Mount Polley mine disaster, the fire at the Squamish docks, chemical fires at the Vancouver waterfront – environmental disasters with response capacity cut to bare bones thanks to funding slashes by the federal government. After this spill in English Bay we have seen different levels of government pointing the finger at each other. This wouldn't have happened if those that should have been working at the Kitsilano Coast Guard station had still been there. Those workers would have brought together the Regional Environmental Emergencies Team who are ready to go into action. Instead the federal government has

removed emergency response units from the local regions where they are needed, resulting in response times that are much slower, meaning impacts of disasters can be much worse. This can't be allowed to continue.

Watch for campaigns around these issues and around gag orders on scientists and media.

## **6. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

Joey Hartman reported on VDLC activities since the March 17, 2015 meeting.

### Fire at the Maritime Labour Centre

We are back in the VDLC office with most boxes unpacked and technology back on line, but still no heat.

### 2015 Queen Alexandra School Fundraiser

September 30, 2015 with Bill Fletcher Jr. as the keynote speaker is confirmed. Affiliates are encouraged to purchase tables of 8 tickets and to promote. The funds raised are used to support The Wishing Tree – a free store for the children and their families at Queen Alexandra Elementary School.

### National Labor Leader Initiative

Sister Hartman is the only Canadian in the National Labor Leadership Initiative coordinated by the AFL-CIO and Cornell University. Other participants include officers of American nationwide and international unions and “Alt-Labor” organizations such as Jobs for Justice and the National Day Laborer Program. She is also assisting with plans for a Western Region Initiative, based on the national model, for leaders from Alaska, BC, Washington and Oregon that will begin late 2015.

### April 28<sup>th</sup> Day of Mourning for Workers Killed and Injured on the Job

The Day of Mourning ceremony hosted by the VDLC and the New Westminster and District Labour Council will be held at 5:00 pm, April 28 on the Georgia St. side of the Vancouver Art Gallery. All delegates are encouraged to attend. Coincidentally the Vancouver Sun contained an article April 21 about the first ever use of the “Westray Act” (changes to the Criminal Code after 26 miners died in a Nova Scotia disaster) to prosecute an employer for criminal negligence in the death of a worker – in this case 21 year old Kelsey Kristian who was killed when her runaway truck rolled over onto her. She had only minimal orientation and her employer at the Stave Lake Quarries Inc. is charged in her 2007 death.

### May Day

The VDLC and BC Fed march will gather at Clark Park (14<sup>th</sup> and Commercial) at 5:00 and begin the march at 5:30. This will be followed by a rally at Grandview Park around 6:15 pm on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The theme will be Fight for \$15.00 (minimum wage). Marshals are needed for the march.

### Labour History of BC Book

Rod Mickleburgh has been selected as the primary author for the labour history book. A journalist for more than 40 years, his work including many years on the labour beat and 22 years as a reporter for the *Globe and Mail* newspaper.

### United Way Labour Appreciation Dinner

The 2015 dinner is scheduled for Thursday, December 3. The VDLC presents our Syd Thompson Community Service Award at this event each year.

**7. CORRESPONDENCE: NIL**

**8. EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- a) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

Subject: Spending Approvals

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL approve the following expenditures:

- *June 18 – 20, 2015 Miners Memorial Weekend, Cumberland – Donation of \$100.00*

- b) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

Subject: Disappeared Mexican Student Teachers

BECAUSE on September 26, 2014, Mexican security forces stopped three busloads of student teachers from the Ayotzinapa Rural Normal School; in the hours that followed, 6 people were killed and 43 abducted; and

BECAUSE no convincing evidence of the fate of the disappeared students has been produced and the families do not believe the government's version that they were murdered and their bodies burned by drug cartels; and

BECAUSE the targeting of the Ayotzinapa student-teachers is not an isolated incident; rural normal schools were created during the Mexican revolution to train peasants and indigenous peoples to teach in the expanding public school system, and have a tradition of producing teachers with a strong commitment to social justice, and who identify with the impoverished populations they serve. When the Mexican state began to "modernize" public education through waves of neoliberal reforms in the 1990s, rural normal schools were seen as an obstacle to the competition-based, individualist values the reforms sought to promote. For the past decade successive governments have sought to close or cut funding to the rural normal schools, resulting in conflicts in several states as students, parents and the local community rally to defend the schools; and

BECAUSE the disappearance of the student teachers has galvanized a population infuriated by the ongoing violence throughout Mexico that has produced some 100,000 deaths and 23,000 disappearances since former president Felipe Calderón launched the drug war in 2006; and

BECAUSE the VDLC hosted an International Solidarity night on April 14, 2015 for a presentation by participants in the Ayotzinapa Caravan, en route to Ottawa to request Canadian intervention to call for an inquiry into the disappearances and return of the missing students; and

BECAUSE the guest speakers included Hilda Legideño, mother of Jorge Antonio who is one of the disappeared students, and Jorge Luis Clemente, a classmate of the students,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL write to the Canadian government to encourage them to ask the Mexican government to initiate a comprehensive and conclusive inquiry into the disappearance of the 43 student teachers from the Ayotzinapa Rural Normal School who were abducted on September 26, 2014, and

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL donate \$100.00 towards the costs of the Caravan from Ayotzinapa to Ottawa.

c) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

Subject: Canadian Revenue Agency Audits

BECAUSE the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) launched a series of 60 political-activity audits in 2012, after the federal government publicly tagged some environmental charities as radicals and money-launderers and possibly linked to terrorists; and

BECAUSE the 2012 federal budget earmarked \$8 million over two years for these special audits, later increased to more than \$13 million through to 2017; and

BECAUSE the CRA audits that have been carried out have disproportionately selected environmental, social justice and labour supported charities to be audited, including the CCPA, CoDevelopment Canada, the Suzuki Foundation, and most recently the United Steelworkers (USW) Humanity Fund; and

BECAUSE the USW audit was initiated after a \$37,000 donation to the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability (CNCA); and

BECAUSE this pattern of targeted audits seems designed to have a chill effect on charities across Canada to discourage them from any political activity that might be critical of federal government policies or practices, despite the law which explicitly permits all Canadian charities to dedicate up to 10% of their funding to political activities,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL express its opposition to the use of Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) political activity audits as a tool to silence criticism of government policies and practices by Canadian charities.

d) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

Subject: Sing Out For Your Rights!

BECAUSE the Solidarity Notes Labour Choir, the Left Coast Labour Chorus, and other performers are hosting a hootenanny on May 2, 2015 at the Unitarian Church (49<sup>th</sup> and Oak); and

BECAUSE this event is a tribute in honour of Pete Seeger and Gil Levine, with sing-a-long songs about people's rights to live in Canada, to work for a fair wage, to organize, to have access to housing, education, and health-care, and clean air and water, as well as free speech and freedom from discrimination; and

BECAUSE this event will also be a benefit for Raise the Rates and UNITE HERE Local 40,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL endorse Sing Out For Your Rights May 2, 2015 as a sponsoring organization and will donate \$100.00 and photocopying.

e) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

Subject: Bill 11: the Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2015

BECAUSE Bill 11, *the Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2015* is anti-democratic; and

BECAUSE it infringes on the rights of responsibilities of duly elected boards of education, including broadening the minister's authority to force school boards to comply with government directives; and

BECAUSE it removes restrictions on the use of student personal information, is generally more permissive with respect to the use of such information and may in fact allow public bodies to disclose personal student information to private companies; and

BECAUSE it is a serious incursion into teacher-led and directed professional development and provides no role for teachers or university faculties of education in these discussions,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL calls on the provincial government to withdraw Bill 11: *the Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2015*.

**9. REPORT OF UNIONS:** *(in order reported)*

a) CUPE Local 873 – Reported by Sophia Georgas

The Fallen Paramedics Memorial Monument will be unveiled May 6, 2015 on the back lawn of the parliament buildings in Victoria at noon.

b) CUPE Local 391 – Reported by Gary Jarvis

Local 391 began bargaining April 21.

The local has elected by acclamation their new Executive: Gerard Batty, President; Aliza Nevarie, Vice President; Steven Turner, Secretary Treasurer; Vania Tse, Recording Secretary; and Members-at-Large, Inder Pannu, Gloria Hershorn, Mark Whittam, and Gary Jarvis. Sarah Hall continues as the second year of a 2 year term as Vice President.

Attendance management continues to be used by the employer to restrict opportunities for job shares and expressions of interest in advancement. The employer says staff morale is not a priority. The employer has the position that they are not obligated to provide a career path for clericals and shelvers and that it's up to them to go back to school to increase their chances of advancement. As for those that can't go back to school the employer says they aren't responsible for their situation.

The employer wants to double workloads for supervisors by making them do programming and clerical supervisor duties by posting supervisor as Library Tech 2s, not as senior clericals.

c) CUPE Local 2278 – Reported by Adrienne Levy

Local began bargaining at the end of March/early April. They met for 2 afternoons and things are going smoothly thus far, they've even signed off on an item. The local will keep the VDLC posted on updates.

The following reports were made by not submitted for the minutes:

a) CUPE Local 2950 – Reported by Karen Ranalletta

b) COPE Local 378 – Stephen Von Sychowski

c) CUPE local 1939 – Mike Lanier

*MSC to adopt the reports of unions.*

**10. REPORT OF COMMITTEES:** *(in order reported)*

a) Education – Reported by Joey Hartman

Labour Law education brochures are available. The Labour History class has 2 more sessions left. Participants are still welcome to join in now for the remaining 2, registration

will be prorated. Contract Interpretation is being held Saturday, April 25; this course looks at how to read one's collective agreement in a way to know which items take precedence over others and much more. A WCB Course has been added follow the website for details on upcoming courses and registration – [www.vdvc.ca](http://www.vdvc.ca)

*MSC to adopt the reports of committees.*

**OTHER REPORTS:**

a) BCFORUM – Reported by Sandy Bauer

The latest copy of the Advocate is out and available. Sister Bauer signed up a new member and 1 renewal, others were encouraged to do the same and they too could receive a token of thanks.

b) CLC – Reported by Ron Stipp

The federal election is coming up, and with the new budget delegates can see why this election is so important. Election work is gearing up and we really need all hands on deck to defeat the Conservatives this fall. The CLC held Election Preparedness Conferences, followed by telephone town halls in April, with thousands participating across the country. Leaflets are being produced, one for each key issue – retirement security, child care, health care, and good jobs – to be distributed by organizers that have been hired for each region in the province. They will also be attending meetings, etc. to mobilize for the fall election. This pre-election work is entirely member-to-member. On June 8 at Anvil Centre in Coquitlam they are gathering people for a rally event – Time for Change – CLC President Hassan Yussuff will be present, there will be a presentation, a rally, and a party. The rally will close out the first phase of the campaign and after Labour Day it will be all out campaigning leading up to the November election.

Bill 377 is up for debate in the senate. It is currently in committee, the CLC is doing a presentation as are some affiliates. They may actually run out of time on this, as there will be some amendments that will hopefully stall the Bill until the June recess.

The budget came down, with focus on this being a 'balanced budget'. They took \$2 million out of the contingency fund and sold a bunch of GM stock, which makes this not a balanced budget. The budget is very skewed to those with money. A lot of the spending isn't until 2017, when they are likely not in government. The budget does nothing to create good jobs, or reverse the cut of 35,000 federal government jobs, or to end the program ending door to door postal delivery. It puts a little into public transit but with the contingency that it be P3s. The government claims to commit to good faith bargaining, however, with the right to impose their will. They continue to cut millions to health care transfers and do nothing to invest in home care services, more hospital beds, or mental health. The budget does nothing for seniors, poverty, or childcare. However, they have increased compassionate care leave covered by EI from 6 weeks to 6 months, which is good; they've made some improvements to harmonization of apprenticeship training and certain certification requirements in targeted red seal trades; and they will invest almost \$150 million over 5 years in aboriginal labour market programing. The budget while not really good for labour, lays out their election platform quite clearly.

*MSC to adopt the reports.*

**11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**      NIL

## 12. ELECTION

The following nominations were accepted at the March 17, 2015 regular meeting:

Laura Cipolato	UFCW Local 1518
Neil Munro	Heat & Frost Insulators Local 118

A second call for nominations was opened by Ron Stipp, CLC Representative seeing no further nominations Laura Cipolato and Neil Munro were acclaimed to the VDLC Executive as members-at-at-large; Sister Cipolato and Brother Munro will be sworn in at the May executive meeting.

13. NEW BUSINESS: NIL

14. NOTICE OF MOTION: NIL

## 15. GOOD AND WELFARE:

- 50/50 Proceeds to benefit the Solidarity in Action Committee (amount carried over until next meeting as winner had left)
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual People's Voice Victory Banquet, May 2, 6 pm – will feature Micheal Vonn from BC Civil Liberties will be speaking on Bill C51 and the right to free speech.
- Earth Day march, Sunday, April 26 at Clark Park
- BC Health Coalition – thank you to everyone who came out for the Health Accord Day of Action and to HEU for organizing it, there were many actions around the province that received lots of media bringing much needed attention to the damage being done by federal cuts. Brian Day, private clinic owner, is running for leadership of the BC Medical Assoc. (now known as Doctors for BC), bring some material to your doctors and talk to them about this
- World Peace Forum, Sunday, November 15, this year's theme is Austerity and Anti-terrorism: the doublespeak of today's capitalism. They are taking suggestions for workshop themes and speakers.
- Thank you to Craig Bavis of Victory Square Law for his presentation at the pizza educational on the precedent setting case in Saskatchewan that won the right to strike in the Supreme Court. Joey Hartman will have a copy of the power point he 8presented, it is something that all of labour should be familiar with.

16. MEETING ADJOURNED: *MSC to adjourn at 9:03 pm.*

17. NEXT MEETING: **TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2015**, 7:30 pm,  
Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph Street.

For full size of event flyers to post please visit our events page on our website – [www.vdlc.ca](http://www.vdlc.ca)

## **Pizza Educational**

### **Harperism: How Stephen Harper and his Think Tank Colleagues have Transformed Canada with Donald Gutstein**

We now live in a Canada we no longer recognize—more militaristic, nationalistic, free-market, unregulated. Donald Gutstein discusses his book, *Harperism: How Stephen Harper and His Think Tank Colleagues Have Transformed Canada*. This book identifies how decades of coordinated efforts by right-wing think tanks created the conditions that allowed someone like Harper to rise to power and challenge our notions of an egalitarian, just society. We need to understand how we got here so that we can move on and collaboratively shape a Canada that reflects our progressive values and works for all Canadians.

Donald Gutstein is an adjunct professor in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University and author of five critical books on Canadian Politics and the media. He writes for the Tyee, rabble.ca, and the Georgia Straight.

**Tuesday, May 19**

**6:00 pm**

**Maritime Labour Centre**

*Immediately preceding the Regular meeting. Pizza by donation*



*Education flyers under Education on website*

**Vancouver & District Labour Council**  
**Spring 2015 Labour Education**  
**Anita Yan Memorial Law Series**

**Negotiating Techniques & Collective Bargaining**  
The purpose of this course is to ensure that union members understand their rights and responsibilities with respect to collective bargaining, and be well prepared to negotiate excellent contracts for their members. It is designed for those with some experience at the bargaining table, or who intend to be part of a bargaining committee.

**Date:** Saturday, May 30  
9:30 am to 4:00 pm

**Registration:** \$70 VDLC affiliated union / \$90 other  
Fee includes lunch & materials

**Instructor:** Peter Shkianka, Kestrel Workplace Legal Council LLP  
Peter Shkianka has represented unions and employees at tribunals and all levels of the courts in British Columbia and Ontario. Peter is a founding partner of the Vancouver Law Firm of Kestrel Workplace Legal Council LLP.

To register, fill out the attached form and forward to the Vancouver & District Labour Council