

VANCOUVER YIPPIE!

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Vancouver Yippie! put the "International" in the Youth International Party.

Besides turning the Canadian city upside down in the early 1970s, this Yippie group would have an enduring impact on the international anarchist movement. Vancouver Yippies combined a witty, imaginative protest style with creative day-to-day organizing, while producing flashy, ground-breaking publications. And along the way, they did everything from invade America, to bring down a right-wing mayor, to build a people's park, to play a considerable role in politicizing the counter-culture and punk rock.

How It All Began

In the spring of 1970, a number of students from Simon Fraser University Industrial Workers of the World branch met with a group of hippie radicals from the East Vancouver and Kitsilano neighborhoods. Their shared perspective was a rejection of the rigid, old-style Marxism that had dominated the left for decades, and an openness to the new anti-authoritarian, mind-expanding possibilities spawned by the Sixties. From this meeting came Vancouver Yippie! (also known as the Northern Lunatic Fringe of the Youth International Party or NLF/YIP).

Yippies were organized in about half a dozen autonomous communes with humorous names like The Dog House or the Charley Mansion. The activist core of Yippie! was about 60 to 70 people, but the group had about 300-500 supporters who would come out to actions. The first action was a mock smoke-in. After that came the levitation of Vancouver police headquarters. But these actions were minor compared to what would follow. (1)

The Bay Sip-In (May 8, 1970)

Vancouver YIP staged its first major event — "The Bay Sip-In" to protest the discrimination against hippies by The Bay department store. The Bay Sip-In turned into a riot when demonstrators moved from the store and took to the street. The American consulate was attacked, entered and trashed in the process. Someone even stole the Great Seal of the United States and the U.S. flag was taken outside and burned. There

were several arrests. One of the Yippies, convicted of freeing a prisoner and assaulting a cop, was sentenced to 2 1/2 years by a judge who denounced rioters as "modern savages." The judge told him: "Your offenses, in light of other similar recent disturbances, pose a grave threat to the whole community."(2)

The Blaine Invasion (May 9, 1970)

The day after the Bay Sip-In, Vancouver Yippie! invaded the United States. The Yippies were protesting Nixon's invasion of Cambodia and the shooting of unarmed students at Kent State. Yippie!, the May 4th Movement or M4M, and the Vancouver Liberation Front (a more self-consciously Marxist-Leninist faction) marched across the Canada-U.S. border, crossing at the town of Blaine, Wash.(3) Neo-Nazis attacked the demonstration at one point, but were soundly thrashed. "The Blaine Invasion" involved some 600 people and created an international incident as the town suffered some minor damage and a trainload of new automobiles was stoned causing \$50,000 damage (1970 dollars).(4) Blaine's newspaper, The Journal, called the invasion "one of the saddest and most degrading incidents suffered by the people of this country since the Alamo." As with other YIP-initiated actions, Yippie organizers didn't specifically call for property damage or violence, but participants took the opportunity of the actions to vent their anger at the system.

Yippie! Is Everywhere

Another highlight among the many YIP actions that summer was an anti-prison "Be-Out," where Yippies tore down a 100-yard section of wire fence during a protest at Oakalla Prison and invaded the prison grounds before being pushed back by the riot squad.(5) Yippie activity both inspired and reflected a concurrent revolt of hippie street youth (as throughout the late 1960s and early '70s, Vancouver was host to a huge transient youth population) and there were a number of youth riots that summer unconnected with the group, but based on the anger generated by police harassment and the insane pot law.(6) Vancouver was one of the capitals of the hippie world. Besides the transient hippies, the city had a large home-grown counter-culture

was severe. As we've learned from 9/11, Americans take actions against their home ground very seriously. The vast majority of Americans wouldn't be allowed inside either the World Trade Centre or the Pentagon, yet they get all bent out of shape when either is attacked.

Fortunately, the government there has been given over to incompetent religious and greedy reactionaries who have managed to bungle even the actions of their very professional military. It doesn't take long for a system based on exploitation to begin eating itself.

Experience from China, India, Persia, Egypt, Rome, Aztlan, Peru, among others, indicate the barbarians from the north always fulfill their historical duty to clean up the rotten decadent civilizations people create and become dependent upon. The Blaine invasion will stand as an early important skirmish in that historical process.



The Okalla Prison Be-Out

Washington DC. It says "Oink, oink, oink, oink, oink..."

About which time the highway patrol cruised onto the hill, using the incoming lane to park their cars in a row beside the US border station. About 20 strong, they formed a skirmish line, white helmets gleaming, thumping their big night-sticks into their gloves. They watched for a few minutes as the city cop rounded up his hooligans and suggested they might want to go home and leave it to the big guys.

As some ten or twenty guys on both sides settled down to nursing their bruises the patrolmen suddenly marched toward us about ten steps. They were still a good 40 metres away, but it was definitely time for another strategic retreat. As the Yankee's limped off the field back toward Blaine, the invaders began to spread out across the Canadian side of the park. And the tight group of patrolmen suddenly didn't have a target, as they had when we'd been bunched up by the arch.

As they pondered their next move, a train came around the curve on the ocean side of the park. The first cars were flat-decks with auto-carrier transport trailers on them, and a load of maybe 60 or 80 of Detroit's finest cars, fresh off the assembly line. Economic imperialism and gas-hog commercialism all tied in with the war-profits industry.

Somebody yelled "Get the cars." But there were already people picking up the nice smooth beach rocks lining the rail bed and hurling them. One guy with a heavy-duty sling shot was firing fist-sized rocks at the rate of one every five or ten seconds from so close to the tracks that ricochet's from some of the other rockers were whistling past his head.

The train proceeded around the bend into Canada at a leisurely pace. And we prepared to retreat again. We were safe on the Canadian side of the park, and the Highway Patrol had apparently decided not to invade Canada. Now we were a problem for the Mounties, who were represented by two officers parked on a hillside above the flower garden, filming us with a long-lensed video camera. I often wonder where that film is today.

Then suddenly and inexplicably, the train lurched to a halt. Perhaps some American had got on a radio to the engineer and told him a band of anarchists were destroying his load. Better get back to the safety of the USA. He dutifully brought the whole load back through for a second round of rocks. And there were rockers on both sides of the track now.

I suspect the physical damage was some bigger than \$50,000, even in 1969 dollars. But the damage to the American war effort in Viet Nam

(mostly in the Kitsilano neighbourhood), providing a sizable base for Yippie organizing, which had a two-point program: turn straights into hippies; turn hippies into revolutionaries.

Militant action was not the only Yippie tactic. There was a spirit of theatricality and fun, with props ranging from gorilla suits to toy machine guns to giant marijuana joints. An irreverent, colorful Yippie newspaper, "The Yellow Journal," published nine issues. The Yippie! People's Defense Fund provided lawyers and other legal help to the city's often-harassed counter-culture community. Zaria, a young single mother, ran as Yippie candidate for mayor, vowing to repeal the law of gravity, and received a surprising 848 votes.(7) The Kommie Kids collective showed movies for a small donation. A food co-op was set up and another collective put on a very popular series of Yippie dances with Vancouver bands such as Uncle Slug and The Burner Boys.

There was also an autonomous Yippie group at Vancouver City College (also known as the Vancouver Silly College Youth International Party), which gained a majority on student council and editorial control of the student newspaper The Tower.(8) Two members of this campus YIP group were expelled for their political activity in 1971.(9) The college dean told them: "All you're doing here is tearing apart this institution." Meanwhile, a group calling themselves the White-Collar Yippies, all of them reporters for the mainstream Vancouver Sun newspaper, obtained a quantity of rubella vaccine from sympathetic doctors, and staged a guerrilla clinic for the public, immunizing the health minister in effigy for his refusal to provide the vaccine to pregnant women. (He finally relented.)

The Gastown Smoke-In (August 7, 1971)

In 1971 came the "Gastown Smoke-in" (also known as the Grasstown Smoke-In), a Yippie street party to promote marijuana legalization that quickly turned into a police riot. The smoke-in was a response ("Operation Whirlwind") to a sustained campaign of police harassment (known as "Operation Dustpan") of hippies in the city's Gastown area. Riot police, including some on horseback, charged the smoke-in crowd of about 2,000 people, knocking over a baby carriage and beating up tourists. The confrontation between police and demonstrators lasted more than two hours, with 79 people arrested, many of them pummeled with riot sticks. (10) With

the aid of a Yippie media campaign afterwards, this brutality became a national scandal and was the beginning of the end for the far-right city government, with the mayor leaving office in disgrace the following year. At a heavily publicized public inquiry into the riot, police charged it was the result of a "conspiracy" among members of the Youth International Party who, they suggested, "are bound and determined to overthrow all recognized authority." (11) (The presiding judge denounced two of the Yippie organizers as "intelligent and dangerous young men.") Yippies, and most everyone else, charged it was a police riot.

All Seasons Park (May 29, 1971)

Yippie! organized an occupation of the proposed site of the Four Seasons Hotel next to Stanley Park. (12) "It's a sad weekend in Vancouver's history," the mayor said when the park/tent city went up. "This is a breakdown of society." (13) Dubbed All Season's Park (also known as People's Park in honour of a similar action in Berkeley, Calif.), it attracted overwhelming community support, with hundreds of people coming to the site each day to help build the park. (14) All Seasons Park persisted for over a year until the government relented and scrapped the hotel development.

How It All Continued

Spent by this frenzy of activity, Vancouver Yippie! finally arrived at the end of its (anti-)organizational life after a couple of years. The broadening anti-authoritarian movement in Vancouver offered numerous paths for involvement, and individuals were absorbed into environmental, women's, community and other activities. The process was hastened by political differences typical of an era marked by conflicting political tendencies ranging from Joan Baez-type pacifism to the armed struggle of the Weather Underground.

After this, many Yippies became ideological anarchists. In the late 1970s, this produced two innovative publishing projects. One was B.C. Blackout (the last Vancouver project started under the YIP name), which became a template for anti-authoritarian community zines across North America. (15) The other was The Open Road, the internationally respected journal, founded by a core of Vancouver Yippies, that reported

After the capture of the flag, some of the invaders declared the invasion a victory and recommended the group head back to Canada. A bunch of guys from Portland and points south who were facing the US draft showed up, and also suggested a strategic retreat, which they joined. Quite a few American visitors decided to cross into Canada that day. Some are still here.

People streamed back across the border, with a Blaine city policeman and a bunch of sailors and assorted town toughguys coming along behind the stragglers who, on looking back, began to hop to it.

Someone got the idea to close the gate at the peace arch. (It has little metal gates on the inside that are wired open). Some other people thought that would send a negative message. There was some argument between longhairs, as the more active disassembled the wires holding the gates to the walls of the arch. The Yank poolhall patriots saw the commotion and decided to intervene against both factions. One husky Canadian truck-driver with a guitar saw a fist coming in the direction of one of his friends, spun the guitar into the oncoming fist so hard the back popped right out with a crash like heavy-metal punk-rock. In the ensuing melee he managed to distribute several pieces of it among the yankees. But mostly it was raw knuckles against noses and eye-brows.

And someone did indeed say, "I didn't know hippies could fight."

The Blaine cop waded into the melee when he saw some of his guys in trouble. And a crowd of maybe 200 longhairs was suddenly surrounding him. He got scared and pulled his club as he unsnapped the holster of his 357 magnum.

A yippie standing next to the cop threw his arms in the air and backed away into the crowd, which dutifully made a path for his mop of curly hair, leaving a straight corridor between himself and the cop of perhaps 6 or 8 metres. He yelled "Baseball!", wound up and threw an imaginary ball at the cop. The cop smiled an evil grin and swatted the air with his billyclub.

The yippie reached in his hip pocket and yanked out a paper, (you wouldn't want to do that today), waved it in the air and announced he'd just got a message from the Mayor of Blaine, USA, thanking us for coming and inviting us to visit again for a shit and a shower.² I think he was embellishing a tourist brochure he'd grabbed at the Blain post office. The cop looked uncertain. The mayor was his boss.

The hippy pulled another paper from his pocket, announced, "I just got this telegram direct from the White House, from Richard Nixon in

Recollections of the Blaine Invasion, May 1970 by Usor O'Toole

Being the first Canadian invasion of the United States since 1814 when Tecumseh's warriors allied with Canadian Quebecois and United Empire Loyalist troops, with the help of the British navy, burned Washington DC to the ground. This was in retaliation for the Americans having burned and looted Toronto on the same day in 1813, inspiring some to suggest it should be declared a holiday on both sides of the border. (July 6th, I believe)

In 1970, at the height of the hippy-yippie revival, some hippy draft-dodger with a yen to see a demo at the Peace Arch on the day Canadians and Americans celebrated their 4000-mile undefended border, picked up a couple of Vancouver yippies hitching down Hastings Street in Vancouver BC. They invited him to a meeting at an old house in the East End. Several long-haired activists were sitting in a circle, discussing how to end war. The Viet Nam one, in particular.

The hippy drank his tea and suggested his idea. Invade the fuckers on Canada-US lovey-dovy day. Someone else asked when that would occur. He said it had just happened a couple months before. The activists looked at each other rather briefly, then one went to a phone and dialed the Seattle Liberation Front HQ, a similar house outside Seattle. Whoever got on the line agreed that another 10 months is too long to wait. They'd spread the word for the invasion to go the next week-end.

Word traveled quickly through the activist peace community. Nixon had just expanded the Viet Nam war into Cambodia to take the Ho Chi Minh trail that was supplying the Viet Cong. He knew he had to get his troops out, because the Democrats of that day had gained control of the US Congress, and had refused him funds to continue. And they didn't ask him for a timetable to end the war. They gave him a timetable. (At the risk of offending Hillary, that Congress had balls).

The invading force that descended on the Peace Arch included at least 300 anarchists, yippies, war veterans, draft dodgers, religious activists, Canadian and American patriots, pacifists, Quakers, communists and socialists of every description and some of the most beautiful liberated women in the known universe. On marching into the town of Blaine, they spotted a flag flying in front of the post office, climbed the pole and cut it down. This caused some American patriots to take note, especially a bunch of US Navy personnel on leave hanging out at the local pool hall.

news of indigenous struggles and anarchist history and theory in the pop-culture packaging of commercial youth magazines such as Rolling Stone.(16) (Vancouver Yippies had enough of a fraternal relationship with their U.S. counterparts that the New York-based Yipster Times provided its mailing list to Open Road, an invaluable act of solidarity that ensured the first issue's wide distribution.)

Vancouver Yippies were active in new anti-authoritarian groups that formed in the city in the 1970s, most notably the Anarchist Party of Canada (Groucho Marxist). In the late '70s, Groucho Marxists pied several notables, were involved in street protests and organized cultural events, including the legendary "Anarchy in Canada" punk-rock concert on July 1, 1978 in Stanley Park. Canada's two most notorious political punk bands, Vancouver's DOA and The Subhumans, were managed by onetime Vancouver Yippies.(17)

One legacy of Vancouver Yippie! is the ongoing Vancouver anarchist movement. The wider anti-authoritarian movement in the new millennium can also trace some of its key attitudes and methods to those first Vancouver Yippies.

YIPPIE!

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- 2 "Judge reads the 'riot' act," The Vancouver Province, Aug. 5, 1970
- 3 David Spaner, "Invade Amerika!" in Blacklisted News: Secret Histories from Chicago to 1984, by the New Yippie Book Collective, 1983
- 4 "Canadian mob invades Blaine," Vancouver Express, May 12, 1970
- 5 Paul Manning, "Yippies tear down fence at Oakalla," The Vancouver Province, July 13, 1970
- 6 Paul Musgrove, "Third street clash erupts in West End," The Vancouver Sun, July 15, 1970
- 7 John Griffiths, "Lippy Yippies irk mayor," The Vancouver Province, Dec. 2, 1970
- 8 Lorne & Betsy, "Yippies Burn School," The Georgia Straight, Oct. 29, 1971

- 9 "Students Expelled and Beaten," The Georgia Straight, Dec. 16, 1971
- 10 "Campbell orders Gastown probe," The Vancouver Province, Aug. 9, 1971
- 11 Jes Odam, "Police charge yippie plot," The Vancouver Sun, Oct. 1, 1971
- 12 "4 Seasons protested," The Vancouver Sun, May 29, 1971
- 13 "Fence-builders go to work at 4 Seasons instant park," The Vancouver Sun, May 31, 1971
- 14 "All Seasons Park Lives On!" The Tower, Dec. 5, 1971
- 15 "B.O. (the smell of freedom) is produced by the Youth International Party," B.C. Blackout, June 23, 1978
- 16 Bob Sarti, "Open Road," in Only A Beginning, edited by Allan Antliff, 2004
- 17 Neal Hall, "Punk's Alive (and spitting)," The Vancouver Sun, Nov. 20, 1981

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"Sixties History; Days of Rage and English Bay Riots and Vancouver Anarchist Invasion of the United States" at

<http://www.geocities.com/emithsilas/sixtieshistory.html>

"Cannabis Culture: Grasstown"

<http://www.cannabisculture.com/backissues/mayjune96/grasstown.html>

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The Yippie! Legacy

The core people in Vancouver Yippie were about 60 to 70 people. Up to 500 others identified themselves with Yippie enough to take part in actions. These actions had a number of significant results. One was to create an international incident around the Cambodian invasion (Blaine) But perhaps of more lasting importance were the two events in Vancouver. All Seasons Park stopped a major development dead in its tracks. Up till this time the developers tended to get away with anything. People would grumble, then watch their houses being bulldozed for an expressway or a favorite grove of trees cut down for a shopping mall but not do anything. Yippie was one of the first attempts to stop the bullying developers using civil disobedience. From this time on, it became the norm for people to protest developments

and zines were given away on campus. But the effect on other student radicals was absolutely zilch.

In the meantime, this little group of dissidents who joined the Wobs, only a couple of whom considered themselves anarchists, felt a sense of comradeship. When the Yippie founding meeting was called by Kitsilano and East Side radical hippies, we joined as a block.

Yippie Anarchists

The Yippie newspaper, "The Yellow Journal", first published in April of 1970, was mainly in the hands of former SFU dissident radicals. Bob M. was editor and Willy E. did a series of articles examining the Russian Revolution from an anarchist perspective. Once I got to know the other Yippies a bit better, I quietly suggested that they should check out anarchism. But I was not the only overt anarchist, as Bill F. was also associated with the Yippies. Bill was one of the pioneer anarchists in Vancouver, having been involved in the League for Total Disarmament back in the early 1960's. They put on a number of anti-war actions and I believe Doug W. of Sooke – an old friend of George Woodcock's – was instrumental in setting up the League.

The energy that fueled Yippie began to peter out in the fall of 1971. Some of the members sought a new direction. I found Eric S. increasingly interested in my anarchist ideas and I gave him articles to read. Soon we were meeting on a regular basis. I remember that Bob S., Peter P., Ken L. and David S. were there as well. I was all fired up about Murray Bookchin's writings published in a copy of Colin Ward's "Anarchy." magazine. Soon after, Ramparts published Bookchin's "Post Scarcity Anarchism" and the whole group started reading it. The upshot was, early in 1972, a handful of us formed an anarchist ecology group with the unfortunate name of "Volunteers" after the Jefferson Airplane Album. (The name was Eric's idea, not mine!) Volunteers never got off the ground, folding eight months later after a couple of small actions. Ken, who did not join the the collective, set up an anarchist study group. People I had never seen before networked and became active anarchists. The one important thing Volunteers did do was to bring Murray Bookchin to the University of BC where he spoke to several hundred people.

In 1975, Ken got the idea of publishing a high-quality anarchist tabloid, modelled in part on Akwasasne Notes and Rolling Stone, and David proposed the name "Open Road". Yippie anarchists and some new people (also anarchists) got together to form the Open Road Collective. The first issue of Open Road was published in the spring of 1976. It is from this point that an overt and permanent anarchist tendency exists in Vancouver.

Well, as you can imagine, "Homage" floored me. Here were anarchists – several million of them in fact, who created a true form of socialism, based upon worker-controlled collectives. And to top it off, they were stabbed in the back by the Stalinists, the ideological forebarers of the Maoism to which I had been attracted.

The let down was, there didn't seem to be any anarchists around any more. I thought that the movement was dead and wandered around in a political quandary for a couple of months. Then, one day in late September I happened to glance at the bulletin board in the SFU quadrangle. Pinned to the bulletin board was a smudgy, badly typed leaflet full of spelling and punctuation errors. It exhorted the reader to build the One Big Union, join the IWW and provided a phone number and address. I tore the leaflet down, reading it over several times. The IWW still existed! The very same sort of people who made the revolution in Spain were present in Vancouver.

That evening Willy E. and I went to the address and were met at the door of a Kitsilano basement suite by a strongly build old man who suffered the effects of a stroke. This was "Old John" McAndrew, IWW delegate for Vancouver. We joined the IWW on the spot. Since I lived only a few blocks away, I often drifted over to see him in the evenings. I would return with armloads of anarchist and syndicalist books, pamphlets and newspapers which I read until my eyes gave out.. All of this was vastly more interesting than my course work.

Not only did the IWW still exist, but there were anarchist groups in a number of different countries. Soon, London's "Freedom Weekly", London "Solidarity" and the Chicago "Rebel Worker" were tumbling through my mail-slot. I tore through the SFU library, reading every book on anarchism and syndicalism there. With the exception of Jim Harding and a couple of my friends, no one else seemed to have the slightest knowledge of anarchism and how important it was. Indeed, the radical students seemed to be pulled ever deeper into the Marxist-Leninist mire. I had to do something to get the truth out.

I had a part time job as printer for the SFU student society, which gave me the ability to self-publish. With Old John's manual type writer I pecked out an article on the the Spanish collectives based on information taken from an eye-witness account from a Wob who was in Spain. This had been written up in a 1936 edition of OBU Monthly, the IWW magazine. Bob M. drew a cover, and "Solidarity Magazine" of the SFU IWW was born in June of 1969. This must have been one of the earliest zines in Canada, the only one I know that preceded it was Art Bartell's "Libertarian" which came out of Toronto in 1968. I also reprinted half a dozen libertarian socialist pamphlets, most of which were copies of the British Solidarity Group. Hundreds of pamphlets

harmful to the community or environment and to engage in blockades and occupations.

Yippies understood the authoritarian personality. By systematically taunting, teasing and ridiculing the authorities, but never engaging in actual violence, we were able to drive the police and city government to over-react. The over-reaction of the authorities made them look as stupid and brutal as they actually were. Much public sympathy shifted toward the counter-culture. The end result was the demise of the traditional Vancouver civic right wing, a group noted for its uncultured cloddishness, racism, bigotry and dirty-minded puritanism.(1) Some years later, the right would re-design itself in a more sophisticated guise, but never again would they have complete domination of City Hall. Civic politics now alternated between left and right-wing governments.

Yippie thus helped to transform politics in Vancouver. It was able to help reform civic politics by revolutionary means. I should add that at the time, reform of civic politics was not our goal, what we wanted was to end the repression of youth, the actual outcome was an unforeseen result. Of course it would be wrong to take all the credit for these changes, and in retrospect the Ancien Regime was rotten and ready to fall. The Gastown Police Riot was Vancouver's equivalent of the storming of the Bastille. It should also be noted that the police did ease up a bit on the youth and pot possession charges were reduced to relatively small fines after Gastown.

What can contemporary anarchists and anti-authoritarian activists gain from the Yippie experience?

You wouldn't want to get the authorities to over-react today. Back then, over-reaction meant a beating. Today it could result in death. In 1970, protesters or radical leftists were a small and largely despised minority. Over-reaction was need to swing a section of the population in our direction. Today, as a result of the new left, feminist, Aboriginal and ecological movements, a very large segment of the population are open to progressive and liberatory ideas, and are quick to make their views known through protests and demonstrations. We need to find new, imaginative ways to weaken the hold the authorities have over the remainder of the population.

Humour remains the best means of doing this. Yes, people ought to point out the cruelty and brutality of the rulers, but more is needed than that. The reality is, the people in charge are a pathetic lot, most of them quite plainly mentally ill, and adhering to some of the most absurd beliefs that misguided humans have ever concocted. We must implant the idea in people's minds that anyone who seeks to have

power over you is seriously nuts, with the long term goal that people will reject power-seekers and start acting autonomously.

There are literally endless possibilities for ridicule. All that is needed is a little imagination. As but one example, I have long thought that rather than protesting against a right-winger like Harper, we ought to "support" him instead. Imagine wherever he went, being met by hundreds of bogus "tin-foil hat" right-wing loonies carrying placards with ludicrous and offensive slogans, but done with enough sophistication to be seen as real by TV audiences. (2)

We need reforms. People can't wait out their lives for "The Revolution." But there is a way that combines reform and revolution. That is direct action. If you ask for a reform, send around petitions, run for office, a generation later and you still won't have that reform. Yippie stopped All Seasons and helped change Vancouver politics in 18 months by direct action. When people see that direct action can be successful (not all the time, of course) they tend to adopt it. By doing things for themselves, in a self-managed way, people are engaged in a mini-revolution. When enough people adopt direct action, reject the authorities, and start self-governing themselves, that will be "The Revolution."

Vancouver Yippie also showed you don't need a lot of people to make waves. Remember about 60-70 people inspired all this action. A small group of people, if connected with the sensibility of a larger group, whether that group is students, workers, or minorities, can give rise to mass action. This form of exemplary leadership – for we of the 70 "core" Yippies would have gone into the streets whether anyone else did - is not the same as authoritarian leadership. Yippies never bossed anyone, or told anybody what to do. Hence Yippie talked of "non-leaders" and "each member as a leader." Nor was Yippie internally structured in an authoritarian manner. Decisions were made at meetings to which everyone except obvious cops could attend and a rough consensus was arrived at. Yippies who disagreed with an action, simply didn't show up at that action, and no hard feelings ensued. This is not to imply that a structure and ideology as loose as Yippie is something to replicate. That is not my point. My point is, that contrary to Leninist ideology, hierarchy is not a necessary for an organization and authoritarianism is not intrinsic to true leadership.

1. An even better representative of this species than the boorish, semi-literate Mayor Tom Campbell, was Judge Les Bewley. This despicable excuse for a human being delighted in degrading the people brought before him and imposed the harshest punishment legally available. An inveterate racist who supported Ian Smith's white Rhodesia, later as a

columnist for the Vancouver Sun, could be depended upon to take the most authoritarian and retrogressive position possible on every issue. 2. The Rev. Phelps of Godhatesfags.org, the Moonbat prince David Horowitz and his lugubrious mascot, Stephen Schwartz, do more damage to the right wing than a thousand angry liberals. Of course, Phelps, Horowitz, and Schwartz are for real, but they should be "aided" by hundreds of spurious right-wing nuts.

Vancouver Yippie! and Anarchism

The Yippie Movement, while anti-authoritarian, was not overtly or ideologically anarchist. However, over the course of two years of militant action, many members began to consider themselves part of a distinctly anarchist tendency. The roots of the Vancouver Anarchist Movement can be traced back to those Yippies. To see how anarchist ideology developed within this (non) organization, it is necessary to examine one of the three original founding groups, the Simon Fraser IWW.

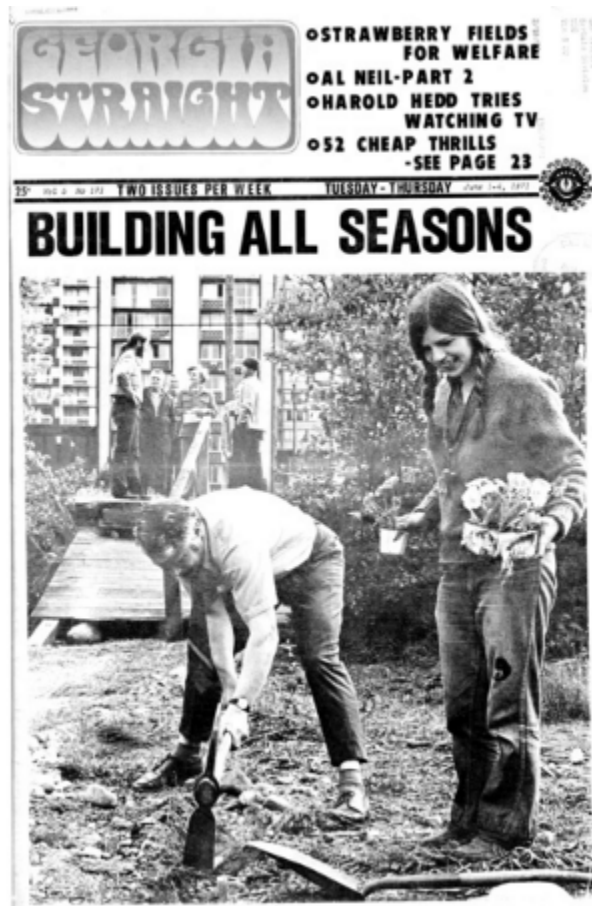
The Simon Fraser IWW and How It Came To Be

SFU IWW was a very loose grouping of about a dozen people dissatisfied with the direction the student power movement called SDU (Students for a Democratic University) was taking. SDU had lost its sense of humour, lost the free and open ways of the early New Left and was drifting into Maoism. Some disgruntled members ran a slate in the student elections called the Fart Party, slogan Fart Now! and cut into the SDU vote. Fart Party and IWW memberships overlapped.

So how did the SFU IWW come about? You have to go back to the summer of 1968. Up till that time, I had been a fairly conventional New Leftist, like so many others, was drifting over to Marxist-Leninism, out of a lack of anything better to do. Then a friend of mine, Willy E., who has a talent for digging up the most interesting books you can imagine, handed me a copy of George Orwell's "Homage To Catalonia" and said, "You gotta read this!"

So I did, and couldn't put it down. I had met people who called themselves anarchists before, in the Ban the Bomb movement, they were nice enough, said they were anarchist-pacifists, but seemed rather vague. Certainly not the sort to start a revolution, and anyway they dropped out and became hippies a year later. Wanting something with teeth, I drifted over to the Trots and the Maoists for influence.

All Seasons Park Occupation 1971



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