

MARCH 2009



RECENT ANARCHIST ENDEAVORS



ON THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST OF CANADA

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Anarchists in BC continually experiment. Different actions are taken: from organizing public demonstrations, to informational and solidarity events, to publishing and distributing analysis. Besides their own projects anarchists involve themselves in struggles with parallel trajectories or which face similar exploitative forces. One general strategy can be seen that involves giving already existing struggles examples of more direct means to their goals in the hope that those goals can eventually expand to include changing all levels of society. Essentially trying to widen conflicts socially as well as sharpening them with an example of self organization and direct action.

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The "bosses Grand Idea," the Olympics, aptly termed by greek anarchists in the time leading up to the 2004 Athens Olympics, is coming to Vancouver in 2010. We say it is already here. Before winning the Olympic bid in 2003, urban development, tourism and resource exploitation were heavily promoted as a way to sell BC on an international level. Not just an event, the Olympics functions to market this land, through ski resorts, mining, shipping ports, highways and security; to catalyze and secure the projects of the bosses. The Olympics serves to enforce projects of exploitation and social control across British Columbia that will, in many cases, integrate and bolster capitalist infrastructure internationally.

Initially, anarchists in British Columbia, were inspired to participate in anti-Olympics efforts by the ongoing indigenous resistance to ski-resorts and development, destroying land and ways of life. By continuing in long-term pre-existing struggles, indigenous resistance was at the forefront of the anti-Olympics fight.

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On August 6th an internet communication claimed responsibility for the firebombing of two police vehicles, a sheriff's van and an police cruiser, in the Downtown Eastside. Reasons given in the communique were "... the police and private security; the courts, sheriffs, and judges continue to enforce the orderly and lawful circulation of commodities and money with limitless social control. Their complicity is present in the example of development, police repression and prison. They should expect no less than burning vehicles and creative expressions of our contempt." The action was also claimed in solidarity with prisoners on hunger strike in Europe and the same three anarchists mentioned above with the addition of Marco Camenisch.

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The Probation Office (PO) on Commercial Drive has also had the benefit of being a repeated target of hostility. The PO was graffitied and had its locks glued on, December 7, 2007, the night of the extradition of indigenous warrior John Graham. In June of 2008, the office was covered with graffiti such as *"Fuck Probation," "Break the Prisons Now!" "Solidarity Across Borders"* and *"Freedom is Our Crime!"* on the same night two surveillance cameras across the street were obscured with paint. This was claimed as part of week of *"Solidarity Without Borders,"* due to the arrest and imprisonment of 5 anarchists in France. The act was claimed as "...a negation and an embrace. Denying the control of the camera and the law over our possibilities, this act

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Anti-Olympics sentiment has become more generalized through peoples direct experiences with gentrification, development and ecological destruction. At first, in Vancouver, the most vocal anti-Olympics organizing was being done by the Anti-Poverty Committee, pressuring the government to build more social housing and spend less on the games, "Homes not games!" they yelled. To us the, construction of more social housing means more land and labour exploitation in the construction, and in practice more government management in the lives of the excluded. This group has since become less prominent. Many of their members have joined the Olympic Resistance Network (ORN), an open organizing group initiated by some indigenous organizers and activist groups.

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refusing to leave the camp or acknowledge the authority of the Courts, she died of pneumonia worsened by jail. The passing of long-time warrior Harriet Nahanee added an increased intensity to the anti-Olympics battle.

In March, 2007, the massive Olympic flag was stolen from the Vancouver City Hall, only six days before the official "flag illuminating ceremony." The action was claimed by the Native Warrior Society "...in honour of Harriet Nahanee..." On the day of the flag ceremony, City Hall was completely surrounded by cops. Some anarchists who went to the planned disruption demo against the flag ceremony, decided not to go through the police bag check, stood a block away but still were chased by eager cops.

On March 15, 2007 anarchists in Vancouver organized a demonstration against police and the Olympics promoted as a, "Street Action Against the Cops," on the International Day Against Police Brutality. This was the fifth consecutive year anarchists organized this demo in Vancouver. With that years' high ratio of police infiltration to participants, intensive

paint bomb attacks, arson attempts and the disruption of CPC recruitment events it was eventually forced out of its location in Grandview park.

In November 2008, at it's new location on Commercial Drive, rocks were thrown through three of the centre's five windows on the same night that two other CPC's and two probation offices had their locks glued. The cost to replace the glass was \$2,740, and in January of 2009, the CPC publicly called for donations to offset the replacement costs. In January of 2009, the CPC had three of its windows shattered, once again. The call for donations went up to \$6,000. Then in February, the CPC recieved a donation of rocks breaking the two remaining windows and the centre's glass door. Now entirely enclosed in plywood, it was made public that they now need 16,000 to replace the glass and install protective rolling shutters and the CPC has even claimed that "*If we shut down, they win.*" Three posters were extensively pasted in the neighborhood explaining the situation and encouraging further anti-CPC action. One poster stated the CPC is an "*...institution of social control working in the interests of the rich and promoting*"

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The RCMP are using open intimidation by knocking on anarchists, activists, and native sovereigntists' doors seeking information on anti-Olympic "disruptions or direct actions," or on people whose sentiments support these activities. An RCMP Olympic task force has attempted to set up meetings with people caught doing anti-Olympics graffiti.

DIRECT RESPONSES

In 1995, a Community Policing Center (CPC) was created in Grandview park in the Commercial Drive area of East Vancouver. Since its inception it has faced considerable opposition, including letter writing, public protests, and attacks on the building itself. In 2005, after numerous smashed windows,
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A debatably successful Vancouver anarchist contribution to the anti-Olympics effort, was the initiation of a campaign of attack against the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) (a main sponsor) and a corresponding call out for all to join in some "amateur vandalism". What is unquestionable is that the Internet communiques encouraged a rash of broken RBC windows across Canada. Although this property destruction has not seemed to spread outside of radical circles, public support for this kind of sabotage has increased. The wave of vandalism is costing RBC more and more money in new windows, and bank machines, and increased security (admittedly a drop in the bucket for companies that make millions in profit every year). Beyond the costs to RBC, the vandalism also functions to damage the sanctity of property.

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Olympics), cementing McDonald's (sponsor) toilets, paint bombings of Vancouver Olympics billboards. Other attacks that were reported by the corporate media include \$50,000 of damage to construction equipment belonging to Olympics contractor, only a few days after a worker was killed on that job site. This targeted vandalism and numerous other anti-Olympic related actions provides a reference for action in the possibilities of property destruction and sabotage.

How the anti-Olympic struggle can contribute to creating a more generalized social revolt, has been a central thread of discussion among anarchists in Vancouver. For anarchists, an important aspect of the anti-Olympics fight has been the question of how to communicate that the problem is not just the Olympics but the system as a whole. Anarchists have repeatedly bombed the city with graffiti, released numerous small run publications, created blogs, and written direct action internet communiques explaining motivations with varying degrees of analysis. Within the question of how to communicate exists the question of with whom. A main critique of much of the current

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CONTROL AND COERCION IN THE OPEN PRISON

Social control and coercion exist on a myriad of scales in BC, they seem to have a costume for every occasion. Under the guise of improving safety, control sprouts eyes and ears as surveillance cameras are installed on street corners and shops. The Vancouver Police Department strives to recruit by advertising its multicultural inclusivity, but control was unburdened with appearances when a newspaper delivery man was brutally beaten and robbed by three police officers who told the man as they kicked him "we don't like brown people, buddy." One of these three pigs was formerly a community policing center volunteer and trains police on the use of force. In many neighborhoods, control comes dressed as a friendly beat cop in non-profit community policing centers. Control appears barefaced with machine guns, gas masks, and helicopters, as thousands of Canadian troops prepare for the Olympics with military operations, named bronze, silver, gold. Tragically, control rises in its all too familiar manifestation as the grim reaper in the recent killing of Robert Dziekanski a polish immigrant who died after being shot repeatedly

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Anarchist solidarity with John Graham means continuing on with the struggle against development, against uranium mining, against the police, against all prisons everywhere. As Anna Mae Pictou Aquash herself said after she was arrested and threatened by the FBI in September of 1975, "Jails are not a solution to problems."

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Anarchists in Vancouver do participate in disrupting certain Olympic events and anti-Olympic demonstrations, however, organizing is focused more towards attempting to disrupt certain capitalist projects accelerated by Olympic fuel. As a strategy, to target simply the Olympics leaves room for the projects themselves to go unchecked, however targeting the spectacle, may also provide an unstable social climate for investment.

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DEVELOPMENT

"Since Vancouver-Whistler was announced as host city for the 2010 Winter Olympics in 2003, Vancouver has experienced large-scale evictions and dislocation of urban poor. Hundreds of low-income, Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units have been lost in the Downtown Eastside (DTES), Vancouver's poorest neighborhood and a key 'corridor' for Olympic media and tourists. Most were hotels forced to close either by owners seeking to demolish or renovate them into upscale hotels for the Olympic/tourist industry, or by City council forcing the closure of buildings that violated fire, health or safety codes."

- Homelessness 2010: Background

Development is advertised as a necessary improvement, the innocent daughter of progress, however, it is little more than the imposition of the will of profit over our lives. Development is a process rooted in occupation and exploitation of land and people, in order to exact resources (raw materials and territory) to be reconstituted as building blocks for the management of space.

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An anonymous communique from a Vancouver action in solidarity with anti-development actions by Six Nations people in Brantford, Ontario states, "On the night of Monday, July 14th, (2008) east of the Abbotsford-Mission Bridge (near Vancouver) thick copper wire was placed across the train tracks, connecting two rails to mimic a blockage and hopefully disrupting train traffic for hours. This is a strategic place because it is a bottle neck of three major train lines... If our solidarity is expansive, disruptive and targeted, we can further our own fight for freedom while strengthening others."

Anarchists in Vancouver, Canada, have been standing in solidarity with indigenous warrior John Graham since his extradition hearings began here in 2004. John had been living in Vancouver for a number of years leading up his arrest. Anarchists first learned about the US government case against John Graham from the local Native Youth Movement, mutual friends and John Graham's family. The FBI charges that Graham, in 1975, killed his comrade Anna Mae Pictou Aquash, his friend and fellow warrior in the American Indian Movement (AIM). John Graham is currently

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In solidarity with the struggle at Tyendinaga and Six Nations, on April 28, 2008 in Vancouver, about a hundred Natives and non-Native supporters including anarchists marched along and blocked-off a major trucking route in East Vancouver. The march was led by native elders, and backed by warriors and supporters, blocking a major intersection for 3 hours during rush-hour and causing massive traffic jams which extended to the United States border.

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The development and displacement of the Downtown Eastside is commonly promoted as "revitalization." This neighborhood is the primary Vancouver corridor for the influx of Olympics visitors and media. Also, it is strategically important for the onslaught of gentrification, as it exists between key tourist and economic areas. Open drug use, poverty, and petty crime is prevalent on the streets here, and considered a obstacle for greater investor confidence. The "revitalization" is truly a collaboration of various economic forces; art galleries, universities, condo developers, the city and social services encouraging the spread of gentrification from where it already exists (in surrounding areas) and essentially displacing undesirable elements. This "revitalization" is another aspect of subjugation of indigeneous people, as a significant percentage of downtown east side residents are natives displaced from their own territories.

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used the "social housing" demands of left-activists at the Woodward's squat to promote the re-development, promising mixed-market housing (a few low-income units, in a sea of the rich; "diversity.") These few public housing units are also problematic in that they only house those that can comply with the bureaucracy, waiting lists, and government standards for the space. The re-development of Woodward's was a masthead for "revitalization," which picked up speed as the city paid more than market value to buy about a dozen SRO hotels, and developers began to demolish buildings, re-building expensive condos (a process that has not yet seen the final market stage). The Woodward's re-development was the calculated trojan horse of gentrification, as "Condo King" realtor Bob Rennie stated in his promotion of Woodward's, "Be bold or move to suburbia." Bold to live in the same building alongside (though separated by security measures) the class of people they exploit.

In November, 2008, an organizing space in the Downtown Eastside was offered rent free for one year to some artists. The space, owned by notorious slum lords, was to be run by local artists, who invited

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used the "social housing" demands of left-activists at the Woodward's squat to promote the re-development, promising mixed-market housing (a few low-income units, in a sea of the rich; "diversity.") These few public housing units are also problematic in that they only house those that can comply with the bureaucracy, waiting lists, and government standards for the space. The re-development of Woodward's was a masthead for "revitalization," which picked up speed as the city paid more than market value to buy about a dozen SRO hotels, and developers began to demolish buildings, re-building expensive condos (a process that has not yet seen the final market stage). The Woodward's re-development was the calculated trojan horse of gentrification, as "Condo King" realtor Bob Rennie stated in his promotion of Woodward's, "Be bold or move to suburbia." Bold to live in the same building alongside (though separated by security measures) the class of people they exploit.

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The fight at Sutikalh is not over, as the 2010 Winter Olympics, to be held in the nearby ski resort of Whistler, increases danger to the area by stimulating investor markets (i.e., companies may be more ready to invest due to the favorable conditions created by 2010). For these reasons, Sutikalh remains an important focal point for community resistance to any potential resort. After nine years, Sutikalh continues to stand as an expression of St'at'imc sovereignty & their desire to protect their territory & way of life. It has withstood attacks by vigilante settlers and police raids, and continues to receive support from other St'at'imc communities.

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apartments have been evicted. Though slated to be demolished and developed into a mix of market and social housing, similar to the Woodward's model, residents of 14 apartments refuse to leave and, along with activist organizations, created a campaign to save their homes.

The development at Little Mountain is stalled due to the economic collapse causing the developer, the Holborn Group, to admit they won't start to build for a minimum of 4 years. Anarchists had no personal contacts with the defiant residents but, inspired by their refusal to leave, visited and discussed strategies with resisting renters. Anarchists made invitations for a residents meeting with two proposals; 1. To squat a boarded up apartment building to lend strength to the resistance and possibly for use as an info point about development/gentrification in the city. 2. A picket at another Holburn group development. These proposals were rejected by residents, and the activists, at the meeting as not being strategic at this time. However most importantly the beginnings of relationships were created and a dialog was opened for future collaboration.

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Native Youth Movement (NYM) Warrior Tselletkwe from the Secwepmec Nation was arrested at a disruption demo interrupting the unveiling of the Olympic countdown clock. She made this statement on her release, stating, "Our land is not for Sale, we are still at war with KKKanada, we have never surrendered our land. We want the whole World to know not to come to our country and to boycott KKKanada and the 2010 Olympic Games. Tourism is not welcome here."

In May of 2000, people from the St'at' imic nation built a camp in the mountains, 4 hours north of Vancouver, to stop the development of a ski-resort. The camp, called Sutikalh, continues to successfully prevent the construction of the resort, acting as a hub to bring people together in the context of resistance and subsistence with the land. The St'at'imic living at

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Secwepmec people, including some who were inside the Gustafsen Lake stand-off, have been fighting against the Sun Peaks ski-resort since 1997. In 2004, they called for convergence at Sun Peaks, which was attended by native land-defenders and non-natives supporters including anarchists. On this day a structure was built using wood just cut from the Sun Peaks golf course. The Secwepmec occupied the structure to monitor destruction of their land by the ski resort, to assert territory and spread information. The

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In the summer of 2009, anarchists are planning to open a space for social projects, solidarity events and, with the Olympics on the horizon, the space can expect to be hosting visitors intent on disrupting business as usual. Because Vancouver is a new city, there is very little empty space. It is still growing and what is temporarily vacant is guarded and coveted due to peaking property values. There are no squatters rights in Canada, and although secret longer term squatting is possible, public squats are quite

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Ski resorts currently expanding or slated for expansion (some directly due to the Olympics) across BC are meeting resistance from the Nlaka'pamux, Secwepmec and St'at'imic nations.

This summer, some anarchists visited the Nlaka'pamux camp set up in the Coquihalla Mountains, to stir up resistance to the signing away of their land for ski resort development. The camp was set up where the people have camped for 1000's of years of berry picking and medicine gathering.

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Recently, anarchists from elsewhere in Canada moved to Vancouver and opened semi-public project/space, The Maquis, in the Downtown Eastside. From their text "Around The Maquis:"

"We have been inspired by many forms of connections and organizations that have emerged in this context; camps to protect the mountains... direct and autonomous actions, from windows that brake to fires that catch, the tenacity of the Downtown Eastside bums occupying street and parks... They struggle everyday against police repression, the privatization of space, the scornfulness of the favored..."

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Despite this inspiring resistance, we have noticed a flagrant lack of spaces for politicization, networking and organization built on that aim to counter domination in all forms and by which the struggle can grow... We are creating a space for research, creativity, spreading critical information, workshops, training, solidarity events, subversion of the daily life, communisation of sensitivities... with the aim of encouraging a radical re-appropriation of the territory here. "

Groups and individuals are calling others to revolt in the streets of Vancouver against gentrification, social control, and the Olympics. More formally, the ORN is appealing for a convergence in Vancouver against the Olympics during games time in February 2010. An informal call out is being made to people internationally to collaborate in an international street art/graffiti effort dubbed "The Carnival of Revolt." People are invited to push their passions and critiques onto the walls of their worlds. As a part of overturning the assigned meaning of our spaces, this call out is for street messages and images to be thrown up with the aim to inspire people beyond submission, to interact

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INDIGENOUS SOLIDARITY

Indigenous resistance to colonization is a source of inspiration in the local anarchist struggle against industrialism, capitalism and the State. The institution of colonization has only existed in British Columbia for the last 150 years, but it's impact has been swift and brutal. The Indian Act, passed in 1876, confined indigenous people to reservations and abusive christian residential schools, outlawed language and ways of life. From the beginning of colonization there was fierce armed resistance by indigenous nations slowing down by 1890. The Canadian State is still entrenched in a counter-insurgency war, to secure resources for capital's expansion. In the 1960's there was a resurgence in native resistance in the form of warrior societies and grassroots organizing, with a focus towards land re-occupation and fighting for traditional ways of life.

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