

# From Protest to Resistance:

## A Report on the Campaign Against the 2010 Winter Olympics

2002-2010, Coast Salish Territory

(Vancouver, Canada)

by Zig Zag



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*Anti-Olympic Protest, February 12, 2009, in downtown Vancouver*

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# **From Protest to Resistance: A Report on the Campaign Against the 2010 Winter Olympics 2002-2010, Coast Salish Territory (Vancouver, Canada)**

by Zig Zag



*St'at'imc protest against Olympic Torch, Feb. 6, 2010*

# Introduction

From 2002 to 2010, an anti-Olympic protest and resistance movement emerged in and around Vancouver, British Columbia, developing also into a national network. This time period can be divided into two distinct phases of protest & resistance.

By *protest*, I mean activities designed primarily to raise awareness and mobilize people into a political struggle. It is used by groups to focus attention on a problem, influence public opinion, and create political pressure on a government or business. Protests are often used by groups lobbying for changes in laws or government policies.

By *resistance*, I mean these protest activities plus direct actions (both public and clandestine) that seek to stop or disrupt the activities of our opponent, or to gain resources, terrain, or some other material benefit. Blocking a road may stop logging operations, for example, or squatting an empty building may provide shelter. Direct action can cause economic and material damage to an opponent, and raise the fighting spirit of the people by showing them their potential power.

The protest phase of the anti-Olympic campaign (2002-2005), consisted largely of rallies (including several tent villages/homeless camps), forums, and a campaign for a 'No' vote in a city-wide plebiscite. It was also during this period that the housing/homelessness struggle, primarily in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES), began to intensify (beginning with the 2002 campaign to have the vacant Woodward's department store turned into social housing).

The resistance phase (2006-2010) was characterized by larger, militant protests involving public direct actions (such as squats, disruptions, and blockades), as well as clandestine acts of vandalism &

sabotage. This movement had a radical critique of the Olympic industry as a whole, and not just its negative consequences. It had a strong anti-colonial and anti-capitalist perspective. This second phase also expanded to a national level with solidarity actions and disruption of Olympic events across the country.

The anti-Olympic resistance was a unique movement, organizing against a particular type of large-scale industry, that none of us involved in had any experience with. We had to educate ourselves on what the IOC was, how the industry was organized, who was involved, its history, the impacts of Olympics on host cities and regions, and how other people resisted. Because of the scale of the Olympics, and the powerful propaganda that legitimizes them, this process of education took some time.

The campaign extended over several years and involved numerous activities, ranging from direct action to producing videos, speaking tours, newsletters, conferences, workshops, etc. Over 30 public direct actions, including squats, disruption of events, and blockades, occurred. Over 60 clandestine acts of vandalism and sabotage were carried out. Over 80 arrests occurred in Vancouver and other cities from 2006-2010 (mostly from public direct actions). Some 27 additional arrests occurred during the Olympic Games themselves (Feb 12-28, 2010).

The anti-2010 Olympic resistance movement had a considerable impact on the city, region, country, and the Olympic industry itself. There is no doubt it influenced public opinion, with polls as recent as October 2009 (i.e., the Canadian Press Harris-Decima survey) showing over 30 percent of people in BC supported the anti-Olympic protests, and over 70 percent believing the Olympics cost too much. Pollsters were surprised by the results, which showed the massive unpopularity of the Games, a phenomenon that had not existed prior to 2007 (when militant direct actions began). In fact, a poll by marketexplorers in Feb. 2003 showed that 69 percent of Vancouver residents supported the bid at that time.

By the time militant resistance got underway in 2007, Vancouver had experienced a large increase in homelessness that was clearly linked to the Olympics. People also had a better sense of the potential costs of the Games (some \$6 billion), the extent of ecological destruction, the criminalization of the poor (i.e., the *Safe Streets Act*, passed in 2004), etc. They also began to see the arrogant and dictatorial style used by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC). The resistance gave expression to this discontent and helped clarify what the Olympic industry was, as well as the negative impacts associated with hosting the Games.

The movement helped mobilize thousands of people, in both Vancouver and across the country, to go out in the streets and show their opposition. In the fall of 2008, the CP Spirit Train was protested & disrupted in five of the ten cities it stopped at. The torch relay from October 2009-February 2010 was disrupted in over 30 cities, towns and reservations.

The main slogan used in virtually every protest was 'No Olympics on Stolen Native Land'. This was the primary slogan used from 2007-2010, and was adopted by the ORN when it formed in 2008. ORN, a coalition of radical groups & individuals in the Vancouver area, organized its anti-Olympic campaign as an anti-colonial and anti-capitalist resistance movement. It was the primary coordinator of both local and national anti-Olympic opposition, including the CP Spirit Train, Torch Relay, and the Feb. 12, 2010, protest of some 4-5,000 people.

ORN also organized numerous conferences, training workshops, fundraising concerts, public forums, and speaking tours. The group produced educational leaflets, posters, t-shirts, and banners. The culmination of two years of organizing by ORN was the 2010 Anti-Olympic Convergence, which lasted from Feb. 10-15, 2010.



## Protest Phase: 2002-2005

Vancouver (and the nearby resort of Whistler) were originally submitted as candidates for the 2010 Olympics under the New Democratic Party (NDP, a social democratic party), in 1998. The NDP provided \$50,000 to the Vancouver 2010 Bid Society (later renamed the Vancouver 2010 Bid Corporation). The Bid Society/Corporation was comprised of local businessmen involved in construction, real estate, tourism, hotels, and organized labour.

One of the first groups established as an apparent 'watchdog' of the Olympics was the **Impact on Communities Coalition** (IOCC), in January 2002. One of its founding members was Jim Green, a former anti-poverty advocate in the Downtown Eastside. Green appeared critical of the Games but would soon reveal himself as supporting the Olympic industry.

The IOCC held various forums and released press statements, but was not very active at this time. It would later become more critical of the Olympics after repeated meetings with VANOC and IOC officials, broken commitments (including the Inner-City Inclusivity Agreement that promised a 'legacy' of social housing, etc), and the departure of Jim Green.

In June 2002, groups from the **Secwepemc & St'at'imc** Indigenous nations filed statements with the IOC regarding ongoing human rights violations carried out by Canada & BC. At the time, these groups were involved in campaigns against ski resort construction & expansion (at Sutikalh and Skwel'kwel'welt/Sun Peaks). They urged the IOC to not award the Olympics to Canada. A delegation of Secwepemc was also sent to Lausanne, Switzerland, to meet with the IOC, in March 2003. None of these activities had any apparent impact on the IOC.

A blockade established at Sutikalh in 2000 succeeded in halting construction of a proposed ski resort, and in 2010 the camp will celebrate its 10 year anniversary. At Sun Peaks, over 50 arrests occurred over the years, with numerous protests, blockades, and camps. In 2007-08, members of nearby Secwepemc communities protested the Austrian Olympic ski team during their training at the resort.

In August 2002, the IOC short-listed Vancouver, along with cities in Austria, Switzerland, and South Korea. One successful bid city, Bern, Switzerland, held a referendum shortly after and a majority voted against hosting the 2010 Games (Switzerland being where the IOC is based, it is interesting to note that its fellow citizens did not want to host the Games).

By late summer 2002, **No Games 2010** had been formed by a group of Vancouver friends involved in protests at the 2002 Kananaskis G8 Summit. Chris Shaw, a University of BC professor and doctor, was one of the original members and the group's main spokesperson. For several years and up to 2010, Shaw was one of the primary

personalities used by corporate media for a critical perspective on the Games (some dubbing him Dr. No, according to Shaw). He worked with Conrad Schmidt (another member of the No Games coalition, as well as the Work Less Party) to produce the documentary *5 Ring Circus* (2007) and later published a book of the same title (2008).

No Games carried out a media campaign, with Shaw appearing on numerous TV and radio shows, as well as in newspapers. Along with a lawyer, Shaw also launched a lawsuit against the Bid Corporation and provincial government agencies that provided funding to the bid campaign (including BC Lottery Corp and the Insurance Corporation of BC).

Although No Games 2010 would liason with other groups, including grassroots St'at'imc at Mt. Currie, as well as the provincial Green Party, it was never a large group or coalition. In Shaw's book, he describes a sense of bewilderment in trying to mobilize opposition among 'progressive' social democrats in the city (which he assumed would be natural allies). In reality, large sectors of the political Left, and in particular the middle-class leaders of social democratic parties (NDP and COPE, the Coalition of Progressive Electors, a civic party) and trade union organizations, supported the 2010 Games.

As noted, it was the NDP who first initiated the 2010 bid process when they were the provincial government, and organized labour also supported the bid. Ken Georgetti, president of the Canadian Labour Federation, was a member of the 2010 Bid Corporation. Labour saw the potential for business contracts, while the NDP sought to use the Games for the same reasons the BC Liberals would when they assumed power (in 2000), using them as a catalyst for greater foreign investment, resource exploitation, and new transportation as well as security infrastructure.

Shaw, a reservist in the Canadian Forces, often used the language of war in his book to describe the media campaign carried out by No Games 2010 during this time. In one passage he states "We weren't going anywhere, except back into the trenches to take the fight to the next level" (*5 Ring Circus*, p. 44).

Meanwhile, real fighting was occurring in the Downtown Eastside (DTES), where anti-poverty militants and street people were waging a low-level class war against homelessness and gentrification. Although Shaw's No Games group had trouble finding allies, many in the DTES clearly saw the Olympics as a growing threat.

## ***Vancouver's Downtown Eastside***

The DTES is often described as the “poorest postal code” in Canada, with over 15,000 people living in 10 square city blocks. Nearly 75 percent of residents live below the poverty line. Over 30 percent of the population is Indigenous (although only 5 percent of the provincial population). The area has HIV infection rates similar to Botswana, as well as high rates of Hepatitis and Syphilis. A main factor in these high disease rates is widespread drug addiction, the sharing of dirty needles, and prostitution.

Since the 1970s, the DTES has seen an ever-expanding number of housing agencies and service providers that are intended to alleviate (or manage) the oppressive living conditions of the area. Along with the prevalence of cheap housing (including hotels as well as social housing), there are also a large number of services, such as food, medical, dental, legal, etc., that are accessible to poor people. These factors lead those living in poverty, as well as those who are homeless, to naturally gravitate to the area.

In the late 1990s, the DTES became world renown for its open air drug use, high rates of heroin overdose deaths, and over 70 missing/murdered women. Later, Willie Pickton, a local pig farmer, was charged with six of these murders. Charges against some 20 other killings were not laid after he was convicted of the first six.

## ***Left, Right, Left: BC's Shifting Political Terrain***

The NDP were elected into office in 1991, following a series of scandals that devastated the ruling Social Credit party. Beginning in 1993, the NDP began drastic cuts to social services and removed tens of thousands from welfare. In a televised address announcing the first cuts, Premier Mike Harcourt lashed out at “welfare cheats, deadbeats and varmint.” In the DTES, drug use and violence increased, in both intensity and scale. The numbers of people on the street continued to grow.

Across the country, other provincial governments were carrying out similar reforms. In fact, they were being enacted around the world by many governments using neoliberal economic policies.

Around the same time, the NDP announced changes to its forestry policy, opening up areas on southern Vancouver Island previously closed to logging. This created a huge backlash from the environmental movement, who began organizing protests and non-violent blockades. Over 800 people were arrested in a campaign of civil disobedience.

Then, in 1995, facing its own scandal and growing unpopularity, the NDP authorized a massive police operation against a Native Sundance camp in the southern Interior (Gustafsen Lake/Ts’Peten). Over 450 Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) were deployed, most being heavily armed Emergency Response Teams (ERT), along with eight Bison APCs borrowed from the military.

The NDP won the provincial elections in 1996, but

their decline in popularity continued as the party was wracked by more corruption scandals. During the 2001 elections, the NDP were reduced to just two seats in the provincial parliament (the BC Liberals with 77, the largest majority ever).

When the Liberals gained power, with Gordon Campbell becoming premier, they continued the same policies as set by the NDP (including the BC treaty process and 2010 Olympics bid), and worked to capitalize on these by opening up BC to greater corporate investment (especially in mining, oil and gas, and ski resorts).

The election of the ‘right-wing’ Liberals, combined with declining social conditions, sparked a renewed phase of struggle by the Left, who found it far easier to mobilize against the BC Liberals than it did against the NDP when it was in power. This was despite the fact that the NDP carried out the same neo-liberal policies, suffered a number of corruption scandals, and engaged in acts of violent repression (i.e., Ts’Peten/Gustafsen Lake 1995), while in government. This is probably due to the dominating influence NDP-affiliated organizations and unions have over significant sectors of the political Left (which includes careers, funding, housing, and other resources).

Many radicals from Vancouver had also participated in the 1997 APEC protests, as well as those in Seattle, 1999 (WTO). Some had also attended the April 2001 Quebec City protests against the Summit of the Americas. These experiences had a profound effect on a broad spectrum of social movements, including those based in the DTES.



In Vancouver, while much of the Left was reorienting itself to the new global context following the attacks of 9/11 (with the ‘War on Terror’, invasion of Afghanistan, and new anti-terror laws), groups in the DTES remained focused on local campaigns and would subsequently emerge as the most active social movements.

All these factors combined to give rise to a renewed militancy in the DTES, which first gained prominence with the 2002 Woodward’s squat and tent city.

### ***Woodward's Squat and Tent City, 2002***

On Sept. 14, 2002, the vacant Woodward's department store in the DTES was occupied by scores of squatters, including both activists and street people. The building had stood empty for nine years, and many groups in the DTES demanded it be turned into low-income housing. On top of the building was a massive 'W' that was draped with three large banners reading "Campbell's Olympic Shame."

By Sept. 19, 2002, after an injunction was obtained ordering the squatters removed, 100 cops—including the Crowd Control Unit (CCU) in full riot gear—broke down barricaded doors and arrested 58 people, many being choked, beaten, and dragged out. Almost immediately, a 'tent city' was established on the sidewalk around the building. Five days later, on Sept. 24, over 600 people rallied in support.

The Woodward's tent city would last three months, with up to 200 people being camped out on the sidewalk. In November 2002, COPE was voted into city hall. That same month, the Woodward's tent city ended after 60 homeless people participating in the action were provided short-term accommodation by COPE. COPE also purchased the Woodward's property and allocated 200 units for social housing. These concessions were seen as victories at the time, although Woodward's would later emerge as a 'flagship' for gentrification in the area.

### ***Olympic Plebiscite, 2003***

The newly elected COPE mayor, Larry Campbell (an ex-RCMP officer and coroner), also announced that the city would hold a referendum on the Olympics. The referendum was quickly watered down to a non-binding plebiscite, to be held on Feb. 22, 2003.

The Vancouver Bid Corp., along with the city and provincial government, used millions of dollars in advertising and other propaganda to promote a 'Yes' vote. They also had considerable positive corporate media coverage, free of charge.

Despite this, the results were a shallow victory for the Yes side: less than 50 percent of some 293,263 eligible voters participated, and of these 86,113 (or 64 percent of those who voted) voted Yes, with 48,651 (or 36 percent) voting No.

The No Games 2010 group noted that since all citizens in BC would be paying for the Games, any plebiscite should have included them. Considering this, only 12 percent of citizens were asked if they supported the 2010 bid (i.e., those that lived in Vancouver), and of this less than 50 percent had voted, resulting in just 3 percent of the provincial population voting Yes.

No Games demanded a province-wide, binding referendum, although this was never seriously considered by the provincial government, and the Vancouver plebiscite vote was used over the years as evidence of large public

support for the Olympics.

### ***APC Tent City, 2003***

On July 2, 2003, the IOC awarded the 2010 Winter Olympics to Vancouver-Whistler. That same day, the APC established a tent city at Victory Square to coincide with the IOC's decision and to put political pressure on the provincial & city governments. Their main demands were for social housing and ending a two-year time limit for social assistance (welfare).

On the posters, people were told that they would march from Victory Square to a secret location and establish a tent city. Instead of marching, however, the tent city was established at Victory Square itself (while police massed at the nearby Woodward's, which they suspected was to be the site of another tent city).

After nearly two months, the tent city relocated to Thornton Park (Main St. Skytrain station), in order to avoid a court injunction the city had finally obtained to remove them from Victory Square. As they marched from one park to the other, they took the Georgia St. viaduct and caused a major traffic disruption as thousands of people were driving downtown to attend a Formula One race car event (sponsored by Molson, a big beer corporation).

At Thornton Park, the conditions of the camp began to deteriorate after the city stopped collecting garbage from the park, and criminal activity began to be organized within the camp itself. After a month and a half, the tent city relocated a couple of blocks over to Science World (an exhibition and theatre complex that has lawn space), where it persisted for another month or so before ending.

### ***Emerging Anti-Olympic Opposition***

After Vancouver-Whistler won the bid in July 2003, the No Games 2010 coalition dissolved, with some members starting **2010 Games Watch** as an unofficial 'watchdog' group. Shaw remained the spokesperson and was frequently in the media.

Occasional protests from 2003 to 2005 included Olympic-related themes, such as homelessness, or Indigenous sovereignty. Some of the first groups to begin linking these issues with 2010 were the Vancouver chapter of the Native Youth Movement (NYM), the Anti-Poverty Committee (APC), and No One Is Illegal (NOII). These groups did not have a full analysis of the Games, and did not attack the industry directly. They were also more focused on their immediate campaigns than an Olympics far in the future.

Overall, there was little overt movement against the Games during this time. This was largely because most people & groups had not yet been affected, nor were the consequences of hosting an Olympics fully comprehended. There was also no sense of urgency, as 2010 was still several years away. Along with these factors, there were few actual Olympic-related events, projects, or infrastructure, that could be organized against.

## Resistance Phase: 2006-2010



JOHN LEHMANN/THE GLOBE AND MAIL  
A protester is arrested yesterday by West Vancouver police after activists refused to stop blocking a highway project through the Eagleridge Bluffs.

### *Eagleridge Bluffs Blockade, April-May 2006*

The second phase—that of resistance—began on April 17, 2006, when some 200 protesters erected tents and blockaded the beginning of expansion work on the Sea-to-Sky Highway at Eagleridge Bluffs. As part of securing the 2010 bid, the BC government had committed to expanding the narrow, at times dangerous, 129 km highway connecting Vancouver and Whistler. The total cost was announced as \$600 million.

The protesters, known as the Coalition to Save Eagleridge Bluffs (mostly environmentalists from various organizations, students, as well as middle-class residents from the area), held training on non-violent civil disobedience and conducted a well-organized media campaign. Their demands included protection of wildlife habitat along the highway, with some proposing the building of a tunnel as an alternative to expansion.

Like the earlier housing and Native land defense campaigns, the blockade was not explicitly anti-Olympic, with some protesters stressing they weren't against the Olympics (although some mocked the idea of a 'Green Games'). Despite this, it was a well known fact that BC was expanding the highway in preparation for the Games (and at the request of the IOC).

The construction company, Peter Kiewit & Sons, filed an injunction that eventually resulted in the arrest of 24 protesters on May 25, 2006, by West Vancouver Police.

Among those arrested were **Harriet Nahanee & Betty Krawczyk**. Nahanee was a 73-year old Native elder from the Pacheedaht nation who had married into the Squamish band. She was well known and outspoken in the local Indigenous movement. Krawczyk was a 'famous' environmentalist who had been arrested at several other protests for civil disobedience over the years.

On January 23, 2007, Nahanee was sentenced to two weeks imprisonment, despite her age and poor health (she had obvious difficulty breathing). During her court appearance, she had based her defense on the 1763 Royal Proclamation and had turned her back to the judge, Brenda Brown. Nahanee served her sentence at the Surrey Pre-Trial Center. Shortly after her release, she was admitted to a Vancouver hospital suffering from pneumonia she had caught while in jail. On two occasions, large rallies were held in her honour, ringing the hospital. On Feb. 24, Nahanee passed away. Over 500 people attended her funeral on the Squamish reserve.

Krawczyk, at 78 years of age, was sentenced to ten months in jail because of her previous convictions. Nevertheless, her sentence outraged many who saw it as



excessive and unjust. The remainder of those arrested for the Eagleridge Bluffs blockade recieved fines of up to \$5,000.

As the coalition had no other purpose than to stop the highway expansion, it ceased to exist shortly after the blockade was removed. Although

not the best start to the first Olympic-related construction project, the Games themselves were not tarnished directly. But this was just the beginning of a long line of bad luck and protests.



*Harriet Nahanee Arrest, May 25, 2006*

On June 12, 2006, Mike Greer, a 45-year old blaster from Kamloops, was killed in an explosives accident while working on an access road to the Callaghan Valley, site of the proposed Whistler Nordic Centre (an Olympic venue later renamed the Whistler Sliding Centre). The road was being built under the supervision of the RCMP for security use during 2010.

On June 15, 2006, five heavy construction vehicles were vandalized on the same access road, causing more than \$50,000 in damages. Some of the vehicles were tipped over. They were owned by Kiewit, Murrin Construction, and Pacific Site Concrete.

### ***APC Squats, Fall 2006***

In the Fall of 2006, the **Save Low Income Housing Coalition** (SLIHC) was formed by a number of groups involved in the DTES. These included APC, Downtown Eastside Resident's Association (DERA), AIDS Vancouver, Indigenous Action Movement, VANDU, Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction Network, Vancouver Status of Women, NOIL, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC), the Power of Women Project, as well as the Pivot Legal Society.

As a group, SLIHC organized rallies and public forums. At the same time that SLIHC was formed, the APC began a campaign of occupying empty buildings (squatting) as acts of civil disobedience, in order to raise the public profile of the homelessness crisis. By the Summer of 2007 the coalition was no longer functioning.

Despite this short existence, SLIHC showed the extent and nature of social movements in the DTES, almost all of whom recieved some form of state funding. Within some of these agencies were members who were radicals, while in others they were far more reformist. The main campaigns these groups were involved with in the DTES were housing, poverty, welfare, harm reduction, AIDS, and women's safety and security.

While many will see the end of SLIHC as typical of Vancouver's divided social movements, the fact that it was

established at all is cause to pause. What made it possible was the increasing sense of crisis that was enveloping the DTES as hundreds of low-income housing units were lost. Homelessness increased from some 620 in 2002, to over 1,290 by 2005. Insecurity, anxiety and tension increased among residents, resulting in more drug and alcohol use, as well as more street violence. Shelters and service agencies also came under greater pressure.

Vancouver was experiencing a massive increase in homelessness, and low-income renters were being evicted for renovations, or demolitions to make room for condominiums. The Olympics was fueling this construction craze, with the DTES having some of the only remaining property not already gentrified (and just blocks away from Olympic venues).

Many of the evictions were illegal, with landlords failing to provide proper notice or using a false pretext to evict tenants. In numerous cases, tenants were unable to retrieve their belongings, or collect their damage deposit. In some hotels, conditions were allowed to deteriorate and then used as a pretext for evictions, at times ordered by the city. According to civic bylaws, however, the city should have forced the owners to conduct repairs.

Groups in the SLIHC coalition frequently fought illegal evictions, at times by organizing rallies at the building, or by filing legal challenges on behalf of tenants (as DERA and Pivot did). As a result, several hotels and apartment blocks were prevented from evicting their tenants (small victories which continue to this day).

As noted, as SLIHC was established in October 2006, APC began a renewed campaign focused on homelessness by squatting empty buildings. Their main demand was for the various levels of government to purchase low-income hotels and convert them to social housing, and/or to construct new social housing units. Their slogan was "Buy It or Guard It". Another demand was a moratorium on the demolition of low-income housing. This essentially reformist strategy differed little from those used by others in SLIHC, except for the use of direct action.

On October 23, APC & members of DERA occupied the abandoned North Star hotel at 5 W. Hastings. A large banner reading "Homes Not Games" was unfurled from the top floor windows. Six people were arrested later that day, including Kim Kerr, president of DERA.

A week later, on October 31, APC rallied at City Hall with the declared intent that they were going to storm city council chambers. As police and staff gathered in the locked down lobby, APC marched a few blocks along Cambie Street and occupied an empty building owned by the city. On Nov. 1, more than two dozen cops in full riot gear (hard hats, shields, batons) smashed down the barricaded doors and arrested 8 squatters (all later released without charge).



*Riot cops arrest APC member, Nov. 1, 2006, Cambie St. squat near city hall*

On November 20, 2006, APC and other protesters shut down a city council meeting at the Vancouver Public Library central branch. On the agenda was funding for the Olympics. Cops initially attempted to prevent the protesters, numbering about 80, from entering the meeting room. Several persons were pepper-sprayed, with cops later claiming one person had attempted to grab an officer's pistol. Three people were arrested.

On December 10, six more APC members were arrested after building a makeshift shelter outside an empty government building as a protest against government inaction on homelessness.

Although having popular support among many DTES residents, APC also had estranged relations with other radical/militant groups in Vancouver. The group had formed around 2000 and was modeled largely after the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP). APC soon came under the control of socialists from the Fire This Time (FTT) movement, who used authoritarian and manipulative methods.

By 2003, FTT members had left APC after a bitter internal struggle. FTT had also been kicked out of StopWar.ca, a local anti-war coalition. FTT then established another group, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO), which continues to exist but is totally isolated from other social movements in Vancouver.

After the 2003 tent city and the departure of the FTT, APC began to focus on harm reduction for drug users in the DTES (working closely with the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users, VANDU), as well as advocacy work

for welfare and housing. They also continued with protests and forums against rising homelessness, welfare policies, and police violence.

The APC's 2006 squatting campaign raised the profile of the homelessness crisis as well as that of APC, who attracted new members with each new action. These actions made headlines, but were also resented by other (perhaps less-effective) groups. At this time, not only did APC carry the stigma of the FTT period, and face ongoing criticism from reformist groups for its more militant tactics, it was also the target of public smear campaigns by police, government, and corporate media.

For these reasons, although APC was perhaps the most resistant to the Olympics through its anti-poverty and housing advocacy/direct action, it was unable to mobilize beyond its core members and supporters.

### ***Olympic Countdown Clock Feb. 12, 2007***

In the midst of Harriet Nahanee's 2 week imprisonment, VANOC had a 3-year 'Countdown' ceremony, including the unveiling of a tombstone-shaped digital clock, designed by Omega (a corporate sponsor). The event, held at the downtown Vancouver Art Gallery, was to be broadcast live on CTV (another corporate sponsor).

Two weeks prior, some members of APC and an unnamed Indigenous organizer had met to plan a protest. A poster was designed with an Inukshuk smashing a clock, endorsed by several groups and organized by an ad hoc 'Anti-Olympic Coalition.'

Groups listed as speaking at the rally included APC, NYM, NOII, DERA, Wild Earth, and the Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group (representing anti-poverty, Indigenous, immigrant/anti-colonial, housing, environmentalist, and student movements). We would quickly learn, however, that such disruptions were not the time for speeches, but rather yelling slogans and making as much noise as possible, and taking action when the opportunity arose.

Just before noon on February 12, approximately 80 protesters descended on the Art Gallery lawn. Several hundred citizen spectators packed the area in front of the main stage, many having been bused in by VANOC.

Prior to the event beginning at 12 noon, there were small skirmishes between protesters and a dozen or so cops, who attempted to confiscate a "Homes Not Games" banner

that was eventually airlifted by helium balloons. Then there was some pushing against the police line that had formed to separate the protesters from the crowd.

Two protesters infiltrated past the police line, one wearing a baseball cap, hoodie, and bandana over his face. They made their way to the small fence between the stage and crowd. Just as VANOC's vice-president of communications, Renee Smith-Valade, began to introduce the event, the masked person stormed the stage, grabbed the mic from her, and yelled "Fuck 2010! Fuck your corporate circus!" The PA system was cut and a security guard grabbed the protester who was then arrested (this was Gord Hill, an Indigenous militant and former member of Native Youth Movement-Vancouver).

Meanwhile, the second protester, David Cunningham from the APC, also got on stage, yelling "Homes Not Games!" before he too was wrestled away by police. More pandemonium erupted as some protesters began throwing projectiles (including eggs & paint bombs) at the main stage and giant TV screens. Police made a distress call and within minutes over 60 cops were on the scene. VANOC officials and their invited guests, including BC premier Gordon Campbell, had to yell at times just to be heard over the noise of the protesters as they struggled through their scripted speeches. Altogether, seven people were arrested, with three eventually going to court for mischief & causing a disturbance charges.

The Countdown Clock protest caught both VANOC and police off-guard. One *Globe and Mail* reporter commented that, prior to this protest, most people had no idea there was any anti-Olympic sentiment in the city. Police condemned the protesters as 'hooligans' and criminals, showing a display of items confiscated from protesters, including paint bombs, eggs, and small rocks, during a press conference. They promised to plan their security for future events accordingly.



*Larger than life: masked protester on jumbo TV screen, Feb. 12, 2007, 'Countdown Clock' protest in Vancouver*

### ***March 6, 2007: Olympic Flag Theft***

On March 6, 2007, a massive Olympic flag flying at city hall was stolen the night before an IOC delegation arrived to check on VANOC's progress. In the course of the theft, the flag pole itself was damaged when a heavy weight attached to the flag plummeted down after the halyard was cut. Altogether, the action caused several thousands of dollars in damage.

Two days later, as the IOC delegation prepared to leave, a group calling itself the **Native Warrior Society** released a communique and photograph. The photo showed three masked persons holding a warrior flag and portrait of Harriet Nahanee, standing in front of the stolen Olympic flag. The group explained how they had stolen the flag in honour of Nahanee and against the 2010 Olympics. Both the theft and communique attracted considerable media attention and caused embarrassment for VANOC and IOC officials.



*Native Warrior Society photo, March 2007*

### ***March 12, 2007: Flag Illumination Ceremony***

On March 12, VANOC held a 'flag illuminating' ceremony at city hall as the last of its '2010 Countdown' events for 2007. By this time, the massive Olympic flag had been replaced. The event was to unveil a new lighting system that illuminated the Olympic & Paralympic flags at night.

The same group that organized the Feb. 12 protest organized one for March 12 as well, producing a poster with a burning Olympic flag and the slogan "Shutdown Countdown 2010." It urged people to take a stand against corporate invasion of Native land, ecological destruction, homelessness, massive public debt, and the 2010 police state. No organizational names or contact info were attached to the poster.

Because of the Countdown Clock protest, police launched a large operation to secure the area in an attempt to prevent any disruptions. As many as 100 cops, with members of the Emergency Response Team, Crowd Control Unit (soft hat), riot-equipped horse mounted cops, as well as a helicopter and crowd-control fencing, were used.

A few hours before the protest, the Countdown Clock at the Art Gallery was vandalized when a stencil



reading “Free Betty” was sprayed on it. One person was arrested, making no effort to disguise himself or escape as an act of civil disobedience. The slogan was in reference to Betty Krawczyk, then serving her 10 month prison sentence for the Eagleridge Bluffs blockade of 2006.

At city hall, a cordon (a secured perimeter) was set up around the grounds and police searched people entering the site. Megaphones and other noisemakers were restricted. Despite this heavy police presence, some 200 protesters gathered, far outnumbering actual spectators. The crowd was kept back some 75 feet from the small stage by crowd control fencing and a line of police.

Despite these efforts, protesters were able to disrupt the event through yelling, slogans, airhorns, and whistles. The mayor, VANOC officials, an Aboriginal performer, and even a children's choir were shouted down. This was one of the last attempts by VANOC to hold any type of public ceremony for the Olympics in Vancouver (until the Games began in 2010). All future promotional events were invite only, often announced with short notice, and accompanied by large numbers of security and police. The resistance had driven VANOC off the streets, and they would not return until the 2010 Games, and then only with a massive security apparatus to protect it.

### **May 16, 2007, APC Vanoc HQ Protest**

Following the successes of the Feb. 12 and March 12 protests, APC attempted to exploit the momentum created by the emerging anti-Olympic resistance. Through the spring of 2007, this consisted largely of small protests and actions, since the group was still not capable of mobilizing outside its core membership.

On May 16, 2007, the APC organized a protest against VANOC at its East Vancouver headquarters, located in an industrial area bordering the suburb of Burnaby. The action was to disrupt a VANOC meeting in the afternoon, on a weekday. Despite renting a bus to transport people from the DTES, only 30 persons attended. When they arrived at the VANOC HQ, they were met with a large police force of some 80 officers, with the building surrounded by crowd control fencing.

After a brief, somewhat demoralizing rally, APC's David Cunningham announced they were going to “bring the class war to the offices & doorsteps of Vanoc members... We have found where their offices are and we have found where their homes are.” Like those evicted from low-income housing, VANOC and government officials would also be evicted.

### **May 19, 2007, APC's Cunningham Arrested**

Immediately following the May 16 protest, Vancouver police chief Jamie Graham notified all VANOC and city officials that police would be on hand to protect them from any APC efforts to evict their offices or homes.

Three days later, on May 19, Cunningham was arrested by Vancouver police posing as journalists. They had arranged a meeting with Cunningham for an interview to be published in a local daily newspaper. He was charged with uttering threats in relation to his comments during the May 16 protest. The police tactic of posing as reporters to carry out an arrest was criticized by many journalists.

### **May 22, 2007, APC Eviction of Ken Dobell**

On May 22, three members of APC gained access to the Premier's office in downtown Vancouver by pretending to be delivering flowers. Their main target was Ken Dobell, a VANOC member and advisor to the premier. While neither Dobell nor the premier were in the offices at the time, the APC members trashed the office lobby area, throwing furniture around and damaging some office equipment before being arrested.

By this time, APC had seen some thirty arrests since the Fall of 2006. Many members were now weary of additional arrests, especially as pre-trial or probationary conditions could include restrictions on attending protests—or being near Olympic-related events or property—possibly up to and including the 2010 Games themselves.



### **Indigenous Conference in Sonora, Mexico October 2007,**

In October, 2007, Indigenous delegates from 'BC' attended an intercontinental gathering on 515 Years of Indigenous Resistance, called by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and the National Indigenous Congress (of Mexico). Several thousand Indigenous people, primarily from Mexico, attended.

The delegation from 'BC', consisting of Indigenous organizers from Vancouver (including staff from Redwire and Warrior Publications) as well as Secwepemc NYM,

established the dates of the 2010 convergence and had the conference endorse an anti-Olympic statement.

From this, an “Intercontinental Indigenous campaign” against the 2010 Olympics was launched,



although its primary purpose was its propaganda value. A press release made shortly after was widely distributed, which raised the profile of Indigenous opposition and helped mobilize groups with anti-colonial politics into the campaign.

### ***Fall 2007, No 2010 Network***

Sometime in the Fall of 2007, efforts began to form an anti-Olympic coalition comprised of various groups, including APC, NYM, NOII, Warrior Publications, Downtown Eastside Women's Center (DEWC), Carnegie Center Action Project (CCAP), Pivot Legal Society, 2010 Games Watch, Work Less Party, The Torch (an anti-Olympic magazine collective), and others.

Many of these groups had not worked together before and had widely differing politics. Some were totally reformist and state-funded/Non-governmental organizations (NGOs, such as CCAP and Pivot), while others were grassroots community groups (such as NYM, APC, NOII, etc.). The basic concept had been to invite as many groups as possible who were engaging the Olympics on some level and see what kind of alliances could be made.

Some representatives attended only the first meeting and never came back. Those that did exchanged information, discussed the impacts of the Games, and ways of resisting them. The only events No 2010 Network organized were a Feb. 6, 2008 anti-Olympic film festival and helping with the Feb. 11, 2008 "Shutdown the Corporate Olympic Countdown" protest.



*Native 2010 Resistance banner, Vancouver 2008*

### ***Feb. 11, 2008, Shutdown the Corporate Olympic Countdown***

To mark the two-year countdown to the 2010 Olympics, a coalition of groups organized a protest against a corporate luncheon featuring government, VANOC, and corporate officials. The protest was organized by **Native 2010 Resistance** (established in December 2007) and the No 2010 Network.

Approx. 100 people attended, led by Native elders from the Downtown Eastside Women's Center (DEWC). Upon arriving at the Hyatt Regency hotel where the

luncheon was being held, the protest was blocked by dozens of police at the entrances and inside the building.

Although unable to disrupt the event, the rally helped raise the profile of Indigenous opposition to the Olympics. In order to ensure the safety of elders at the protest, no disruptive plans had been made other than marching to the hotel.

By this time, the No 2010 Network had collapsed, and the remainder of anti-Olympic protests during the February 'countdown' period were much smaller.

### ***Feb. 17, 2008, APC Vandalize Countdown Clock***

On Feb. 17, an APC rally of some 30 people made its way from Victory Square to the Countdown Clock, which was vandalized with a paintbomb and poster. A small number of police, obviously caught off guard but outnumbered, looked on, powerless to intervene. Although it was a minor incident, the protest made news around the province.

### ***Feb. 18, 2008, Disruption of AFN/FHFN Press Conference***

On Feb. 18, three members of Native 2010 Resistance disrupted a joint press conference by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and Four Host First Nations (FHFN) promoting Native participation in the Olympics. As AFN grand chief Phil Fontaine spoke, a member of Native 2010 Resistance approached the podium and dumped a bag of red apples (indicating Fontaine was red on the outside, but white on the inside). The chiefs were denounced as sell-outs and collaborators.

### ***Feb. 21, 2008, APC Vandalizes Premier's Office***

On Feb. 21, four APC members, wearing white coveralls and masks, threw buckets of paint on the premier's Vancouver office at 3615 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Vancouver. They video taped the attack and sent it to the media. Staff were able to lock the doors before any substantial damage was done to the interior. Although Vancouver police vowed to catch the attackers, no arrests were ever made.

### ***Feb. 27, 2008, IOC 'Dead Prez' Rally***

On Feb. 27, Jacques Rogge, president of the IOC, was scheduled to speak at a luncheon held at Canada Place in downtown Vancouver. A small protest of some 20 persons showed up, outnumbered by police—including 40 members of the Crowd Control Unit.

Later justifying their large deployment to the media, police cited a "disturbing poster" that advertised the protest. It featured a masked Native warrior cutting off the head of a serpent representing the Olympic industry (including the IOC, Vanoc, and corporate sponsors) with the caption "Dead IOC Prez" (a reference to revolutionary hip hop group Dead Prez).

## Olympic Resistance Network



The Olympic Resistance Network (ORN) was formed in the spring of 2008. It was the second attempt at organizing a coalition. The first attempt was the No 2010 Network, which had existed for 2-3 months. This first attempt was perhaps too broad, with reformist and government-funded groups participating in some of the initial meetings. Among the more radical groups there was also a lack of trust and animosity that hindered organizing efforts.

By the time ORN was established, some of the most divided radical groups had made efforts at reconciliation. The reformist and state-funded groups weren't a part of ORN and this probably helped facilitate the process of establishing the group's methods, tactics, and strategies. ORN would become the primary organizer of anti-Olympic opposition, based on a radical anti-colonial and anti-capitalist analysis. It adopted respect for a diversity of tactics as a basic organizing principle.

Among those that formed ORN were members of the Anti-Poverty Committee (APC), No One Is Illegal (NOII), Warrior Publications, No2010.com, Native 2010 Resistance, 2010 Games Watch, and others.

ORN met every two weeks for general meetings, and in January 2010 began having weekly meetings. Three email lists were established, one for general anti-Olympic news (with a fairly high volume), an ORN Announcement list (low volume, with announcements of upcoming events), and an ORN Organizer list (which was used to communicate between organizers, where discussion and coordination occurred outside of meetings, etc.). Every 3-4 months, a day-long strategizing meeting was held. Major decisions,

allocation of funds, etc., were decided at the general meetings. Most of the organizing work was left to committees.

The committees were: Outreach, Legal, Logistics, Communications, Fundraising, and Medic. In 2009, a Teaching 2010 Resistance committee was also established to prepare and carry out classroom workshops. The committees met weekly or as necessary. The legal, logistics, and communications committees were closed—only known & trusted comrades could join these (for security reasons).

The ORN Media Committee later reorganized itself independently as the Vancouver Media Coop, in 2009 (see below).

The Outreach Committee was responsible for public education events such as conferences, forums, and training workshops, as well as several protests, production of posters & pamphlets, t-shirts, tabling at events, etc. The

committee also organized speaking tours in BC and down the US West Coast. It was essentially an agit-prop group.

The Legal Committee produced information on legal rights, provided training, and organized legal defense teams for protests and the 2010 convergence. It also prepared information for border crossing and responded to ongoing incidents of police harassment of organizers. Committee members initially undertook work with the BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA), including joint press conferences regarding police harassment, restrictions on civil liberties, and a lawsuit launched by the BCCLA against changes to city by-laws restricting signage and public spaces.

The Logistics Committee was responsible for securing venues and housing during the 2010 convergence, as well as food and childcare. It was closed due to the need to minimize the potential for police disruption of logistical support (i.e., cancelling venues).

The Communications Committee maintained the ORN email and website, and organized speakers for media interviews and press conferences (both corporate and alternative). Members also prepared press statements and communiques. Media liaison was delegated among ORN members on a rotating basis.

Fundraising was responsible for gathering funds through benefit concerts, art auctions, grants, etc. Two committee members were also authorized as treasurers and were responsible for maintaining the ORN bank account and issuing cheques. They regularly updated the general meetings on the status of the account, expenses, and incoming money.

The Medic Committee organized training

workshops, acquired medical supplies, and provided street medics for large protests, including those during the 2010 convergence (where approximately 40 street medics were mobilized). Many of these medics also helped provide medical assistance to the Olympic Tent Village (Feb. 15-28, 2010).

Along with ORN, two other specifically anti-Olympic groups formed: No2010 Victoria, which organized public forums, protests (including the start of the torch relay), as well as a website, and ORN-Ontario, which carried out similar activities in southern Ontario.

### ***CP Spirit Train Protests, Sept-Oct 2008***

As part of the propaganda campaign for the Olympics, Canadian Pacific Rail (CP, a 2010 Olympic sponsor) launched a CP 'Spirit Train' on September 21, 2008. The train engine and other cars were painted in Olympic logos, with one being a stage for when the train stopped at ten cities across the country. Musical performances were used to draw crowds onto the site, where they were then subjected to Olympic propaganda.

VANOC and CP Rail officials clearly did not want to use train stations in downtown Vancouver because of the greater potential for disruption. They decided to launch the train from Port Moody, a suburb of Vancouver. Despite this, ORN organized a rally in which 80 or so persons took public transit to the Port Moody train station (about a 1 hour bus ride).

Just prior to the event beginning, the protesters moved in & positioned themselves directly in front of the stage, blocking much of the view with banners. They used noisemakers including pots and pans, buckets, and a PA system to drown out the first performers. Government and corporate officials were afraid to go onstage because of the proximity of the protesters and cancelled an official ceremony.

Unknown to the organizers at the time, Port Moody is a wealthy suburb that has its own municipal police force. Most of the other suburban areas of Vancouver have RCMP. The lack of security provided by the Port Moody police, who seemed to have no idea as to how to conduct crowd control, enabled the ORN members to take center stage. Subsequent Spirit Train stops saw greater security by local police forces, although protesters were still able to disrupt some of the major events.

As the train crossed the country, it was met by protests in Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Mississauga, and Montreal. In Edmonton on Oct. 1, some 30 protesters were close enough to disrupt the event with yelling and megaphones. Two were able to climb on top of the train to place an anti-Olympic banner. Outside Toronto on Oct. 12, the train was blocked for several hours by 20 protesters, including a young woman who chained herself to the tracks.

In Mississauga on Oct. 13, some 30 protesters were

able to disrupt the event before police pushed them back and away from the stage area. In Montreal on Oct. 18, over 100 protesters were able to disrupt the event with noise and a PA system.

In an Oct. 16 press release, VANOC acknowledged the impact of the protests, stating:

"Despite the efforts of small groups of protesters at some stops along the route, the enthusiasm and participation of local Canadians was evident at each stop..."

The campaign against the Spirit Train helped strengthen an expanding network of anti-Olympic resistance across the country, a network already evident with the carrying out of solidarity actions in Victoria, Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, etc., over the previous year.

### ***November 2008, Why Resist 2010? Conference***

On November 2008, ORN organized a highly successful conference on the negative impacts of the 2010 Olympics, including homelessness,

ecological destruction, corporate invasion of Native lands and the role of corporate sponsors in ecological destruction and human rights violations, the 2010 police state, etc. Between 250-300 people attended the conference, held at Simon Fraser University's Harbour Center location in downtown Vancouver.

### ***Olympic Torch Relay Protests Oct 2009-Feb 2010***

The torch relay, devised by the Nazis for the 1936 Berlin Olympics, is one of the most high-profile events of the Olympics. It serves to promote the Games and to mobilize popular support. Heavily coated with patriotic imagery and themes, the torch relay was used by the Nazis to promote fascism throughout the countries in which it ran.

During the 2006 Turin Winter Olympics, protesters were able to disrupt the torch relay several times, dousing it with fire extinguishers and briefly stealing it at one point. Blockades forced the rerouting of the torch relay around entire towns, despite the deployment of thousands of police. Anti-Olympic organizers targetted Coca Cola, one of the

## **Protest mars Olympic fun**

**PORT MOODY:** Demonstrators shout over Spirit Train celebration



Police haul away one of two protesters who were arrested during celebrations. JACKSONVILLE — THE PROVINCE

Police arrested two people yesterday as protesters armed with placards, air horns and megaphones overpowered the kickoff of the Canadian Pacific Spirit Train in Port Moody.

Shouting "Home, not Games!" and shouting down the scheduled entertainment, the protesters cheered for more than an hour. The performers continually turned up the volume, but were unable to proceed.

"I think the idea is to make some (of us) feel like we're not here," shouted Geoff Mullins, a future at anti-Olympic protests. "They're trying to drown us out, so let's drown them out."

The Spirit Train is scheduled to travel to 10 communities across Canada, carrying activities and exhibits related to the Vancouver 2010 Games.

As the show began under the watchful eye of police, the protesters — some wearing masks and balaclavas — positioned two large banners in front of the stage so nobody could see the show.

But protester Kelly Worrall hauled the sign down so the crowd could watch. "I'm not politically motivated, I'm just trying to see the show," Worrall said. "Freedom only goes as far as when it affects me. You can't accept this type of behavior."

Colin Hansen, the B.C. minister responsible for the Olympics, huddled with aides and Canadian Pacific staff to decide whether to go on stage.

"I think it shows the strength of Canadian democracy, that there's room for protesters. It's a shame that a small number of protesters can ruin this for the vast majority," Hansen said. "They claim to be in favour of free nations, but they're shouting down an aboriginal hand on stage."

Hansen, federal minister James Moore and five other guest speakers cancelled their speeches.

Officers moved in at 3 p.m., handcuffing a man and carrying him to the back of a police van, later arresting a woman among a group who tried to prevent the arrest of the man.

The protesters later moved over to the Canadian Pacific corporate tent where they shouted anti-Olympic slogans and profanities next to a table where families were collecting autographed postcards.

Police had to restrain a woman who tried to snatch a megaphone from one of the protesters. Eventually the group retreated and left the event at about 3:30 p.m. to continue their protest at the Port Moody police station, where the two arrested protesters were taken.

The protesters vowed that each of the 10 nationwide stops by the Spirit Train would be the targets of similar protests.

Port Moody Police Sgt. Phil Reid said he expected the two protesters to be charged with assault.



main sponsors of the relay, due to its human rights and environmental abuses in Asia and Central America.

During the torch relay for the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics, the torch was the target of major protests because of China's bloody crackdown in Tibet shortly before the start of the relay. The torch was disrupted numerous times by large crowds during its 21 country journey. In San Francisco, London, Paris, and other cities, massive police mobilizations couldn't prevent protesters from repeatedly attacking the torch relay. In Paris alone, the torch was extinguished 3-4 times. These protests successfully tarnished the image of the Beijing Games and raised the profile of Tibet's independence struggle.

Following the 2008 torch relay, the IOC announced there would no longer be an international torch relay.

Based on this history, we decided to target the torch relay and began efforts to publicize this a year prior to the actual start. The torch relay route was extensive, lasting 106 days and crossing over 45,000 kilometres, from one side of the country to the other, and then back again. Altogether, there were some 12,000 torch bearers. The total cost of the relay was some \$30 million, with the main corporate sponsors being Coca Cola and RBC.

Because of the RBC's financing of the oil tar sands in northern Alberta, many environmental and social justice groups saw the rationale for protesting the torch relay, as well as anti-colonial/anti-capitalist groups. The Indigenous Environmental Network also participated in the campaign against the torch relay.

With the torch relay starting in Victoria on Oct. 30, 2009, comrades in this Vancouver Island city (also the BC capital) began organizing almost a year prior.

**No2010 Victoria** was established to coordinate anti-Olympic efforts between Vancouver and Victoria, and to mobilize against the torch relay in particular. A May 2009 torch promotional event was protested in downtown Victoria. At the September 2009 Victoria Anarchist Bookfair, further organizing for the torch relay was discussed.

For two days prior to the start of the relay in late October, No2010 Victoria held workshops and a concert promoting the protest. The anti-Olympic torch protest was organized as an afternoon Festival of Olympic Resistance, with a Zombie March later in the day designed to disrupt the torch route. The Zombie theme was used due to the fact that this was a Halloween weekend (and a good excuse to wear scary masks).

On Friday, October 30, as many as 400 people took part in the festival and march. As darkness descended and rain began to fall, several hundred marched through the city streets for 5 hours, eventually managing to block the torch,

cancelling a section of it and forcing it to reroute. Nearly a hundred Victoria police and RCMP accompanied the rally, with many walking among the participants in a show of force. Seven horse-mounted riot cops were also deployed, as well as Emergency Response Teams and a helicopter.

At around 7PM, the march arrived at the BC Legislature (the provincial government building). Despite as many as 200 police on the grounds, the protesters were still able to disrupt the final performances of an Olympic torch celebration by chanting and yelling.

From Victoria, the torch travelled north on Vancouver Island and then up to the Yukon, where it was moved across the Northwest and Nunavut territories to the Atlantic Coast. Although there were no protests along its northern route, the torch was extinguished over a dozen times by the severe cold and high winds. As the relay crossed southern Canada, where most of the population is located, it was met with more protests eventually involving over 30 cities, towns, and reserves.

When the torch landed in Halifax on Nov. 18, it encountered a protest of some 40 people. Protests intensified when the torch crossed into Quebec, with

hundreds disrupting the event in Montreal on Dec. 10 and causing it to end early (despite the use of riot cops in an effort to disperse the rally). In nearby Kahnawake, over 30 people protested the torch. Because of community opposition, the RCMP were not allowed to accompany the torch through the reserve (security was provided by the Kahnawake police). One person was arrested



*Torch Relay runner falls to ground as protesters and cops skirmish. Guelph, Ontario, Dec. 28, 2009*

from the Mohawk Traditional Council (a grassroots longhouse, not a band council).

In Toronto on Dec. 17, over 250 protesters disrupted the torch relay, causing it to split in two and be delayed for up to an hour. On Dec. 21, protesters at Six Nations prevented the torch from running through their reserve-territory. Torch runners did relay laps in a bingo hall parking lot. The next day, protesters at the Oneida reserve blocked the torch from entering their community. On Dec. 24, over 40 people protested in London, Ontario. On Dec. 27, more than 150 people protested in Kitchener, with two banners being dropped across RBC locations calling for boycotts of Olympic sponsors.

On Dec. 28, protesters collided with the torch relay in Guelph, Ontario, causing the torch bearer to fall to the ground after tripping over a police officer. Two protesters were arrested. The clash occurred as police frantically rerouted the relay and collided with a mob of protesters



running to intercept it (it was, protesters claimed, all a big 'misunderstanding').

On Jan. 2, 2010, eight Indigenous youth attempted to blockade the TransCanada Highway between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie. They were detained and later released. On Jan. 5, more than 50 people successfully delayed the torch relay in Winnipeg, Manitoba. That same day, members of the Rosseau River First Nation band protested alongside the highway to raise awareness of the nearly 3,000 missing/murdered women across the country. On Jan. 14, around 30 people protested in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The next day, dozens protested the relay in Edmonton, Alberta.

On Jan. 29, some 100 protested the torch relay in Prince George, BC. On January 31, the torch was protested by Secwepemc near Chase, BC. The last major torch protests occurred in East Vancouver on Feb. 12, 2010 (the day of the opening ceremonies).

In Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, at approx. 9AM on Friday Feb. 12, 2010, some 150 protesters blocked the torch at Victory Square (Hastings and Cambie) and forced it to skip several stops through the area. On Commercial Drive, beginning around 10AM, some 200 protesters blocked the street, placed rocks on the road, and strung barbed wire across the street, forcing the torch to take sidestreets. One torch bearer was bundled into a police car and driven out of the area.

### ***Speaking Tours***

The first, and most extensive, speaking tour was held in January-February of 2008. It was organized primarily by comrades in the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement-Guelph. Two Indigenous speakers, Kanahus Pellkey of the Native Youth Movement (NYM) and Dustin Johnson (a former editor of *Redwire*, a Native youth magazine), both from BC, spoke at over 20 cities and towns in Ontario, Quebec, New York, and Massachusetts.

Attempts by ORN at organizing a West Coast US tour were first attempted in the fall of 2008 but failed due to poor communications and coordination. Not until October 2009 did ORN speakers begin making their way to Seattle, Olympia, Portland, etc. These efforts were at first blocked by US border agents refusing entry to ORN organizers, at the request of Canadian police. ORN members with dual citizenships, or with lower profiles and no criminal records, were later able to cross the border.

Around the same time, speaking tours began to be organized for towns on Vancouver Island and in the Interior region. ORN members, Indigenous people (including NYM), tar sands activists, and members of the Council of Canadians, all participated in these speaking tours. Other tours were also conducted by punk and hip hop groups, including Testament and Illogick who toured through the US in 2009-10 and helped mobilize comrades to travel to the Convergence.

### ***Forums***

Along with speaking tours, ORN also helped organize several forums in Vancouver with high-profile speakers, including David Zirin (a writer for *Sports Illustrated*), Helen Lenskyj (a Toronto area professor who has written several books critical of the Olympics), and Andrew Jennings (an investigative journalist who has written several books exposing the corruption of the IOC). ORN members also spoke at numerous conferences and events throughout the city.

### ***Corporate Media***

ORN spokespersons did extensive corporate media relations work, primarily television and print, but also radio. This included pre-arranged press interviews, last-minute commentary, as well as during protests. ORN also held numerous press conferences for both local and international media, and issued regular press statements and communiqués regarding upcoming events, police harassment, news items, etc.

Generally, corporate media coverage was negative and served in the criminalization of the resistance. This was accomplished through sensationalistic headlines and articles, as well as broadcasting slanderous statements from police and government officials. Columnists and editorials were especially hostile to the anti-Olympic movement, some declaring that we were 'criminals', 'vandals' and even 'terrorists.' Ethan Baron, a columnist in *The Province* newspaper, called the No2010.com website the 'arson website.'

The corporate media regularly covered anti-Olympic protests and actions, primarily due to their sensationalism but also because of public interest. During the 2009 'Countdown' period and Olympic Games themselves, however, anti-Olympic protests and actions were not widely reported. Instead, the media focused exclusively on pro-Olympic news and hype (revealing their true role as propaganda for the ruling class). The only exceptions were large disruptive protests (i.e., some of the anti-torch actions across the country) and the 2010 Heart Attack.

During the 2010 Heart Attack, after riot police had attacked the protesters and groups were dispersing, a CTV camera operator followed one group and filmed them as they de-masked and removed their black outer layer of clothing. The next day, on Feb. 14, one of these comrades was arrested after confronting the same camera person at another rally.

## Indigenous Anti-Olympic Resistance

“Colonization, the loss of land, and the residential schools system, have taught our people to be dependent on the state and on welfare. Many of our people have become very apathetic and are just trying to survive.”

(Kat Norris, Indigenous Action Movement, “A Roundtable with Vancouver Housing Activists,” *Upping the Ante*, No. 4, May 2007)

While the main slogan used by the anti-Olympic resistance was “No Olympics on Stolen Native Land,” the reality on the ground was that there was no mass movement of Natives opposing the Games. There are various reasons for this, including some of the same issues that limited non-Native mobilizing (i.e., the nature of the Olympic industry, propaganda and indoctrination, etc.).

The primary reason, however, is that there is no mass Native resistance movement. Again, for a variety of reasons.

For the Native anti-Olympic resistance, there was the added problem of the Four Host First Nations (FHFN), a collection of the four Indian Act band councils (Squamish, Lil'wat, Tseil-Wautuh, and Musqueam) whose traditional territories Vancouver and Whistler occupy. In addition, most band councils and their political organizations, including the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), also supported the Games. This collaboration helped the IOC and VANOC legitimize the Games, and served to confuse both Natives and non-Natives about the real extent of Native participation and support for the Olympics.

While the FHFN/AFN created the appearance of support by Indigenous peoples, other state-funded urban Native organizations (i.e., youth groups, service providers, employment programs, housing, education, etc.) either accepted Olympic-related funding and began promoting the Games, or self-censored themselves so as to not endanger their funding.

Gord Hill, a Native organizer involved in the ORN, stated his opinion regarding the low number of Natives actively organizing against the Olympics:

“Here in Vancouver, not many Natives are directly involved in anti-Olympics resistance, although there are groups and individuals who regularly attend protests and forums. Only a handful of Natives have been involved in day-to-day organizing activities. I differentiate between mobilizing and organizing. Although Natives will mobilize within anti-Olympic struggles, they are not engaged in organizing.

“There are various reasons for this, including

general apathy, the social conditions facing Indigenous people, and the massive propaganda efforts of the Olympics industry and the government...”

(“Going for Gold on Stolen Land...” *Upping the Ante*, No. 9, pp. 143-44)



DEWC Elders at Feb. 11, 2008 anti-Olympic protest, Vancouver

While it is true there was no large Native movement opposing the Games, that is not to say Natives did not participate in anti-Olympic resistance. As noted:

- Among the first groups to publicly oppose the 2010 bid were grassroots members of the St'at'imc and Secwepemc, in 2002.
- The Native Youth Movement was involved in early anti-2010 organizing through both the then-existing Vancouver chapter as well as the Secwepemc chapter.
- Elder Harriet Nahanee was arrested at the Eagleridge Bluffs blockade and died shortly after her imprisonment, in February 2007.
- On March 6, 2007, the Native Warrior Society stole the Olympic Flag from city hall, partly in response to Nahanee's death.
- The No2010.com website was maintained by Gord Hill (Kwakaka'wakw).
- Native 2010 Resistance organized a rally on Feb. 11, 2008, that had a large participation by Natives. Later that month, they also disrupted an AFN/FHFN media event.
- Elders from the DEWC frequently led anti-Olympic rallies.
- Natives in reserves, towns and cities across the country participated in protests against the CP Spirit Train and Torch Relay (including Kahnawake, Six Nations, Oneida, Neskonlith, and St'at'imc).
- A large contingent of Natives, including elders, led the Feb. 12, 2010 rally.
- Member and allies of the Katzie First Nation, near

Vancouver, briefly blockaded a local bridge in solidarity with the 2010 Heart Attack on Feb. 13.

These activities ensured that Native opposition to the Olympics became a part of the public discourse, one that the FHFN and AFN were forced to respond to in their public statements (one of the FHFN's statements, in fact, decried the use of the term "No Olympics on Stolen Native Land"). In January 2010, when then-former AFN grand chief Phil Fontaine ran with the Olympic torch (now as a representative of the the Royal Bank of Canada), he stated "We knew there wouldn't be 100 percent support," referring to the protests.

### ***The Slogan "No Olympics on Stolen Native Land!"***

As noted, the slogan "No Olympics on Stolen Native Land!" was the primary one used during the anti-Olympic resistance of 2007-2010. It was spread through the use of protest chants, stickers, t-shirts, video, banners, graffiti, and statements.

A frequent response to this slogan, by both citizens and journalists, was "What 'stolen land'?" The colonial history of the province, and the government's lack of treaties legally surrendering Indigenous title, then became a part of the public discussion (along with that of Native resistance).

The slogan was strongly supported by social movements already involved in anti-colonial resistance, as Harsha Wallia of No One Is Illegal-Vancouver stated:

"The slogan "No Olympics on Stolen native Land" brings to the forefront the critical question of Indigenous self-determination. Rather than being treated as one of many issues within a laundry list of demands (such as homeless or public debt), it provides a necessary foundation for the movement, while also implicitly highlighting that Indigenous communities bear the brunt of most social issues (such as poverty, environmental degradation, and state repression)..."

("Going for Gold on Stolen Land: A Roundtable on Anti-Olympic Organizing," *Upping the Anti*, No. 9, pp. 143-44)

### ***No2010.com***

No2010.com was an Indigenous anti-Olympic website established in the spring of 2007. Its main purpose was to promote anti-Olympic resistance by providing educational material, news and updates, downloadable leaflets, posters, booklets, etc. The site was maintained by Gord Hill (Kwakwaka'wakw) from 2007-2010 and was part of the ORN.

No2010.com was one of the main forms of public communications for anti-Olympic resistance. It was referred to frequently by corporate media as well as the top RCMP commander for Olympics security, Bud Mercer (who used images taken from the website as 'evidence' of plans for

violent protests).

By early Feb. 2010, the site averaged 4,000 hits a day. On Feb. 12, 2010, it reached 12,000 hits (with some 26 originating from the military's National Defense Headquarters). The website's popularity was raised by comrades constantly including the address in communications, pamphlets, posters, banners, and even through graffiti. A comrade in Montreal also designed a sticker and fundraised to have 100,000 printed. From 2008-2010, these stickers were sent across the country and used to promote the website's address as well as the slogan "No Olympics on Stolen Native Land."

In 2008, a PayPal account was set up on the site, through which the stickers, t-shirts, and patches were sold. From October 2008 to February 2010, a year and a half, nearly \$3,000 in merchandise was sold through the website alone. Many more were sold at forums, festivals, and conferences.

In 2008, No2010.com and Burning Fist Media produced a 15-minute video, *Resist 2010: 8 Reasons to Oppose the 2010 Olympics*. The video was duplicated on DVDs and hosted on the No2010.com website. Many other sites also linked the video.

### ***Native 2010 Resistance***

Native 2010 Resistance was a brief effort to organize an Indigenous anti-Olympic group. Its two main contributions were the Feb. 11, 2008, protest to 'Shutdown the Corporate Olympic Countdown' and the Feb. 18, 2008, disruption of the AFN/FHFN press conference. Although Native 2010 Resistance remained listed as part of the ORN, it had ceased to exist by the spring of 2008.

The group was unable to sustain itself for various reasons, yet this was clearly the method that should have been used for there to be any Native anti-Olympic organizing. At the same time, it is also true that there is no grassroots Native movement in the city (or generally).



### ***Downtown Eastside Women's Centre Elder's Council***

The DEWC's Elders Council were frequently involved in anti-Olympic protests, often leading rallies, drumming and singing. Members were also regular speakers at forums and panels. Most of the elders were from the Northwest Coast, living in Vancouver, and also participated in the DEWC's Power of Women project.

## ***Native Youth Movement***

By the time anti-Olympic resistance emerged in 2007, the only chapter of NYM still existing was that based in Secwepemc territory, primarily the Neskonalith reserve near Chase, BC. Due to the rural location of Secwepemc NYM, however, their contribution to the anti-Olympic resistance was not extensive.

At the Feb. 12, 2007, Countdown Clock protest, one young Secwepemc NYM member was arrested (along with six other protesters). In November 2007, the group organized a rally against the Austrian ski team using Sun Peaks ski resort as a training venue. An NYM member participated in the East Coast speaking tour from Jan-Feb 2008, and NYM members spoke at occasional conferences and forums. Prior to the convergence in Vancouver, the Secwepemc NYM also organized an Indigenous People's Assembly on the Neskonalith reserve from Feb. 5-8, 2010.

## **Radical Media**

### ***Vancouver Media Coop (VMC)***

The Vancouver Media Coop originally began in 2009 as a media committee of ORN but later reorganized itself as the VMC, part of the *Dominion* newspaper/website's efforts to establish local media coops (the *Dominion* also produced a special magazine issue focused on the Olympics with several thousand copies distributed in the Fall of 2009). The group consisted of video makers, photographers, and writers. For several months prior to the 2010 convergence, they conducted training workshops and organized fundraisers. They set up a website with video, text, and audio reports, and a Twitter feed.

During the five days of the Convergence, the VMC produced a daily newsletter, entitled *Balaclava*, with updates, interviews, and photographs from the previous day's activities. They also posted daily news, photos and videos on the website. Overall, the VMC provided the most up-to-date and extensive grassroots coverage of the anti-Olympic resistance, with between 30-40 people using the VMC resources to edit and post material. The VMC website was so popular that it crashed the Resist! servers several times during the beginning of the 2010 Games.

Although the VMC set itself up in order to report on the anti-Olympic resistance and particularly during the 2010 Convergence, it was not an anti-Olympic project and was always intended to serve a broader purpose as a form of alternative, independent media. The VMC continues to exist and publish/post alternative news.

VMC members were also under surveillance and harassed by the RCMP-VISU. Several independent media from the US were denied entry by the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA). One person from Salt Lake City,

Utah, was detained by US Homeland Security agents and subjected to a strip-search. Others were held for several hours and questioned by VISU officers before being denied entry, or in some cases allowed to enter Canada with a warning they would be under surveillance. In all cases, cell phones, cameras, laptops and other electrical devices, as well as notebooks, were searched by border agents. One of the most high profile border incidents involved the CBSA's detention of Amy Goodman, a well known journalist with Democracy Now in the US.



*Banner on DERA building, Vancouver, Feb. 15, 2010*

## **State-Funded/Reformist Groups**

Although they will likely leave the militant anti-Olympic resistance out of their versions of history, it is important to note the activities of reformist groups in relation to the resistance. By reformist I mean groups that use political and legal methods to affect social change, and that do not challenge the system as a whole. Many such groups are state funded, while others are Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that receive funding from the state and/or corporate foundations.

Reformist groups often play an ambiguous and problematic role in regards to resistance movements. They are both a part of the movement, but also part of the system's



institutions for social control. Their reformist strategies can be used by the state to coopt social struggles, while their very existence can reinforce the legitimacy of the system.

Reformist groups are reliant on government and/or business for funding, and many staff members have a vested self-interest in maintaining a harmonious relationship with funding agencies. This is true even for non-funded groups, with individuals who know their future careers are based on their political legitimacy.

Reformist groups are overwhelmingly middle-class, which directs their efforts towards legal constitutional reform and against radical social change (which threatens their class interests). For these reasons, reformist groups are almost always 'nonviolent' and ultimately collaborative with the state and ruling class (i.e., Gandhi and King), for whom they rely on for both legitimacy and the carrying out of reforms.

This legitimacy can be tarnished by association with radical movements. Funding can be denied, or cut off. The path of an aspiring political career, blocked. Some reformists are also ideologically motivated, with strong beliefs in political or legal methods, or non-violence.

For all these reasons, reformist groups will almost always maintain a public distance from the resistance (even if secretly some support the militants). This can take the form of never publicly acknowledging the existence or work of the resistance, or even public statements denouncing radical groups. This distancing is but one example of the problematic nature of reformists (whose activities cannot help but limit support for radical movements). At times, their true natures are not revealed until a 'crisis' occurs. Others may routinely collaborate with police during rallies or in 'community policing' projects.

Despite this, the reformist groups often work on similar campaigns as do radicals, and there is often overlapping participation in both. Some comrades may even work for reformist state-funded groups, or liason with them for project funding, etc. Reformist groups are also able to mobilize those who are threatened by more radical movements, or opposed to them ideologically, or who see reformist demands as being more achievable. Because of their greater resources and political legitimacy, reformist groups are often able to mobilize larger numbers than militant groups (although not always).

With some exceptions, there was little public interaction between the reformist groups and militants. Most reformist groups conducted their own, separate campaigns regarding the Olympics (at times coordinating and collaborating with one another). Some focused on local or national issues (such as homelessness, or poverty), using the

Olympics as political pressure, while others focused on the Games, but with a social justice agenda (i.e., the Impact on Communities Coalition). The main common demand of the reformists was for a national housing strategy (Bill C-304, no relation to C3PO of *Star Wars* fame).

Although at times highly critical of the costs of the Games, or their negative impacts, the reformists did not develop an overall analysis or critique of the Olympic industry itself (some probably feeling it would diminish from their particular campaign). Nor did they have any anti-capitalist or anti-colonial analysis.

### ***Downtown Eastside Resident's Association (DERA)***

DERA was established in the 1970s and originated the term 'Downtown Eastside', replacing the once common 'Skid Row' in designating the area. DERA's main focus have been the immediate concerns of residents regarding housing and income. Over time, it came to manage three buildings containing low-income housing, and to administer programs and services through these.

Although DERA has always been involved in social movements in the DTES, this increased in the 1990s as social struggles in the area intensified. When APC carried out rowdy protests regarding housing and poverty after 2001, DERA was one of their main supporters and one of the only groups to not criticize APC's tactics. During the North Star squat in 2006, DERA President Kim Kerr was one of those arrested.

After the March 2007 Olympic flag theft by the

Native Warrior Society, the offices of DERA were raided based on a flimsy "tip" given to police by a disgruntled former employee. After several hours of searching the office and storage space, police did not find the stolen flag.

DERA has also provided resources for Food Not Bombs, who regularly prepare and serve free meals through one of the DERA buildings. The Vancouver

Media Coop was temporarily located in a DERA building, which was also used for exhibits and forums by Art and Anarchy (including a 'Fuck the Cultural Olympiad' exhibit).

Later, DERA had some of its funding cut by the provincial government (DERA is funded by the BC Ministry of Housing). Then, in the Fall of 2009, police were brought in by BC Housing to conduct an audit of DERA. In March 2010, BC Housing announced it was suing DERA for nearly \$500,000 in unpaid taxes and rents. They also claimed DERA mismanaged its buildings, providing DERA



*Carnegie Community Action Project banner*

employees (some of whom were APC members) with apartments, bypassing wait lists.

### ***Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC)***

The DEWC is a state-funded institution that provides services for women in the DTES, including a social space, kitchen, showers, etc. Originally established in 1978, DEWC is funded by BC Housing, Status of Women Canada, Vancouver Coastal Health, the City of Vancouver, and the BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.

From the DEWC, two groups were involved in the anti-Olympic movement: the Power of Women (POW) project and the Elder's council. Some members of ORN were involved in both the DEWC and POW.

The DEWC and POW organized many of their own protests against Olympic-related issues in the DTES, including homelessness, police violence and harassment, as well as government legislation affecting residents (including the *Safe Streets Act* and the *Assistance to Shelter Act*). POW at times worked with CCAP, Pivot, and others on joint campaigns, press conferences, etc. POW also initiated and organized the Olympic Tent Village from Feb. 15-28, 2010.

### ***Carnegie Community Action Project (CCAP)***

CCAP is run by the board of the Carnegie Community Centre Association, the Carnegie Centre being a large building at Main and Hastings Streets that provides various services & programs for DTES residents, including a library, computer lab, kitchen, weight room, gym, etc. It is a government funded institution out of which other government-funded or NGO-type groups organize, and which is generally hostile to radical groups.

CCAP is largely funded by VanCity Credit Union, a 'progressive' banking institution. The main concerns of CCAP are housing, income, and land use issues in the DTES. Its main coordinators are Wendy Pederson and Jean Swanson.

As part of its mandate, CCAP has monitored the loss of low-income housing from 2002-2010, along with the increase in condominium construction. It has organized numerous forums and protests, and produced regular newsletters and reports. It also maintains a website.

At the Feb. 12, 2007, Countdown Clock protest, CCAP members showed up for their own, separate, rally with a large clock of their own, counting down the projected increase in homelessness by 2010. After the protest, an editorial in the Carnegie newsletter blasted the APC for stealing the media spotlight (a constant complaint of some Carnegie activists, and other reformists, which reveals a tendency to view any successful action almost entirely through the media coverage they receive).

Among the most successful of CCAP's activities were the Annual Poverty Olympics, the first being held on Feb. 3, 2008. The event attracted between 200-300 people and featured games and theatre satirizing the Olympics,

including 'welfare hurdles', curling, wrestling, etc., with poor people competing against Team Vanoc. Three mascots became minor icons of the Poverty Olympics: Itchy the Bedbug, Chewy the Rat, and Creepy the Cockroach, emphasizing some of the conditions people in the DTES must live in.

The second Poverty Olympics was held on Feb. 8, 2009, with approximately 500 people attending. The third and final Poverty Olympics was held on Feb. 7, 2010, with some 600 people attending. This last event was the most ambitious and was preceded by a Poverty Olympics Torch Relay.

The Poverty Olympics Torch Relay began on Jan. 17, 2010, and travelled through 18 communities, including 100 Mile House, Sechelt, and Whistler. It consisted of a large torch with the words "End Poverty" emblazoned on it. The purpose was to raise awareness about poverty and homelessness in the province. For more info check out [www.povertyolympics.ca](http://www.povertyolympics.ca).

According to CCAP, there are between 10,000-15,000 homeless people in BC, with some 643,000 living in poverty (as of 2007, prior to the 2008 economic decline). The Poverty Torch Relay ended on Feb. 7, 2010, and opened the last Annual Poverty Olympics.

### ***Impact On Communities Coalition (IOCC)***

The IOCC was established in January 2002, during the public debate about Vancouver-Whistler hosting the 2010 Games. At the time, the IOCC "did not take an explicit position either for or against the bid" ([www.iocc.ca](http://www.iocc.ca)). According to IOCC statements, it was "dedicated to maximizing the positive impacts of the Games... while minimizing the negative impacts."

To this end, the IOCC organized numerous forums, issued press statements, and met with members of the Bid Society, government, the BC premier, and, after Vancouver won the bid in 2003, with Vanoc officials. It also organized a public talk with Olympic critic Dr. Helen Jefferson Lenskyj.

At this time, the IOCC was a mixed bag of social democratic activists, many with connections and careers in the NDP. One of the founders was Jim Green, a former DERA member and 'poverty advocate' in the DTES. He would later emerge as a strong supporter of the Olympics.

Once Green left the IOCC, and after growing frustration in attempting to engage in dialogue with Vanoc, the IOCC became more critical of the Games. Some activities organized by the IOCC included a 2010 Homelessness Hunger Strike Relay, which began in December 2008 and had people conducting a 'hunger strike' for 1 week, after which another participant would take over.

In January 2008, IOCC board chair Am Johal blasted Vanoc for failing to live up to the Inner City Inclusivity Agreement, which included commitments to housing and other social services as part of the 2010 Games. Johal stated that five years of meetings with Vanoc officials

had been a waste of time, and threatened that the IOCC could “no longer control” the radicals, warning Vanoc to expect more protests (an obvious political ploy).

On Feb. 20, 2010, the IOCC also organized a housing rally at the Vancouver Art Gallery. The main demands of the hunger strike relay and rally were for a national housing plan to be adopted and implemented by the federal government (Bill C-304). These demands were shared by CCAP and Pivot Legal Society.

### ***Pivot Legal Society***

Pivot was established in 2002 by progressive lawyers who sought to use their legal training as a way of improving living conditions for people in the DTES (they probably saw *Gandhi* while in law school). Pivot has focused on issues such as police violence and homelessness. Over the years, it has carried out various campaigns including collecting affidavits from people who claimed to have been harassed, assaulted, and even tortured by Vancouver police. It also gathered information on the loss of low-income housing and ongoing gentrification in the DTES.

Pivot provides legal counsel for people and groups from the DTES. This once included members of APC, but this ended in 2008, (probably due to APC's involvement in militant anti-Olympic protests). One of the main spokespersons for Pivot was David Eby, a lawyer who joined Pivot shortly after it was established.

Over the years, Pivot's campaigns contributed to public awareness of some of the conditions in the DTES. This included publishing reports, participating in forums, and launching legal challenges to civic and provincial legislation (such as the 2004 *Safe Streets Act*, as well as against illegal evictions by hotel owners).

Pivot has worked with many other groups in the DTES, including CCAP, DERA, DEWC, POW, Insite (a safe injection site), etc. Some members participated in anti-Olympic forums and protests over the years, including Eby (who left Pivot in 2008).

During the 2010 Games, Pivot launched a 'Red Tent' campaign, distributing 500 red tents with the words “Housing is a Right” printed on them. The tents appeared at high-profile locations along the torch relay route into the city, as well as at Science World. The tents were also used at the Olympic Tent Village, established on Feb. 15, 2010.

On Feb. 27, 2010, Pivot organized a banner wrap around the Canada Pavillion in downtown Vancouver, consisting of over 1,700 feet of red banner material with slogans such as “Homes for All” and “We can do better than tents.” According to Pivot and the World Records Academy,

this was the largest 'banner wrap' ever.

The main demand of the Red Tent campaign was for a national housing strategy (bill C-304).

### ***BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA)***

The BCCLA is a state-funded institution whose mandate is to promote civil liberties and to act as a 'watch dog' over government policies that affect such liberties. It was first established in 1963 and its motto is “The Voice of Liberty.” It receives funding from BC Gaming and the Enforcement Branch of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (the Solicitor General being the highest law enforcement official in the province).

For decades, the BCCLA has lobbied government, launched legal challenges to policies or legislation, provided advocacy for citizens, and published reports. Their occasional press releases criticizing new CCTV cameras in city streets, for example, were about the most political movements ever heard of from the BCCLA.

This changed with the appointment of David Eby in December 2008 as executive director of the BCCLA. Eby took the position after failing to win a nomination as a candidate for the Vision Vancouver party in the civic election

of November 2008. He brought with him the experience and contacts from community organizing he had acquired through Pivot's DTES campaigns. Combined with the growing public debate over restrictions on civil liberties in regards to the Olympics, the BCCLA suddenly became a high profile critic of certain aspects of Olympic security measures.

Some members of ORN began working closely with Eby and the BCCLA, participating in joint press conferences denouncing police harassment of anti-Olympic organizers, as well as amendments to city bylaws that restricted 'illegal signage'. The BCCLA also challenged the police to agree to not use agent provocateurs (they didn't), sharply criticized Vancouver police for purchasing a Medium Range Acoustic Device (MRAD, or LRAD), and raised concerns about 'police sweeps' against the homeless, the imposition of CCTV cameras in downtown streets, as well as the potential for 'preventative arrests' of anti-Olympic organizers (as had occurred during APEC 1997, and Quebec City 2001).

Two ORN members, Chris Shaw and Alissa Westgarde-Thorpe, joined with the BCCLA in launching a lawsuit against the city's bylaw amendments restricting signage. The lawsuit was later dropped when the city added



*Banner of Gatewaysucks.org with Olympic sponsors*

provisions that it would not target political signs or protests, (although none of the actual amendments that would enable authorities to do so were ever changed).

The BCCLA established a **Legal Observer** program in September 2009, training up to 200 people on how to record and document arrests or 'violations of civil liberties.' They held regular training workshops and issued volunteers with bright orange shirts with the words "Legal Observer" printed on them. These observers were first used at the anti-torch protest in Victoria, on Oct. 30, 2009, and then at protests during the 2010 convergence and throughout the Olympics. Although many observers were sympathetic to the anti-Olympic resistance, they were portrayed as 'impartial' and did not publicly associate with protesters.

During the Olympics, the BCCLA established phone lines people could call for legal support if they were arrested, or if they witnessed any police misconduct. The Legal Observers were also stationed throughout the DTES to monitor any increased police harassment or arrests (sweeps).

This high level of involvement by BCCLA in a social movement was unprecedented, though not necessarily unwelcomed. Their media work raised concern about restrictions on civil liberties and placed greater scrutiny on police, most certainly limiting some of their more repressive plans (i.e., protest zones). Some protesters felt more secure with the presence of the legal observers at highly-police rallies.

Despite this, there was growing concern among militants about the political reliability of the BCCLA, and Eby in particular. These concerns were proven correct after the 2010 Heart Attack protest, which Eby denounced in public statements. He was pied several days after the protest, on Feb. 17, during a public forum (the pie-thrower calling him a "disgrace" and a "traitor").

### ***Council of Canadians (COC)***

The COC was first established in 1985. It was primarily focused on free trade and "to protect and promote Canadian sovereignty and democracy." In 1988, it joined with the Pro-Canada Network in opposing the Conservative government and the Free Trade Agreement with the US. Today, it describes itself as a sort of government and corporate 'watchdog'.

Although the COC has engaged in some civil disobedience, its primary activities are public education and lobbying government. Its main campaigns include opposing integration to the US, globalization and trade issues, energy, water, and food production.

Due to its broader membership and orientation, the COC is not a single-issue group and has a broader political analysis than CCAP, IOCC, Pivot, or the BCCLA. It is not based in the DTES but instead has a national membership, with local COC chapters participating in national campaigns as well as local issues.

Although COC is reformist, in that it promotes political and legal methods to pressure policy changes at the

federal level, it has shown itself more willing to act in solidarity with radical movements. Some of the main campaigns carried out by COC include involvement in the anti-globalization movement (the COC were present at the protests in Quebec City, 2001, and chose to march to the security fencing, in contrast to other reformist groups who marched away from the fencing and abandoned any pretense of resistance), privatization of fresh water resources, free trade agreements, as well as corporate power.

Despite their nationalist image, one that seeks to portray itself as a defender of Canadian 'sovereignty', the COC has been more willing to adopt anti-colonial politics than most other reformist groups. In a *Statement on the 2010 Olympic Winter Games*, for example, the COC acknowledged the Games were held on unceded Indigenous land.

Of all the reformist groups, the COC developed the most comprehensive critique of the Olympic industry, including environmental and social impacts (homelessness, erosion of civil liberties, police repression, displacement), as well as the links between corporate sponsors and many of these same issues across the country (and around the world, in some cases).

COC members were also involved in the 2010 corporate campaign, highlighting many corporations involvement in ecological destruction and human rights violations. They also organized public forums in many of their local chapter areas throughout BC. Although not a high profile organization in terms of protests and actions, COC members made many valuable contributions in mobilizing anti-Olympic resistance.





## Direct Action & Vandalism/Sabotage Campaign, 2006-2010

Direct action, including sabotage and vandalism, played an important role in the anti-Olympic campaign. These actions occurred in Vancouver and other major cities across the country, including internationally. From 2006, when the first direct action occurred (the blockade at Eagleridge Bluffs), to Feb. 28, 2010 (the end of the Games), there were over 90 direct actions carried out. The majority of these were clandestine acts of vandalism and sabotage (approx. 62), with the remainder being public direct actions (such as squats, disruption of events, blockades, etc.).

Of the two, the public direct actions had a higher profile, involved larger numbers of people (as many as 400 in Victoria to disrupt the start of the torch relay on October 30, 2010), and generated more media coverage. These disruptions became a regular part of the anti-Olympic campaign and were most closely associated with the militant anti-colonial & anti-capitalist resistance (i.e., protests organized by the Olympic Resistance Network).

The clandestine actions were carried out largely by autonomous anarchist or anti-Olympic groups. Some exceptions included the March 6, 2007, flag theft by the Native Warrior Society and some actions conducted by members of APC.

Many communiques for clandestine direct actions, however, were never sent to corporate media, although they were available on No2010.com and other sites. Consequently, there was little public debate about clandestine actions except that which was reported by corporate media (overwhelmingly negative, although it did raise the profile of such attacks). Because No2010.com posted most of these communiques & reports, the website itself was singled out by media as well as the RCMP as evidence of the 'terrorist' or 'violent protester' image they sought to portray.

Targets for clandestine actions included corporate sponsors, real estate companies, banks, political party's, the BC Premier's office, the Olympic 'Countdown Clock' in Vancouver (as well as another version in Ottawa), construction companies, military vehicles, and railway lines. Methods of attack included smashing windows, spray-painting, glueing door locks and ATM machines, slashing tires, blocking sewage pipes, damaging machinery, as well as arson.

The first anti-Olympic *public direct action* was the Eagleridge Bluffs blockade from April 17- May 25, 2006. Twenty-four persons were arrested, including Harriet Nahanee and Betty Krawczyk. The blockade halted

destruction work by Kiewit & Sons for over a month.

The first clandestine act of *sabotage* occurred June 15, 2006, when five heavy equipment vehicles were damaged, including some that were tipped over, on a road



*Anti-Olympic Protest, Vancouver, Feb. 12, 2009*

under construction leading to the Callaghan Valley (near Whistler). The total cost of damages was over \$50,000.

The first *public direct action* that disrupted an Olympic/VANOC event was the Feb. 12, 2007, 'Countdown Clock' protest at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Following these and other protests, a sabotage/vandalism campaign began against corporate sponsors. One of the first of these was on August 19, 2007, in Ottawa, when anarchists smashed the windows of a Bell Canada building. Bell is one of the main sponsors for the 2010 Olympics and owns CTV as well as other telecommunications companies.

Just over a month later, on September 29, 2007, one of the first of many attacks on the Royal Bank of Canada occurred when an RBC location had its windows smashed, in Vancouver. RBC would become one of the most common targets for clandestine anti-Olympic resistance over the next three years (approximately 21 attacks, mostly smashed windows but also sabotage of ATMs). These attacks occurred in Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, & Ottawa. RBC was a main sponsor for the 2010 Olympics and the torch relay, as well as being the largest financier for the Tar Sands in northern Alberta.

Other corporate sponsors attacked included McDonalds, General Motors, and CP Rail.

On December 12, 2007, one of the first arson attacks occurred in Guelph, Ontario, when two Bell Canada vans were set on fire. On June 24, 2008, simultaneous arson attacks occurred in Vancouver and Toronto. In Vancouver, Molotov cocktails were thrown into a Canadian Forces parking lot, damaging several vehicles. In Toronto, a

General Motors dealership had 13 vehicles destroyed or damaged by incendiary devices.

On May 7, 2008, a Kiewit company vehicle was set on fire in East Vancouver. On July 22, 2008, another Kiewit vehicle was set on fire in East Vancouver. On October 13, 2008, a CP Rail depot in Toronto was sabotaged when militants cut down two telephone poles and set fire to an electrical box.

Vandal attacks continued up to and including the Olympics themselves, with attacks on corporate sponsors (including the HBC, RBC, and McDonalds) and damage to a \$150,000 flag draped over a building in downtown Vancouver. Damages from the 2010 Heart Attack action are estimated at \$22,000.

## Anti-Olympic Convergence, February 10-15, 2010

The idea for an anti-Olympic convergence had been discussed as early as March 2007. At that time, a poster was designed with the slogans “Convergence Feb 2010: No Olympics on Stolen Land! No Social Cleansing! No Eco-Destruction!”. These demands reflected what were felt to be the main threats which the Olympics represented, and which promoted anti-colonial and anti-capitalist resistance. There were no specific plans or dates set.

Later that year, in October 2007, during an Indigenous conference organized by the National Indigenous Congress and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in Sonora, Mexico, Indigenous delegates from 'BC' met and set the dates of the convergence: Feb. 10-15, 2010. These dates were chosen to provide two days for preparation, and three days of action commencing with the opening ceremonies on Feb. 12, 2010.

Over the next two and a half years, the Convergence was promoted as a gathering of anti-colonial and anti-capitalist forces, with the aim of disrupting the Games. It was based on the successful convergences that had taken place in Seattle 1999 and Quebec City 2001. The convergence concept seemed applicable since the Olympics affected many different social sectors & movements (i.e., homelessness, environment, Indigenous, anti-poverty, anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, anti-war, civil liberties, students, etc.).

When ORN formed in the Spring of 2008, it maintained the call for the 2010 Convergence. Members were under no illusions that it would be of the same scale as those of Seattle or Quebec City. A major contributing factor to these mass mobilizations—organized labour—was totally absent from the anti-Olympic movement (having been part of the bid process from the beginning, along with the NDP, the rest being bought off in 2006 with Olympic “peace contracts” lasting until after the Games).

By 2008 it was also apparent that large numbers of people would not be travelling from eastern Canada to

Vancouver in 2010, due to harsh winter conditions across the rest of the country during February. The main external organizing effort was then seen as the West Coast of the US. While attempts to organize a West Coast speaking tour faltered until late 2009, the heightened security measures at the border encountered by ORN organizers signalled that border crossings by US comrades could be a major obstacle.

By this time, it was clear that any mass mobilizing would be primarily regional, based in Vancouver, Victoria and the southern Interior of the province. Speaking tours in the Interior and on Vancouver Island began in late 2009 and continued through January 2010. At this time, *SubMedia* also produced a short promotional video for the 2010 Convergence, which received widespread coverage (see SubMedia.tv).

Although reformist groups, as noted, conducted their own, separate campaigns focused on their particular issues, there is no doubt their activities, and at times sympathies for the resistance, also contributed to the mobilization during the ORN Convergence dates.



### *Olympic Resistance Summit, Feb. 10-11, 2010*

The Summit was held in two venues in East Vancouver, located around the Commercial Drive area. The main events were held at the Wise Hall. During the two days, some 500 people attended training workshops (mostly legal and medical), forums, and panels.

People came from across the country as well as the US. Many comrades from Ontario and Quebec attended. A group of Mapuche women attended from Toronto, along with Indigenous delegations from northern California and Six Nations, and Anicinabe from Manitoba and Ontario. There were also Natives from the Pacific Coast and 'BC' Interior region.

From the US, people travelled from Washington

state, Oregon, California, New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. Other international visitors included comrades from the UK, as well as one former organizer against the 2006 Games in Turino, Italy.

A delegation of Circassians, living in New Jersey, attended the Summit and gave a presentation on their opposition to the 2014 Games to be held in Sochi, their ancestral homeland. They described their people's history of genocide at the hands of the Russians, and their forced dispersal in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A representative from the No Games Chicago coalition spoke on his group's efforts to oppose the 2016 Chicago bid. Indigenous people from Fort McMurray, Alberta, described the conditions there resulting from the tar sands.

### ***Torch Protest, Feb. 11, 2010, at UBC***

In the early evening hours of Thursday, Feb. 11, approximately 150 UBC students and anti-Olympic activists protested the passing of the torch relay through university grounds. Their presence was loud and they were confronted by RCMP (who provide policing to the university). One person was arrested.

### ***Anti-Torch Actions Feb 12, 2010***

Two anti-torch protests were organized for the final day of the torch relay. One was set for 9AM at Victory Square (Cambie and Hastings), while another was organized for Commercial Drive at around 10AM. The intent was to disrupt and block the torch from travelling through these areas, which were centers of anti-Olympic opposition and resistance.

At around 9:30AM several hundred people had gathered at Victory Square, one of the scheduled stops for the torch as it passed through the Downtown Eastside. Some 150 of these were protesters. As the torch convoy approached, the protesters surged into the intersection and blocked the street. Cops on motorcycles attempted to push through the crowd but were stopped by a mass of determined people. As 20-30 cops, including six horse-mounted officers, attempted to contain the crowd, the torch relay was diverted up a side street. Protesters then ran across the park and to the next block in an effort to block the torch runner. The convoy sped up and passed by several scheduled stops, until it reached Commercial Drive.

Gathering an hour or so beforehand, some 200 protesters had blocked the intersection of Commercial Dr. and Venables St. Rocks were placed on the road and barbed wire strung across the street. Police didn't even both bringing the convoy up Commercial, but instead diverted it down another main street several blocks away.

Upon hearing the relay had been rerouted, the protesters ran south on Commercial in an effort to prevent it turning onto the Drive at some other point. Several blocks up, the crowd ran into a line of mounted horse cops blocking the street. These were soon reinforced with more bike cops.

After some minutes, the protesters ran through a nearby alley and bypassed the cops. They stopped at Commercial and First Avenue where they blocked traffic for 45 minutes or so.

### ***Take Back Our City Rally, Opening Ceremonies, Friday Feb. 12, 2010,***

The "Take Back Our City" rally was primarily aimed at achieving as large a mobilization as possible. Because of the ORN's more militant analysis and practise (exaggerated and demonized through the corporate media, government and police, etc.), a separate coalition was established to organize the Feb. 12 rally. This was the 2010 Welcoming Committee, initiated by ORN members but comprised of a larger coalition of over 50 groups, including many reformist and liberal ones that would not work publicly with the ORN.

The Welcoming Committee established its own communications and logistics, and planned the program and route of the rally. It was promoted as a "family-friendly" festival-type of rally and march, gathering at the Vancouver Art Gallery at 3PM and then marching to BC Place, site of



*Police CCU on left, Black Bloc on right, Feb. 12, 2010, outside BC Place stadium*



the opening ceremonies (which were to begin at 6PM).

By 4:30PM, some 4,000 people had gathered at the Art Gallery. Speakers and performers kept the crowd occupied until it was time to march. At the head of the march were Native elders, including many from the Downtown Eastside Women's Center-Power of Women group, along with Native warriors and drummers. A large mob of reporters gathered at the front of the march as it proceeded down Georgia Street.

The march took a side street to BC Place where it met a line of Vancouver police, members of the Crowd Control Unit in 'soft hats' (no helmets or shields). As the elders pushed up against the police line, cops warned them that people were going to get hurt. At this point, the elders withdrew and the Black Bloc was requested to move forward and take the front line.

Masked militants then began pushing up against the police line, which were reinforced with more Vancouver police CCU members, and then later by RCMP officers. Behind the lines of cops was another line of horse-mounted cops wearing riot gear.

For nearly an hour, the two forces confronted one another. Militants threw projectiles into the police lines, including large plastic traffic pylons. The Black Bloc made several charges against the police line and also confiscated hats, flashlights and gloves from CCU members. Three officers were injured, two by projectiles and one with an injured shoulder.

It was later learned that BC Premier Gordon Campbell and Indian Act chiefs from the Four Host First Nations were late for the opening ceremonies—and missed the national anthem—when their bus was delayed by the protest.

### ***2010 Heart Attack, Saturday Feb. 13, 2010***

The 2010 Heart Attack was a daring plan to disrupt business as usual and to “clog the arteries of capitalism” (i.e., leading to a heart attack). Contrary to the claims of some after the protest, the action was organized by militants from ORN and clearly promoted as one that respected a diversity of tactics.

Some 400 people gathered in Thornton Park (across from the Main St. Skytrain station) at 8:30AM on Saturday, Feb. 13. The protest included a diverse number of groups, including a Black Bloc of some 100 militants. At the park, the group practised some basic maneuvers, then proceeded down Main Street towards Hastings, eventually marching to the downtown business district.

Newspaper and mail boxes were dragged out into the street to delay police cars following the protest (a routine tactic used by Vancouver anarchists). Dumpsters were also rolled out and turned over on the street. Walls, sidewalks



*Windows of Hudson's Bay Company smashed in by Black Bloc militants, 2010 Heart Attack action, Feb. 13, 2010*

and vehicles were spray-painted.

At Georgia and Seymour, as the protest passed the Hudson's Bay Company department store, militants emerged from the Black Bloc and began smashing the large plate-glass windows. Using metal chairs taken from a nearby cafe, as well as newspaper boxes and what appears to be batteries in a sock, several windows were smashed. Red paint-bombs were also thrown against some windows.

In the next block, a newspaper box was thrown through the windows of a Toronto Dominion bank. By this time, the CCU was deployed and began following the protest as it proceeded to the West End, and towards the Lion's Gate Bridge (its ultimate objective).

At Denman St., the CCU, accompanied by shooters carrying M4 carbines as well as 'less-lethal' launchers, attacked protesters with batons. After some pushing and de-arrests, the protest was largely dispersed. Some 7 persons were arrested, while others would be arrested over the next



*Black Bloc with ladder, 2010 Heart Attack action, Feb. 13, 2010*



few days.

In one incident, as militants took shelter behind an electrical box and were demasking, a CTV camera man approached them and began filming them. The next day, one of the militants confronted the camera man and was arrested shortly after for assault. Another comrade, Guillaume, was arrested two days later and charged with counselling mischief over \$5,000.

The 2010 Heart Attack received widespread national and international coverage, far more than the large mobilization the previous day. Images of black-clad militants smashing the windows of the HBC appeared around the world. The action became the most controversial of any that occurred during the entire anti-2010 campaign, and sparked debates within the movement. Corporate media, police, and government officials immediately condemned it, claiming the legitimate protesters had been taken over by a “criminal element” (comprised largely of anarchists from Ontario, they claimed).

The action succeeded in its objective of disrupting business as usual and clogging traffic. The Lion's Gate Bridge was closed by Vancouver police themselves, who positioned large numbers of CCU members across the access road. The bridge was not opened until 11:30AM, with police and transit authorities claiming a “serious accident” had led to its closure. The bridge is a main artery from Vancouver to Whistler. Several hundred VANOC buses were delayed as a result.

### ***Women's Memorial March, Sunday Feb. 14, 2010***

The Women's Memorial March is held every Feb. 14 (Valentine's Day) in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. It is held to remember and bring awareness to some 3,000 missing/murdered women in Canada, mostly Indigenous women. It began in Vancouver because of the large number of missing/murdered women in the city. Over the last few years, other cities and towns have also begun to hold similar events across the country.

The march differs from regular protests in that supporters are asked to not bring political banners, and is conducted as a ceremonial march. It is always led by Indigenous women, drumming and singing. This year's was the 19<sup>th</sup> annual memorial march. It was also the largest with some 5,000 people participating.

Although not organized by the ORN or any anti-Olympic groups, the march fell within the Convergence dates and was attended by those who had come to participate in the anti-Olympic resistance. Attempts by the city and police to reroute the march so as to not interfere with Olympic transportation plans were resisted by organizers in the months preceeding.

### ***Housing & Homeless Rally/Olympic Tent Village, Feb. 15-28, 2010***

The final day of the convergence had two main themes: housing and anti-war. In the afternoon, a rally was held beginning at Pigeon Park with the slogan “No More Empty Talk—No More Empty Lots! Homes Now!” Across the street, a massive 50 foot banner reading “Homes Now” was dropped from DERA's Tellier Tower. After some speeches and singing, the protesters marched to a vacant lot at 58 W. Hastings. The lot is owned by Concord Pacific, one of the main 'developers' of condos in the DTES. VANOC had leased the site to use as a parking lot, which was surrounded by chain link fencing.

Upon arriving at the empty lot, tents and structures were immediately set up. A medical aid station was established, along with security and food (provided by Food Not Bombs). Fires were also built, and on some nights performances organized. Daily meetings were held to organize the tent village.

Many of the tents used were part of the Pivot Legal Society's 'Red Tent' campaign—cheap and easily set up red tents that had the slogan “Housing is a Right” printed on them. Pivot distributed these tents as part of a campaign to



*Olympic Tent Village on Hastings Street, Vancouver, Feb. 2010*

highlight homelessness during the Olympics. The Olympic Tent Village was organized by the DEWC Power of Women Group with assistance from Streams of Justice (a grassroots Christian group).

By Feb. 28, the last day of the tent village, some 41 homeless people had been placed in housing by the city and BC Housing (a state agency). On the final night, as a continuation of the final anti-Olympic protest (the “Games Over! Resistance Lives!” Rally), Hastings St. was blocked for some 12 hours before a platoon of riot cops was deployed to clear the street.

Even after the support organizations had withdrawn after Feb. 28, the tent village continued for several weeks after, and was eventually cleared out in mid-March after Concord obtained a court injunction ordering the removal of those that remained.

## ***Stop War Rally, Monday Feb. 15, 2010***

At 6PM the anti-war rally began at the Vancouver Art Gallery, organized by StopWar.ca with the theme of "Do You Believe in: Torture, War and Occupation, Theft of Indigenous Land? The Canadian Government Does," etc., mocking a 2010 Olympic slogan ("Do you believe...?") and highlighting the Canadian Forces occupations of Afghanistan and Haiti.

After a few speeches, the two hundred or so protesters marched through the downtown business district and passed by Olympic sites and exhibits. About 20 police on bicycles accompanied the protest, which was heckled by some pro-Olympic fans. The march ended at the Olympic Tent Village where a festival was then occurring.

## ***Games Over! Resistance Lives! Rally, Sunday Feb. 28, 2010***

The final anti-Olympic rally was organized with less than a week's notice as a last minute effort to show ongoing resistance and unity, despite the controversy generated by the 2010 Heart Attack rally. About 200 people gathered in a downtown intersection at 1PM, just blocks from BC Place, the site of the closing ceremonies (scheduled to begin at 6PM).

The original plan had been to hold an anti-Olympics festival at the intersection for several hours, disrupting the flow of spectators into BC Place. With the advance of Team Canada to the final gold medal round in hockey, scheduled to begin at 12 noon and to end by around 2PM on Feb. 28, some organizers were concerned about the potential for violence with thousands of drunk Olympic hockey fans flooding the streets. The idea to hold a festival was scrapped, and the march proceeded shortly after 1PM in order to move the protest from the downtown core.

Led by elders from DEWC, the protest was immediately blocked by bicycle cops who prevented the march from going down certain streets. The protesters eventually reversed direction and marched to Victory Square, heckled at times by drunk hockey fans. At Victoria Square, the rally formed a circle and blocked Hastings St., beginning at around 2:30PM.

At 3PM, the march proceeded to Main and Hastings, which was then blocked for another hour. At 4PM, a smudge ceremony was held in honour of Harriet Nahanee. By 4:30PM, the march was back at the Olympic Tent Village, where a victory celebration was underway with performers and free food. Hastings St. remained blocked, and at around 7PM bicycle cops attempted to clear dozens of people off the street. As the standoff began, the PA system inside the tent village started up with a loud, angry, Rage Against the Machine song playing. Within minutes, the cops retreated as people cheered and yelled at the pigs.

Tents and chairs were brought from the village out onto the street, and people gathered to play guitars or street soccer. Police positioned patrol cars at both intersections

and kept the street closed. They rerouted heavy volumes of traffic along side streets. With the Cambie and Granville Street bridges closed for traffic control, and the Georgia St. viaduct closed for security reasons, Hastings was one of the last major routes out of the downtown core, where as many as 130,000 people gathered after the closing ceremonies were over.

The main concern for police was crowd control in the downtown core. In response to drunken brawls and disturbances the previous weekend, police had begun shutting down liquor stores in the downtown to limit public drunkenness. On the evening of Feb. 28, virtually all their CCU personnel, including those from the RCMP, were in the downtown core.

Police didn't make any further attempts to move protesters off Hastings street until early the next morning. At around 2AM, the city manager showed up at the tent village attempting to negotiate people off the street. She was mocked and ridiculed, but left with the impression that an agreement had been made to clear the streets at 4AM.

Over the next two hours, police began to build up their forces, and riot squad vans were observed turning down a side street. At 4AM, the city manager returned with a senior police officer, who informed the protesters that at 4:30AM police would begin to take action to clear the street.

By this time, some of the people were getting scared and began counselling others to get off the street. They also began removing tents, which others then replaced. Heated arguments began between those who wanted to remain on the street, and those who feared a violent incident. Around 30 people remained on the street.

At around 4:30AM, a platoon of 40 riot cops in hard hats, with shields, four K9 units, and shooters armed with M4 carbines and less-lethal launchers, marched onto the street. People immediately began removing the tents and chairs and putting them on the sidewalk. The CCU commander ordered the sidewalks to also be cleared and moved his officers up onto the sidewalk, directly in front of the entrance to the tent village. A brief standoff occurred before the CCU marched off.

After having been blocked at the outset of the march some 15 hours earlier by police, the final anti-Olympic protest had shut down a portion of Hastings Street and disrupted traffic for 12 hours, forcing the rerouting of tens of thousands of Olympic fans departing the downtown area. The blockade also created a calm and secure atmosphere for that one city block (and the tent village).

## The Olympic Games

In the weeks leading up to the Games, the main black cloud hovering over the Games, besides the resistance, was the weather. Freakin' Mother Nature: The region was experiencing the warmest January on record!

Combined with the temperate rainforest of the region, this weather created not only very warm days but also long periods of heavy rain, especially in mountainous regions such as Whistler and Cypress. At Cypress, giant cargo helicopters and an army of dump trucks were used to gather and transport snow to the mountain slopes, where instead of snow there was only exposed, muddy earth. Along with moving snow, bales of hay were also acquired to build up sections of courses.

Then, on February 12, the day of the opening ceremonies, a Georgian luger (Nodar Kumaritashvili) was killed when his sled went off the track during a training run and he crashed into a steel beam (this portion of the track was named 'Thunderbird').

VANOC immediately claimed it was 'human error,' until other lugers came forward revealing the track was a safety concern for many of them. That the track was immediately modified also showed that safety improvements had to be made.

During the opening ceremonies, the BC premier and chiefs from the Four Host First Nations were delayed 30 minutes and missed the national anthem due to the protests. The climax of the ceremony, the raising and lighting of a giant metal cauldron inside BC Place, was marred when one of four gigantic beams failed to rise from the floor.

The ceremonies used hundreds of Aboriginal dancers and plenty of artwork, including giant 'totem poles.' So much Indigenous culture was used, in fact, that other ethnic groups complained of the lack of diversity, including Quebecois, Chinese, Punjabis, etc.

Up in Whistler, the 'Live Site' broadcasting the ceremonies was the site of a sombre gathering due to the death earlier in the day. One reporter noted that no one sang along with the national anthem. A few minutes into the event, the jumbo-sized TV screen went blank. The feed would be lost several times throughout the evening, sometimes for long periods. Combined with the heavy rain, the crowd came and went, altogether a pathetic event.

Over the next few days, heavy rain continued to disrupt skiing and snowboarding events, with the

cancellations of events and tens of thousands of tickets. Large crowds at Cypress, site of the snowboarding events, complained of bad bus service, long line-ups for over-priced food, and a lack of toilets.

A British journalist dubbed the Vancouver Games "the worst Olympics ever." Others began to describe the Games as being 'cursed.'

After the first weekend, police obtained an order requiring all downtown liquor stores to close early in the day in an effort to limit public drunkenness ('alcohol-fueled violence'), the source of large numbers of fights and sexual assaults. Police were deployed throughout the downtown core in groups of up to 12-16, including RCMP in crowd-control gear. There were also undercover cops throughout the crowds, and streets were surveilled by hundreds of new CCTV video cameras.

After the first week, the rain stopped and the sun came out. The downtown streets began to fill with more people, especially during hockey games involving the Canadian men's national team. Police and media estimate as many as 150,000 people were downtown at peak times.

One aspect of the Olympics we had some awareness of was its use of patriotic and

nationalistic symbols. The Nazis had developed it to a high degree, and there were more Nazi flags flying in 1936 Berlin than Olympic flags. Nevertheless, the level of nationalism brought on by the Olympics was far more than many of us had anticipated. As the sun came out, so did the 'patriots.'

Part of the propaganda hype for the 2010 Games, promoted by VANOC, the government, corporations, and the media, was for citizens to wear red, reflecting the Canadian flag's predominant colour. Tens of thousands of Canadian klowns showed up as instructed, wearing red. Many tied Canadian flags around their necks and wore them as capes. Drunken mobs lurched through the downtown area, spontaneously singing 'Oh Canada' and hi-fiving strangers.

One Texas reporter described it all as identical to the nationalism of the Nazi Olympics themselves. The dominance of Canadian flags and symbols was so overwhelming that there were few other flags to be seen, never mind Olympic ones. Americans flying the US flag were warned by police to stop, because they couldn't guarantee their security.

At the same time, the downtown streets were the sight of a huge festival-like social gathering, which had some kind of cathartic effect on those who participated. The main bond was that of citizenship in Canada, a mobilization manufactured by the corporate state.



*Graffiti stencil in East Vancouver, 2009; a vandal's wishful thinking... altho the year is not yet over...*

## 2010 Police State

The 2010 police state was the largest security operation in Canadian history, costing nearly \$1 billion. Altogether there were nearly 17,000 personnel deployed for Olympic security. This included some 5,000 RCMP, 1,700 other police, 5,000 private security guards, and some 5,000 military personnel. Military helicopters and jets patrolled the skies over Vancouver, while at Whistler aircraft were joined by observation balloons the CF will be using in Afghanistan.

The RCMP were in charge of overall security and established the Vancouver 2010 Integrated Security Unit (VISU) to coordinate with other police (including Vancouver, BC Transit cops, West Vancouver, and Saanich police), the Canadian Forces, Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA), the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), the Coast Guard, and other emergency services.

VISU also coordinated closely with US agencies, including US Border and Customs, the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, US Coast Guard, and others. A \$12 million emergency command centre was also established in Bellingham to coordinate the activities of US and Canadian agencies in the event of a crisis during the Olympics. Many of these joint Canadian-US security measures are to be maintained after the Olympics.

\$76 million was paid for two massive cruise ships to house soldiers and cops in Vancouver's Burrard Inlet. Ten military camps were established between Pemberton and Whistler, with soldiers patrolling forested areas around Whistler and along the Sea to Sky Highway. CF troops also flew ongoing aerial patrols using CF Griffon and Cormorant helicopters, CP 140 Aurora surveillance planes, and CF-18 fighter jets. These aircraft operated under control of the North American Air Defence agency (NORAD), which imposed no-fly zones around Vancouver and Whistler. Naval vessels also patrolled Burrard Inlet and enforced a no-boating exclusion zone.

The RCMP acquired 40 kilometres of security fencing, which consisted of three fences attached to concrete dividers. The fences had motion detectors and CCTV cameras mounted on them, and were erected around Olympic venues, including BC Place. Altogether, nearly 1,000 CCTV cameras were mounted throughout the downtown core.

Although RCMP were only to be deployed inside the venues and security perimeter, many were sent into the streets to reinforce the Vancouver police Crowd Control Unit during protests and after the final gold medal hockey game on Feb. 28.

As part of VISU, the RCMP also established a Joint



*Vancouver CCU with brand new equipment, 2010 Heart Attack action.*

Intelligence Group (JIG). JIG officers mainly conducted the 'visits' and interrogations of anti-Olympic organizers and associates. Beginning in 2008, these visits were a clear attempt by the RCMP to intimidate the resistance as well as gather intelligence. A classic police strategy, this campaign consists of surveillance and harassment designed to create fear and paranoia in organizers, and to scare away potential members of the resistance.

During the 2010 Convergence actions, and for weeks after, a total of 27 arrests occurred, with 10 resulting



*Vancouver Emergency Response Team (ERT) with new weaponry (M4 carbines), 2010 Heart Attack, Feb. 13, 2010*

in charges. Arrests ranged from breach of the peace (preemptive arrests), to assault, and mischief.

Numerous citizens from the US were subjected to lengthy interrogations by Canadian border guards, as well as having their note books, cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices searched. Several were denied entry after being detained, including independent media



journalists. One indy media reporter from Salt Lake City was detained by the US Department of Homeland Security and subjected to a strip search.

Comrades from the US were also subject to detention and interrogations upon leaving Canada, with several being questioned by the FBI (two for nine hours). There are also reports that Canadian citizens leaving Vancouver to fly east were detained by RCMP-VISU officers.

Vancouver police acquired substantial amounts of new equipment. This included at least one \$200,000 armoured personnel carrier (a Bearcat), a Medium Range Acoustic Device (MRAD), new riot gear and less-lethal weaponry, as well as a fleet of Dodge *Sprinter* vans (nearly \$40,000 each), used to transport squads of riot cops (up to 12 per van).

## Strategy Debates

### *“Riot 2010” Slogan*

The slogan “Riot 2010” was first seen around the city's Eastside as graffiti, beginning in 2006 or '07. By 2008 it was widespread, with stencil and sticker versions appearing as well. No2010.com also had a photo gallery of anti-Olympic graffiti (some of which were the website's address spraypainted on buildings and vehicles).

The slogan was never officially used by any group (aside from some members of APC, who draped a massive banner from their office declaring “Riot 2010” during an ORN media conference). It did, however, cause some minor debate with pacifists, who opposed the slogan and feared a potential riot (why, whatever gave them that idea?).

The slogan was an expression of hostility towards the Games and a call to battle. It was also a threatening gesture that promised retribution and rebellion. Nor was it a totally empty threat, for Vancouver had experienced a large-scale hockey riot in 1994, and frequently had crowd-control problems during large public events.

The “Riot 2010” slogan raised the levels of tension and anxiety surrounding the Games. Journalists and police, for example, referred to the slogan as an example of the violent intentions of the resistance. The clandestine attacks on Olympic sponsors, as well as disruptive protests, also formed part of this spectre of vandalism and destruction.

### *Militant Resistance and Mobilizing a Movement*

Following the 2010 Heart Attack, there was debate over the effectiveness of militant tactics in regards to mass mobilizing, with critics claiming militancy reduced such efforts. One statement was headlined “We Need Mass Movements not Black Blocs.”

Such black-and-white thinking reveals a lack of understanding of what constitutes a mass resistance movement. As history shows us, real mass movements

involve a broad spectrum of social sectors, classes, and groups. Nor has there ever been a movement that has achieved any level of success that did not use a diversity of tactics (including those of Gandhi and King).

Nor does militancy always deter people from participating in mass movements.

There is no doubt that both public and clandestine direct actions generated considerable public interest in the anti-Olympic campaign and contributed to movement mobilizing. For example, at the 2007 Countdown Clock protest, approx. 80 protesters were present. After this disruption (and the March 6 flag theft), the March 12 'Flag Illumination' protest saw some 200 people attend. Clearly, militant direct action did not deter people from participating in the March 12 protest, but instead inspired more people to come out.

There are other historical examples of militant resistance sparking widespread mobilizations, such as during the Oka Crisis of 1990 (when thousands of Natives and non-Natives across the country engaged in solidarity actions with the armed Mohawks). The 1999 anti-WTO riots in Seattle didn't lead to a decline in the anti-globalization movement, instead it expanded so that subsequent economic summits became fortified battlegrounds (as they do to this day).

For the Feb. 12, 2010 'Take Back Our City' rally, however, radical organizers presented a less-radical image in order to mobilize a larger number of supporters and sympathizers, those who would not attend a 'scarier' ORN protest. ORN members initiated a broader coalition solely for the purpose of organizing the Feb. 12 rally: the 2010 Welcoming Committee.

The 2010WC was established in November 2009 and was comprised of over 50 groups. Although there was great diversity in the coalition, including pacifists, socialists, anarchists, etc., the simplicity of the task probably maintained the group until February 2010. This task consisted of holding a rally in downtown Vancouver and then marching a few blocks to get as close to BC Place, site of the Opening Ceremonies.

In order to have as broad a mobilization as possible, a less-threatening festival-type atmosphere was promoted. Because of the unpredictability of the Olympic Police State, who would have large numbers deployed, the rally could not be promoted as “family-friendly” (according to an organizer).

This mobilizing strategy was proven correct, with some 4,000-5,000 people attending on Feb. 12, as compared to numbers of 200-400 protesters at rallies in the years prior (including the next day's Heart Attack action).

The Take Back Our City march was the result of several years of organizing—including the emergence of a militant resistance that dramatically raised the profile of anti-Olympic opposition. This, along with revelations of Olympic cost over-runs, new security measures, etc., contributed to the mass mobilization of Feb. 12, 2010. It certainly wasn't a simple matter of a small group calling a rally a few months prior to the event.

Like the Feb. 12 rally, the 2010 Heart Attack was also the result of year's of anti-Olympic organizing, including militant resistance, with the end result being attacks on corporate targets by Black Bloc militants during the Feb. 13 protest.

This action was, in part, the result of the clandestine campaign of direct action that had occurred over the previous three years. It also brought this aspect of the militant resistance to a much broader public through widely televised and photographed images, broadcast across the country and around the world, through both corporate and alternative media.

Although described as vandalism, perhaps correctly, the essence of these attacks is the promotion of sabotage as a tactic in general. The methods of attack, using stones, paint, glue, or fire, are themselves meant to be easily duplicated by others, as is the example of sabotage itself.

In these regards, the 2010 Heart Attack was a highly successful act of propaganda that achieved widespread publicity, portraying militant resistance in action. Although the attacks on the windows of the HBC and Toronto Dominion bank were dismissed by some as of having little economic impact, this is clearly not the ultimate goal. Rather, it is the spreading of ideas (sabotage, resistance, insurrection, etc.), which in the long term would be far more dangerous than a few broken windows.

It is nevertheless true that militancy can diminish the potential for mobilization, for various reasons (i.e., police repression, propaganda, context, etc.). Prior to the actual convergence in February 2010, for example, militant anti-Olympic protests in Vancouver were never larger than 200 people. The Poverty Olympics, in contrast, organized by reformists, drew some 500 people.

Yet, the reformists were unable to organize a national movement, did not promote any anti-colonial analysis, had no critique of the Olympic industry as a whole, and were not effective in actually disrupting Olympic events (including VANOC ceremonies, the CP Spirit Train, and Torch Relay). In being less effective, they were unable to raise the profile of anti-Olympic opposition or provide a focus for the considerable amount of public ill-will towards the Games (feelings that only became evident after the start

of militant anti-Olympic actions in 2007).

This itself should validate the concept of “respect for a diversity of tactics”, which implies not just tolerance for different tactics but respect for a diversity of movements, with different analyses, experiences, and organizing methods. These differences

aren't simply ideological, as many on the Euro-Left seem to think, they are also cultural and socio-economic.

One of the common criticisms against militant resistance, especially that of the 2010 Heart Attack, was that it would alienate support for the anti-Olympic struggle. This same criticism was made after the Black Bloc actions in Seattle, 1999. Although there were plenty of false accusations against the Black Bloc at that time (i.e., that it was the work of police provocateurs, that it preceeded and caused the violent police attacks on peaceful protesters, that it occurred in a peaceful protest zone, etc., all of which were later shown to be untrue), the militant attacks didn't cause the movement to decline. In fact, the anti-globalization movement expanded (as did the militant anti-capitalist resistance).

### ***Cooptation of the Housing Struggle***

While one of the main slogans used during the years leading up to 2010 was “Homes Not Games”, the movement's demands eventually became coopted through a massive initiative that saw some 36 low-income buildings bought by the provincial government (some 25 of which were in Vancouver). Although the maintenance of low-income housing stock was certainly one objective of the anti-homelessness campaign, organizers did not predict the degree to which this reformist demand would be coopted.



*Take Back Our City march confronts police CCU at BC Place, Feb. 12, 2010*

Evidently taking their cue from APC's slogan of "Buy it or Guard it" of 2006-07, the government opted to "buy it" and trumpeted such purchases as signs of its sincere commitment to ending homelessness. This was despite the fact that the housing ministry continually proposed more sinister schemes for reducing the numbers of homeless (including proposals to open up former military bases as "detox centres", a special warehouse to be opened during the Games for the homeless, new laws authorizing police to forcibly take homeless people to shelters, etc.).

While the building purchases certainly limited the loss of low-income housing units (it did not stop the process, nor did it add new housing stock), they also established new levels of institutional control over the poor. State-funded groups that maintain many of the low-income housing units in the DTES (including the Salvation Army, Atira, Portland Hotel Society, and others) have worked closely with other government agencies—

including welfare, health workers, and police—to establish highly controlled and monitored housing for the poor.

Many low-income housing projects, owned by the government but contracted out to these NGOs, are now essentially low-level prisons and psychiatric wards, with CCTV cameras, full-time staffs of mental health and welfare workers, and close liaison with police.

Once the state began purchasing low-income housing, it was able to portray itself as fulfilling its role as social arbiter and caring for the most vulnerable members of society (although this was limited; the 2008 city elections were largely influenced by the issue of homelessness and the apparent failure of the Non-Partisan Association ruling party to address this issue, which resulted in their overwhelming defeat by Vision Vancouver).

Anarchists, who had a more radical critique of the state's ability to coopt such a movement, pointed to the potential for the state to enact such reforms and in this way legitimize its power. While this is true, the anarchists were unable to offer any practical method of defending the poor from an escalating pattern of evictions and homelessness.

While both militants and reformists can claim victory in gaining such concessions from the state, and in actually defending some low-income housing, the movement is limited in that when the state does enact such reforms the only demand is that it must do more. That the state has taken some steps to reduce evictions is seen by many as proof of its commitment to ending homelessness, even when this is not entirely true. The demand for more social housing is ultimately defeated and recuperated once the

concession is granted (a constant problem for reformist campaigns, for once demands appear to be met, the movement often dissolves).

### **"No Olympics on Stolen Native Land" Slogan**

"If you do not condemn colonialism, if you do not side with the colonial peoples, what kind of revolution are you then waging?"

Ho Chi Minh, Vietnamese resistance leader



*Protesters in Montreal, December 2009*

During the resistance campaign, an occasional criticism of the slogan "No Olympics on Stolen Native Land" was that it failed to mobilize citizens who are either wholly ignorant of, or even hostile to, the concept of Indigenous sovereignty. *Georgia Straight* columnist Charlie Smith questioned if the slogan had served to limit the size of the anti-Olympic movement ("Did the anti-Olympic movement miss the mark by focusing on stolen

aboriginal land?" By Charlie Smith, *Georgia Straight* online, Feb. 21, 2010).

Considering the high levels of racism and ignorance in regards to Indigenous peoples, there is undoubtedly truth in this criticism. On the other hand, considering the high level of hostility towards the poor and homeless, the same could be said of the other main slogan used, "Homes Not Games."

In both these cases, corporate media plays a pivotal role in inciting and enflaming such hostility through biased reporting. Nevertheless, they are social realities that must be taken into account.

Smith, and others, suggested the movement could have focused on healthcare, housing, education, or child poverty, instead. Another common suggestion was that the movement should have focused on the massive \$6 billion debt the Games would leave taxpayers—that a greater motivator for anti-Olympic opposition were the costs. This was also clear from surveys taken in October 2009, in which over 70 percent of BC residents thought the Games cost too much, or were a waste of money.

Although it is difficult to say if focusing on these other issues would have greatly expanded the movement (considering all the limitations on organizing against the Olympics in general), it would have undoubtedly affected the strategies and tactics of the resistance that did emerge. This was clear even from the brief attempts at coalition building undertaken by the No 2010 Network. Adopting the public debt, or healthcare, or child poverty, as a main rallying cry may have mobilized more people, but what kind

of people?

As it was, of those who did participate in the resistance, in Vancouver and across the country, from February 2007 and into February 2010, most were motivated by its clear anti-colonial orientation. The attacks on the Hudsons Bay Company during the 2010 Heart Attack action, by the most militant sector (the Black Bloc), is one example. The composition of the main groups that carried out anti-Olympic organizing is another: Anti-Poverty Committee, No One Is Illegal, AWOL, Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement-Guelph, Indigenous Solidarity Movement, etc. (all of whom are engaged in some form of anti-colonial solidarity).

Without these groups, there would have been no national anti-Olympic resistance. Nor is it likely the movement would have been as militant as it was, since focusing on public debt, etc., would have mobilized a far less combative type of opposition, even if it was larger (another example of the mind-set that bigger is automatically better).

And in fact, there was another, less militant anti-Olympic movement comprised of reformist, state-funded and/or NGO groups such as Pivot, CCAP, IOCC, and others. They were not explicitly anti-Olympic but instead focused on housing and poverty. They were no more successful than the militant resistance was in mobilizing against the Olympics (and in some ways actually less successful).

Furthermore, racism towards Native peoples, or hostility towards the poor, should not be minimized simply in order to mobilize a greater number of people. If anything, they should be made a priority considering that Natives and the poor suffer the greatest effects of cuts to housing, education and healthcare. If many citizens are ignorant to such realities then they must be educated, and if hostile they must be challenged.

By using the slogan "No Olympics on Stolen Native Land", the campaign helped to raise the profile of Indigenous struggle in 'BC' and to extend anti-colonial consciousness into both the broader public and other social movements. It was also important in countering the image presented by the FHFN that all Natives supported the Games.



*Oh the horror; Vandals at work on welcome sign*

## Conclusion

The main goal of the anti-2010 Olympic campaign was to limit the negative social and environmental impacts of the Games (to defend people and land). A secondary goal was to strengthen our social movements through organizing resistance. Despite the slogan "No Olympics" the resistance never believed it would achieve the size and strength necessary to actually shutdown the 2010 Games.

In addition, it was hoped that our efforts would contribute to greater resistance against future Olympic Games and the industry as a whole.

Overall, the spectre of greater conflict (i.e., "Riot 2010") was raised in an effort to generate political and economic uncertainty. Key to the movement's strategy was the use of direct action to disrupt and attack the industry.

There is no doubt that the social impacts, including levels of dislocation and homelessness, would have been far greater without the resistance. The restrictions on civil liberties envisioned by police would also have been more extensive, as would police repression overall. Without the resistance, public awareness of the true impacts of Olympic Games would not have been as great. Nor would the mobilization of public opposition that occurred.

The "No Olympics on Stolen Native Land" campaign helped raise the profile of Indigenous anti-colonial resistance, and to counter the propaganda efforts of the Indian Act band councils. The anti-Olympic movement is one of the only times such a slogan has been promoted on a national level in Canada.

Despite the massive resources behind the Olympic industry, including those of government and state security forces, corporate media, etc., the anti-Olympic movement had a considerable impact on public opinion, on a local, national and international level. Several polls in 2009 showed that over 30 percent of BC residents supported the protests, despite years of demonization and criminalization.

The movement was able to sustain itself over a three-year period and to carry out many successful actions, while promoting a radical anti-capitalist and anti-colonial analysis.

Over 90 acts of direct action were carried out, with over 60 of these being clandestine sabotage and vandalism, between 2006-10. Intelligence analysts noted that this level of activity was "unprecedented" two to three years prior to an actual event. One of the most common targets were Royal Bank of Canada locations, as well as General Motors, Bell, and McDonalds (all Olympic sponsors).

The anti-Olympic movement also protested the CP Rail 'Spirit Train' at five of its ten cross-country stops in 2008. In over 30 cities, towns, and reservations, the Olympic Torch Relay was also protested and in some cases disrupted and forced to cancel sections.

Although there were thousands of police, military and security personnel deployed during the Games, the



resistance succeeded in disrupting the Opening Ceremonies on Feb. 12, as well as the first day of Olympic competitions (Feb. 13). During the two-weeks of the Games, a highly visible tent village was established in the DTES that provided temporary shelter, safety and security for dozens of homeless persons. At the close of the Games, Hastings St. was blocked for some 15 hours, disrupting Olympic traffic.

The anti-Olympic campaign provided our movements with experience not only in coalition work, building alliances and solidarity, developing strategy and tactics, but also in dealing with police surveillance and harassment, organizing medical and legal aid, etc. Many people learned or were exposed to new skills such as silk-screening t-shirts, posterizing, arrests and legal support,

medical, counter-surveillance, protest tactics, etc.

This report is an attempt to summarize the main activities, and provide analysis on, the anti-2010 Olympic campaign, in the belief that it may have lessons to offer in the organizing and conduct of such a campaign by other regions and social movements. I hope it has been informative and inspiring!

#### Upcoming Olympics:

- London Summer Games 2012
- Sochi Winter Games 2014
- Rio de Janeiro Summer Games 2016



*Protester poses with pigs, 2010 Heart Attack*



*Burned out vehicles at GM dealership in Toronto, anti-2010 arson attack, June 24, 2008*

- 24 hours news services photo



**Resist the Corporate-Fascist Police State!**