

BALACIAWA!

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Activists confront G8 University Summit

by David Miller

VANCOUVER - A busload of University presidents from G8 nations outside the Fairmont Pacific Hotel came literally face-to-face with resistance by social activists.

The activists accused them of legitimizing a body responsible for the world's social and economic inequality. Injuries were sustained by activists after the forceful intervention of the Vancouver Police Department.

The protest, dubbed the People's Street Summit, was organized by the Vancouver Community Mobilization Network (VCMN) in response to the G8 University Summit, a meeting of the heads of the world's largest universities in advance of the June G8 summit in Ontario.

Beginning at the Vancouver Art Gallery, the People's Summit drew 90 people, including members of groups such as No one is Illegal-Vancouver, the Anti-poverty Committee and Vancouver Status of Women.

"The G8 represents the world's greatest economic and military powers," VCMN organizer Sumayya Kassamali told those gathered in front



of the Art Gallery. "Those are the countries that are responsible for a decision-making body that is responsible for the current economic crisis."

The protesters marched to the Fairmont Pacific Hotel where delegates were staying. After circling the Fairmont several times, protesters spotted a bus carrying G8 delegates. Around 50 protesters then converged on the intersection of Burrard and Canada Place, preventing the bus from moving ahead.

The VPD mobilized 50 more police officers, many of them plainclothes. The officers moved into the crowd, grabbing, pushing, and dragging those who couldn't move quickly enough. With space cleared, the police urged the bus driver to start driving. As the bus made its way past the protesters, police took advantage of the confusion and seized six protesters.

Three protesters suffered concussion that required medical attention, as well as torn ligaments.

Activist groups are compiling information on those who were attacked or harassed by police.

Storm clouds coverage

A Vancouver Police press release issued immediately after the G8 Street Summit claimed protesters tried to "storm the Fairmont Hotel." The release was picked up by mainstream media and run as news.

But there was no attempt to storm the hotel. VMC reporters on the scene say half a dozen bike police stood by the hotel's main entrance trying to joke with students while Solidarity Notes Choir sang, followed by speeches and a symbolic cracking of a G8 piñata. About 50 people then walked around the hotel a few times before noticing a delegates' bus on nearby Canada Place Way.

The VPD release also claimed protesters caused "significant damage" to the bicycles police used to ram the crowd standing in front of the bus and implied the protest was directed by a handful of people dressed in black.



We Ate the G8 at UBC photo: Isaac Oommen

G20 Police won't rule out using agent provocateurs

by Gwalgen Gordie Dent (TMC)

TORONTO - The RCMP-led Integrated Security Unit of the G20 is refusing to rule out the use of agent provocateurs to get protesters to commit illegal acts.

During a G20 forum held by Toronto City Councilors, Constable George Tucker, a member of the G20 planning team, was asked if agent provocateurs would be used.

He responded: "I'm not at liberty to discuss security issues in an open format." The question remains that if the use of agent provocateurs is illegal, why won't police rule it out?

COMING EVENTS

Wednesday, June 2 6:30pm

VMC Intro to print journalism, 459 E Hastings (RSVP vmc@mediacoop.ca)

Thursday, June 3 6:30pm

VMC Final Cut Pro how-to, 459 E Hastings (RSVP vmc@mediacoop.ca)

Saturday, June 5 6:30pm

1984 Candlelight Vigil in remembrance of human rights abuses against Sikhs, Vancouver Art Gallery, Georgia and Howe

Sunday, June 6 1-3pm

75th anniversary of the On-to-Ottawa-Trek, Crab Park (at the North foot of Main St.)

Wed June 9 5:30pm

Law and the Media Workshop, 206-800 Smithe St. (Register info@jackwebster.com)

Sunday, June 13 3pm

SANSAD Forum on Globalization and Militarism in South Asia, Kafe Kathmandu 2779 Commercial Drive

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Housing activists take False Creek after false promises

by Dawn Paley

VANCOUVER - More than 200 people pushed their way into Athlete's Village recently to demand that the City of Vancouver honour its promise for social housing.

A festive atmosphere prevailed as demonstrators, led by homeless and low-income people and accompanied by a marching band, walked to Athlete's Village from Science World.

The City initially promised that 66 per cent of the 1,200 units built to house athletes would be reserved for social/subsidized and affordable housing. More than one third of the total units were to be reserved for people who are homeless or at-risk for homelessness.

Since then, the total units of "deep core" housing has been reduced to almost zero. The demonstration coincided with

an open house held by local real estate baron Bob Rennie's marketing company Millennium Water.

Demonstrators removed fencing panels and quickly overwhelmed police and security to gain access to the site. Their message could not be ignored by the hundreds of people at the open house to catch a glimpse at the now exclusive housing units being marketed by Rennie.

"House the poor, not the pigs," chanted demonstrators, referring to the fact that of the remaining 12.5 per cent of "affordable" units, priority will go to emergency services workers,



False Creek False Promises activists cross fence into Olympic Village photo: Isaac Oommen

including cops. Marchers then approached the Salt Building, which has been renovated at a cost to the City of over \$10 million. Prevented from entering, demonstrators chanted and pounded on the glass until police were forced to vacate crowds from the building.

Radical party - one night

by Andy Crosby

EAST VAN - Hundreds of people gathered for a lively block party May 15, organized by community members opposing plans to "redevelop" Grandview Park. The park is in the heart of Commercial Drive at Charles Street and has historically served as an inclusive social space for the community.

Some residents feel that the park needs to undergo a process of "renewal". A group calling itself "Friends of Grandview Park" is collaborating with the Commercial Drive Business Improvement Association and they have drawn up plans.

Many people came together who eventually spilled out onto Commercial Drive to reclaim the street. Banners were erected at Charles Street and William, effectively closing the block to car traffic. The party carried on throughout the night and police kept their distance as participants lit small fires and constructed barricades.

At one point a window was smashed at the Vancouver East Community Corrections centre. The probation office has been repeatedly targeted.

In 2007, its windows were smashed in an act of solidarity with anarchist prisoners in Europe. Also that year, the building was attacked in response to the extradition of indigenous warrior John Graham to the U.S. from Vancouver.

In response to the broken window (as claimed by police), a long column of VPD infiltrated the party, lining up side-by-side on the sidewalk for the entire length of the block. One party-goer counted at least 85 police, as plain-clothes officers joined their uniformed colleagues.

Conversations with police drew mixed results as the typical notion was invoked that a few "bad protesters" had ruined everything. This divisive and manipulative tactic has been used time and again, but the majority of party-goers stood in solidarity with those who chose more diverse tactics. The police didn't seem to have an answer as to why the astounding numbers were needed for one broken window.

Despite the large police presence and how the end of the party was dictated, it was a smashing success as scores of people showed up to support community opposition to the proposed Grandview redevelopment.



Illustration: Carel Xero

Demand Nothing

by Anonymous

In Vancouver the discussion over the use of demands is coming to a head. This is being brought about by the escalating grassroots campaigns for social housing and the state's increasing ability to co-opt those movements.

What has changed is not the need for housing, but rather the form in which social housing has taken. Up until a couple years ago social housing was not much more than a network of buildings built and owned by the state and operated by various social agencies. In 2007, an aggressive campaign for social housing turned its direct actions towards the demand that the state purchase shithole hotels and convert them into social housing. The state under mounting mobilizations, conceded and over the last couple years purchased dozens of hotels and converted them under their control.

For the complete article: www.vancouver.mediacoop.ca



Banner on Commercial at Charles during the Grandview Block Party photo: Andy Crosby