

BALACLAVA!

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unceded Coast Salish Territory

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Resonant support for detained Tamil refugees

by Andre Guimond

BURNABY- Close to 100 people gathered outside the Burnaby Youth Custody Services Center on Saturday, September 11 in a loud show of solidarity for the much-maligned Tamil refugees being detained there. The “noise rally” was held to “let [the Tamil refugees] know that there are people here that care about them and support them and want them to stay,” said Alex Mah of No One is Illegal-Vancouver (NOII), the immigrant and refugee rights group that organized the demonstration.

Almost 90 women and children are being detained at the center for “processing” after arriving with 400 others aboard the MV Sun Sea nearly a month ago, fleeing from war and persecution in Sri Lanka.

Far from being warmly welcomed, though, the Tamils landed in Victoria amidst a wave of anti-refugee hysteria whipped up by the government and media, kicked off by Minister of Public Safety Vic Toews calling the 490 passengers aboard the ship “suspected human smugglers and terrorists” before they landed, and continued with terrified cries that the refugees were here to suck Canada’s welfare system dry and steal our jobs.

“The reason we wind up having to pay for refugees is because the government chooses to imprison them and treat them like criminals – that’s a huge and avoidable cost,” said Mah. “Canada has obligations under well-established international laws to let these refugees in, whether or not they have proper documents, because they’re fleeing from danger.”

A new Angus Reid poll this week found that 46 per cent of Canadians believe immigration is having a “negative effect” on the country, and almost half wanted the Tamil refugees deported. However, some still have good reason to hope for a kinder Canada. “It’s heart-warming to see this kind of reaction and how much people care and want the refugees to stay,” said Sozan Savehilaghi, also of NOII. “But it’s bittersweet that they’re locked up in the first place.”

Solidarity and Support for Juan, Indy Journalist and Latest G-20 Arrestee

by Friends of Juan Pablo Lepore

Juan Pablo Lepore, 28, was arrested on the morning of September 2 in Montreal, for participating in the G20 Summit in Toronto this June. Juan Pablo was transferred to Toronto the same night and appeared in court Friday morning. The crown has refused his release.

“The criminalization of Juan Pablo Lepore is proof that the waves of arrests following the G20 aim to discourage political engagement by people angered by our system’s injustices,” concludes Nicolas Van Caloen, Juan’s friend and media partner.

Stories in the Balaclava! are shortened versions of the originals, which you can read online at vancouver.mediacoop.ca



isaac oommen photo



flux photo

Project Samosa Anti-Terror Arrests: A spiced up and deep fried narrative

by NOII - Vancouver

In late August, four men were arrested, three in Ottawa, as part of a 2-year investigation entitled “Project Samosa.” According to reports, Misbahuddin Ahmed, Hiva Alizadeh, and Dr. Khurram Syed Sher have been charged; a fourth person has been arrested but not yet charged; while three to four others are overseas suspects and co-conspirators.

The men must be presumed to be innocent, both in the court process and in public consciousness. Media sensationalism, government statements,

and public commentaries have revealed that the men are being considered and treated as guilty terrorists. This is despite the fact that defence counsel Anser Farooq has said that he knows almost nothing about the specifics of the case and that the charges are vague.

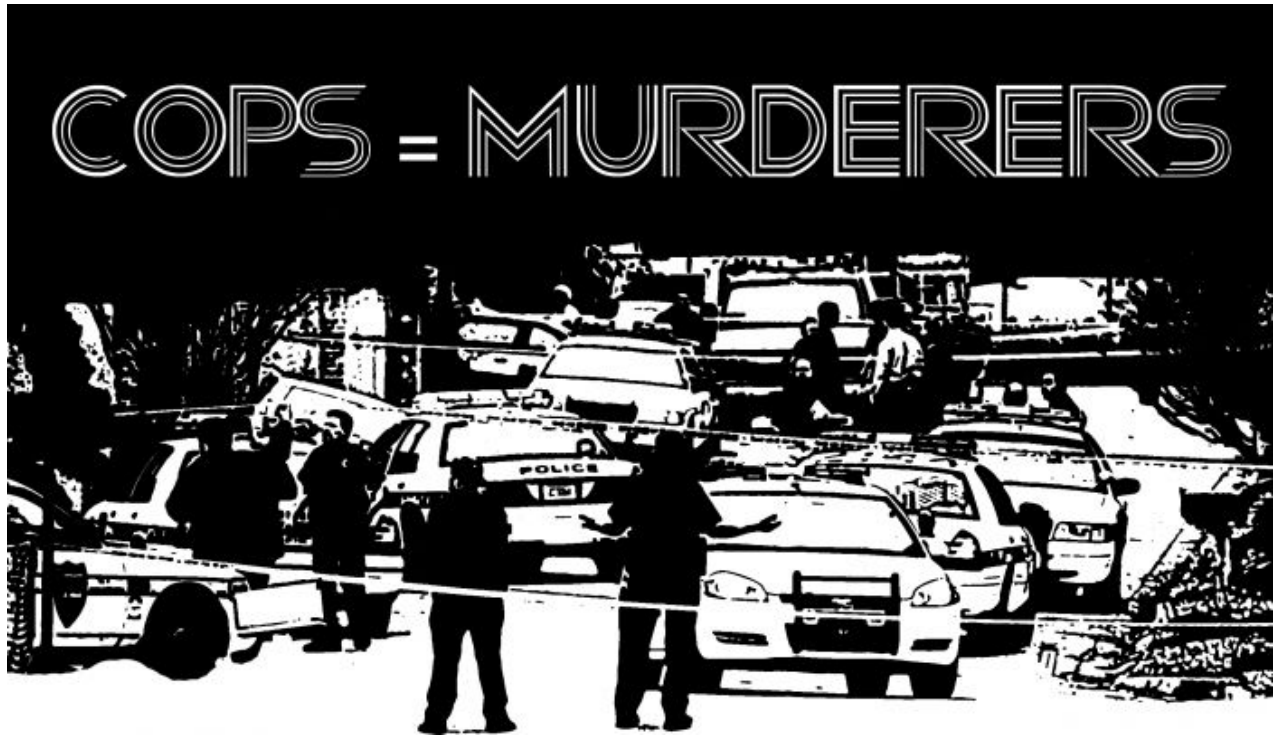
These arrests will provide further justification for the policing and security apparatus, which since 9/11, has already resulted in pervasive government and media censorship of information, the silencing of dissent, and increasingly exclusionary and racist immigration policies.

Seattle Cops Kill Indigenous Carver from Vancouver Island

by Annie Elation

SEATTLE - In the space of a few short August weeks, five people were killed in "officer-involved" shootings in the Puget Sound region. On August 31, John T. Williams became the first of this last string of killings by police. John Williams, age 50, was a native man from the Dididaht, Nuu Chan Nulth nation on the west coast of Vancouver Island. He was shot four times in the chest by Seattle police officer Ian D. Birk, age 27.

The police say that Ian D. Birk shot Williams from a distance of at least 9 feet after Williams did not put down a knife as told to by police. According to Williams' family he was deaf in one ear and partially deaf in another. At the time of his death Williams was carving. A photo of the knife recovered by police show the blade is 3-inches -- a knife that is legal to carry in Seattle.



The Upcoming Battle for Britannia

by Joseph Jones

EAST VAN-Over the coming years, potential housing development in the Britannia complex on Commercial Drive and new towers around East Hastings and Nanaimo Streets promise to make the Grandview Park redevelopment look like the brief opening scene of an all-out extravaganza.

The ball got rolling on the Britannia complex when the Board of the Britannia Centre rightly grew concerned about aging facilities. They developed a master plan (Imagine Britannia and Beyond) and sought \$18 million under the City of Vancouver 2009-2011 Capital Plan. That request was turned down in spring 2008 by the Staff Review Group on these grounds: "The proposal has not received input from the Park Board, Facilities Design and Management or Social Planning, nor did it indicate the availability of funding support from the Community Association" (p. 16).

But then, along came \$60,000 of 2009 seed money from the City of Vancouver Supplemental Capital Budget to spend on working up a "facility concept design in preparation for construction and renovation." The pivotal item in that rejection is the expectation of funding support from the Community Association itself – as though Britannia has any significant economic base other than the land it occupies!

Read between the lines. The Britannia Board may have been judged as far too public-spirited,

since it looked toward nothing more than:

- A new four-storey Arts and Culture building
- A new Information Centre building (housing an Education Centre)
- An expansion of the fitness centre, the seniors centre, and teen centre

What a huge expanse of land! Enough to infect any developer with perpetual itch. So the proposal got shunted back to the drawing board, along with a wad of funding to figure out how developers might get more than just a few construction contracts out of the deal. Talk of "affordable housing" is used to entice less savvy public participants to favor putting those playing fields and parking lots somewhere underground or up in the sky.

(Go further: perhaps some aspects of those aging public facilities could be downsized or eliminated to create even more buildable area? This tactic might work better at a later stage, after newly moved-in yuppies are around to provide the "community support.")

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EVENTS!

Friday Sep 17 9pm: G8/G20 Arrestee Fundraiser
Commercial Drive Legion - 2205 Commercial

Sunday Sep 19 1:30pm: Release Detained Tamil Refugees: Let Them Free, Let Them Stay!
Burnaby Youth Prison, 7900 Fraser Park Dr.
Shuttles from Edmonds Station 12:45-1:15pm

Tuesday Sep 21 8pm: Terrorist: The Kids They Sentenced - Gothenburg 2001 Riots. 12th and Clark, 1284 E. 12th (at Clark) Free/Donation

Thursday Sep 23 7:30pm: Criticize Israel - Go to Jail? SFU (Downtown) Harbour Centre Free/Donation

Sunday Sep 26 8:00pm: The Punishment of Gaza. UBC Wesbrook Building (WESB) 100, 6174 University Boulevard, Cost: \$15, \$10 for students with ID

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