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## Tent Village activists go homeless

by Joseph Jones

VANCOUVER - By 12 Noon, people anticipating a tent city filled the wide sidewalk outside the Pantages Theatre on East Hastings. A series of short speeches set the mood for the Feb. 26 action. Especially vivid was an account of how condo king Bob Rennie looked across the rooftops towards the Olympic Village project to declare, "My Village!" (Rennie has just relaunched his marketing effort selling off condos in the Olympic Athletes' Village.)

Then a crowd of about 200 headed south on Main Street, some with equipment-laden buggies. Destination: Olympic Village – with a brief pause to call attention to the area where developers chomp at the bit to condo-ize Chinatown and bury the street in shadows. As marchers headed towards False Creek, an anti-Olympic arrestee surveyed the throng and exulted: "Biblical!"

Going past Science World, the group skirted the Olympic Village on Ontario, turned west on First, and along Manitoba to enter the plaza. As music blared, tents and canopies began to pop up. Around the edge of the area, orange plastic fencing suspended itself from temporary human posts. At least twice, yells and jeers drowned out a City official who tried to issue orders through a bullhorn.

After some discussion, activists picked up shelters and other equipment and hauled their show to an empty grass field at Manitoba and 2nd Ave. At all times, groups of police roamed at will throughout the area. Incidents included an allegation of public urination, objections to the presence of propane tanks, and an admonitory tour by a fire department official.

Police brought in the owner of the property, already having displayed their eagerness to enforce any request for dispersal – a request they obviously solicited. (It seems likely that Pinnacle International, the "owner" of this field, enjoys the scam of paying next to no property tax in return for providing a grassy space – usable by the public only until that status becomes inconvenient!)

After a 10-minute warning to leave the area, the tent city group discussed its options. Several time extensions proved necessary. Eventually a decision was reached to dismantle and meet up elsewhere. As large tarps were folded, snow pellets pooled in their hollows, and winds billowed them like sails.

When the group reached the Creekside Community Centre, police were lined up in front of a locked-down main entrance. (The sign on the door said open 9-5 Saturdays.) Meanwhile, "acceptable" members of the public could be seen continuing on with their frolics in the gym.

Now numbering around 70, the group reconvened for an extended period under the gazebo near Science World. Police surveilled from nearby vans. Several groups traversed urban the wasteland to reach a McDonalds on Main Street. Who would have thought a McDonalds could be more public and hospitable than a community centre?

Twelve activists occupied a raw retail space and used masking tape on the inside of the glass to call for "Homes Now!" Supporters outside drummed on a steel barrel that should have been warming a tent city. Eleven were arrested, then later released without charge.

For the complete story and Joseph Jones' conclusions visit: [vancouver.mediacoop.ca](http://vancouver.mediacoop.ca)



photos: murray bush - flux photo

## No Gaddafi in the snow

by Masrour Zoghi

VANCOUVER - They came despite the snow. Vancouver's Libyan community and supporters gathered outside the main Public Library to profess their disgust with Gaddafi's desperate and violent attempts at silencing dissent.

According to Al Jazeera, "citizens, including the country's former ambassador to India, are saying warplanes were used to bomb protesters."

Despite the horrendous images posted by the protesters, the mood was hopeful and perseverant. According to one protester, "we will stay here until Gaddafi leaves."

Of course, one would be tempted to draw inspiration from Tunisia and Egypt, but the situation tends to be somewhat different with dictators who have no foreign country to look to for asylum and protection, which means that they have their own lives to worry about if things take an unexpected turn.

# SNITCHING

## & The threat to social movements

### Excerpts from *Broken Bridges*

Darren Thurston was a Canadian animal rights activist for more than a decade. In 2006, he was arrested and charged for animal liberation actions in the US under "Operation Backfire" in what is known as the Green Scare.

More than a dozen people were arrested and at least eight, including Thurston, became snitches ("co-operating defendants"). He served around three years in prison and now lives in Vancouver.

Some of the Operation Backfire defendants refused to become government informants, the others "cooperated" in exchange for reduced sentences. Eight people cooperated with the government and informed on others in hopes of reduced sentences.

Since his release, Thurston is working in the legal offices of Peter Edelmann as technical support and has been able to view personal legal files. Edelmann regularly offers legal support to members of the radical and migrant justice communities. Thurston also runs an internet security company.

Throughout his imprisonment Thurston received public support from the Vancouver based Resist! collective, which hosted a support website. Resist! publicly adopted a position of support for Thurston.

Currently, Resist! is hosting a G20 defense listserv (as well as the VMC), in which the supporters or the G20 Conspiracy arrestees are to co-ordinate their defense efforts. Some of those facing the conspiracy charges and their supporters have been disturbed to learn of Resist!'s role. Defense against conspiracy charges demand a high level of solidarity between defendants and some feel that by using Resist! they are legitimizing state cooperation which would weaken the G20 defense immeasurably. In addition, some defendants are concerned about relying on a collective that doesn't appear to have a firm stance on snitching.

Thurston has attended resistance oriented events including Under the Volcano last summer.

In Thurston's own words from "The Animal Liberation Primer" he claims to have authored, "If you really feel the need to say something a simple "NO COMMENT," should answer any question that they ask you. But it's still better to just keep your mouth shut. And remember, the ALF support groups do not help prisoners who cooperate or testify.

An informant can no longer be welcome in the communities on which they informed. This is not necessarily punishment, but a matter of safety in our struggles.

The primary goal of the government in any political case is not to put any one defendant in prison but to obtain information with which to map radical communities, with the ultimate goal of repressing and controlling those communities. The most minor piece of trivia may jeopardize a person's life, whether or not they have ever broken any law.

Addressing the question of what constitutes acceptable conduct is not infighting and backstabbing, but an essential element of healing and strengthening our communities.

We should focus on demystifying snitching and building up the collective trust and power that discourage it. For this to work, of course, those who do inform on others must be excluded from our communities with absolute finality; in betraying others for personal advantage, they join the ranks of the police officers, prison guards, and executioners they assist (*crimethinc*).

It is never acceptable to give information about any other person without his or her express consent (*crimethinc*).

For the full story visit: [vancouver.mediacoop.ca](http://vancouver.mediacoop.ca)

by Sandra Cuffe

FEBRUARY - Rallies in solidarity with the people's struggles in North Africa and the Middle East have been taking place most Saturdays outside the main Vancouver Public Library. Dictators have fled Tunisia and Egypt, while huge demonstrations and brutal repression continue elsewhere.

More than 1,000 people have been confirmed killed in Libya, while the threat of a US or international military invasion looms.

The Simon Fraser University Public Research Interest Group (SFPIRG) again defeated attempts by conservatives to take over the organization.

Events, rallies, marches, and vigils took place from coast to coast to honour missing and murdered women and to demand justice. On Feb. 14, more than 2,000 people marched through the DTES for the 20th annual Women's Memorial March.

After rallies by Aboriginal youth and women, on Feb. 15, sexual predator Martin Tremblay was sentenced to 11 months in prison on two counts of drug charges.

Women's organizations denounced sexual assaults against women at the co-ed First United Church shelter at Gore and Hastings and the inaction of the City, police, and church staff.

## NEWS ROUNDUP!



Sinixt Protest Camp.

Another VMC contributor involved in the Olympics Resistance network did Access To Information requests to various police and intelligence agencies and posted the results.

Censorship by W2 of an Olympics resistance mural created by local Indigenous artists and the role of W2 in gentrification of the DTES provoked discussion.

The BC Supreme Court dismissed a petition against BC allowing logging on Perry Ridge in the Slocan Valley, essentially telling the Sinixt Nation that it has not yet proved that it is not, in fact, extinct.

Logging proceeds along the South Fraser Witness Trail in Surrey, despite legal action to stop the destruction of the forest for a freeway.

*"The hummingbird pollinates, creates life, mesmerizes in its rapid-fire action, its beauty. The Condor circles, hunting, looming overhead: it is a terrible kind of beauty. When one overpowers the other, say the Nasa, we lack balance."*

*Cauca, Colombia - La Chiva collective*

## Check out the VMC Anti-Olympic Archive

The Vancouver Media Co-op has launched an Anti-Olympic Archive, dedicated to documenting and archiving several year's of anti-Olympic resistance against the 2010 Winter Games. It includes statements, posters, call-outs, corporate news, etc.

Much of this material was originally collected by No2010.com, a website that existed from 2007-2010 (shortly after the Olympics were over, the site mysteriously went offline).

The archive is at: [vancouver.mediacoop.ca/olympics](http://vancouver.mediacoop.ca/olympics)

From the archive creator Zig Zag: The anti-Olympic campaign in Vancouver and across the country over the span of several years is also now a part of history. But it's a history that can be easily lost, or at least forgotten.

Because it is a history of resistance, one that state officials and corporate elites would rather everyone forget. And in such a history, there are many lessons that can be learned, actions to be inspired by, graphics and slogans to be adopted, etc. It is hoped that this archive is especially useful for those facing Olympic Games in their cities and regions (i.e., London 2012, Sochi 2014, Rio De Janeiro 2016, etc.).

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### It takes a community to raise a Media Co-op!

As you know, the Vancouver Media Co-op is this city's source for news from the grassroots. Our model – reader funded, collectively run – creates space for critical, democratic media in Vancouver. Readers like you are an integral part of what makes our project work, so first off, thanks for your support!

The VMC relies on the active participation of hundreds of activists, journalists, readers, and concerned people to contribute stories, photos, press releases, personal accounts, and videos in an open-publishing format that receives over 10,000 page views every month. In addition to user-created media, the VMC is an open and democratic collective open to you to join.

Become a sustaining member of the Vancouver Media Co-op and help us keep up momentum as we take radical media to a new level. Check out [vancouver.mediacoop.ca](http://vancouver.mediacoop.ca) to learn how to become a sustainer. Own Your Media!

### Upcoming Events

March 8 Islamophobia workshop 2-4pm

MBC 1306 SFU Burnaby Free, childcare

March 8 Celebrate Women's Day 9am-5pm

SFU Atrium Saywall Hall Free

March 20 Community March Against Racism 2pm

Waterfront Skytrain Station