Voices of the New Radical Activism

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A Short History of OCAP

By the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty
(2008)

For nearly 20 years, the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) has been mobilizing poor communities under attack. We have resisted all levels of government and a host of institutions that contribute to poverty.

OCAP has its roots in a struggle around welfare reform in the late 1980s. At that time, the Liberal Government of David Peterson was under considerable pressure to introduce some improvements to the Province’s welfare system. As a stalling tactic, it set up a review committee that held extensive public hearings and, finally, recommended a number of measures that included an increase in welfare rates (depending on the category of recipient) of between 10% and 20%. During this period the London and Toronto unions of unemployed workers had been campaigning for a 25% increase in the rates. After the release of the review committee’s report, a broader formation came together and decided to press for the Government to implement the proposals of its own committee. A three pronged march from Windsor, Sudbury and Ottawa was organized on the Ontario Legislature to fight for this.

The 1989 March Against Poverty to Queen’s Park was a huge success. It forced a number of changes out of the Liberals, including a rate increase of roughly 9%. Many of those organizations that had cooperated in the March drew the conclusion that a long term coalition against poverty was now possible and began to work to bring this together. While OCAP was in the process of being formed, a Provincial election took place. Even though we as yet only functioned with a rough steering committee structure, we decided to challenge the fiction that the Liberals had been a ‘caring’
regime and to expose the growing poverty crisis in Ontario by targeting the Government’s re-election bid. We followed Peterson all over the Province, confronting his campaign appearances on over thirty occasions. More than once, his meetings were brought to a halt by OCAP protesters and our slogan ‘Down with the Poverty Premier!’ became a major factor in his defeat.

In the autumn of 1990, the founding conference of OCAP took place. After some debate, it set a course for the organization that committed it to mobilizing poor and homeless people to fight back through militant, direct action and rejected notions of basing the organization on methods of consultation and compromise with those in power. The emergence of OCAP coincided with the election of an NDP Government. This posed major difficulties for us in that the climate became tough for an organization that wanted to take a strong stand. The backsliding of the Rae Government away from its promises to raise welfare rates above the poverty line and ‘end the need for food banks’ created a lot of confusion and demoralization. For quite some time, people were unclear on how to confront a Government that they had expected and hoped would offer them more than the Liberals and Tories. Resources to carry on our work were very hard to come by and our base of activity was largely confined to Toronto. We held demonstrations at NDP gatherings and gradually, as Rae’s measures grew ever more right wing, found a stronger level of support for resisting the Government. We worked with the Street Peoples’ Organization to put up a tent city of the homeless at Queen’s Park. We hounded Government Ministers and challenged the freeze they imposed on welfare rates. We played a major role in convincing them not to actually cut welfare rates. We pressed forward as best we could but it was a tough period to work in.

It was during the Rae years that OCAP first took up in a serious fashion the Direct Action Casework that has played such an important role in its development. We began bringing mass delegations into welfare offices and taking similar actions. People began to turn to us as an organization that could make a difference in their lives and act to defend families under attack. Since that time, this method of resistance has grown to include mobilizing to stop deportations, to prevent evictions, to compel employers to pay wages they owe and to stand up against the violence of cops and security companies.

Also, during this period, OCAP played a major role in challenging the offensive of the Federal Tory regime with a tent city outside the PC Convention in Toronto that became known across the Country as ‘Mulroneyville’. We continued to confront the Federal Government after the Liberals took power in 1993 and have resisted their attacks on poor and homeless people. This struggle included two mass delegations of the homeless to Parliament Hill that were a major factor in prying hundreds of millions in funding for emergency shelter spaces out of the Liberals. It is with the election of the Harris Government in Ontario in 1995, however, that the struggles of OCAP took on the sharp character that we have come to see as defining our work. This more recent history being better known, we can confine this account to detailing its main features. We can see four main phases in the struggle against the Tories. At first, immediately after the election of Harris, OCAP pressed for action to be taken by the broad movement. We held a major rally at Queen’s Park and a march from Regent Park (Ontario Housing project) to the home of the Lieutenant-Governor in the ultra-rich community of Rosedale. Our readiness to move forward after Harris’s election did much to convince others to take up the fight and helped to create the momentum that led to the ‘Ontario Days of Action’.

Beginning in late ‘95, the Ontario Federation of Labour began a series of city wide strikes and protests that were called Days of Action. They had huge potential power but were never used as a weapon to challenge the ability of the Tories to govern and were never escalated to the level of sustained province wide action. OCAP participated in all of them, carried out serious picket line actions and agitated strongly for the struggle to be taken to a new level. Sadly, however, this round of generalized resistance to Harris was wound down and abandoned and the late 90s was a period when the Tories could carry on their attacks with only localized opposition to confront them. In this very grim period, when regressive measures came out of Queen’s Park at dizzying speed, OCAP turned its attention to fighting to hamper the implementation of a political agenda it could not prevent from being formed. We greatly increased the amount of Direct Action Casework we did. We picketed agencies and employers who were introducing workfare and made the program harder for them to put into effect. We took over empty buildings to win shelter for the homeless. We took to the streets to fight the social cleansing of poor and homeless people. We stood against attacks on squeegeers and panhandlers. We resisted the closing of rooming house stock in poor neighbourhoods. We were a thorn in the flesh of reactionary ‘residents’ associations that worked to redevelop the urban landscape in a way that served the interests of developers and yuppie colonists.
As vital as the work we did in this period was, we realized that the reactivation of a movement of generalized resistance was the only way to move from rearguard action to a real challenge to the Tories. On June 15, 2000, we held a March of homeless people and supporters on the Legislature that demanded that the Government receive a delegation and deal with its grievances. When they responded by moving to clear the grounds with riot squads and mounted cops, a battle broke out that the media dubbed the ‘Queen’s Park Riot’. The action was as much a call to people in Ontario to ‘fight to win’ as it was a challenge to the Government. The huge outpouring of support that followed the action, convinced OCAP to call for a Province wide campaign of economic disruption against the Tories and led to the formation of the Ontario Common Front to lead this struggle. This is written days after the October 16 snake march through Toronto’s financial district and as communities across the Province, First Nations people and students move into action. There is no question that the period of passivity and retreat is over and that the time ahead of us will be dominated by a growing movement of resistance.

When the Tories left office, however, they were not driven out but merely replaced, in 2003, with a Liberal regime that talked the language of mild reform but consolidated Tory cutbacks. OCAP has taken up the task of challenging this duplicitous political formation. We have demanded the raising of welfare rates by 40% to restore what has been lost over the last decade. At the heart of this, has been a campaign to win the Special Diet for thousands.

In 2005, OCAP turned its attention to a welfare provision that very few had heard of. The Special Diet Supplement of up to $250 per person per month could be obtained if a medical provider considered it necessary. We began holding clinics, where providers diagnosed Special Diet items to thousands of people. Attempts by welfare offices to deny the benefit were confronted with hard hitting mobilizations. News of the Supplement spread throughout Ontario. 2005 saw an increase in spending on the Supplement of $40 million. In October of that year, we brought 1,100 to a Queen’s Park Hunger Clinic where they obtained the Special Diet from some 40 medical providers. The Government responded by cutting back on the entitlement but, provincial Special Diet expenditures continue to rise. Before the Special Diet campaign began, Ontario Works was spending $2 million on the Special Diet in Toronto. In 2007, that number skyrocketed to $30 million.

The Special Diet Campaign led to a wave of community organizing, as people took action to ensure that they were not cheated by welfare offices out of their entitlements. This has led to much deeper roots in poor communities. In Toronto’s west end, OCAP Women of Etobicoke has formed within the Somali community and has taken up key fights against police harassment and bad housing conditions. Other such community based organizing has emerged among street vendors, taxi drivers and TCHC residents.

Last Year, OCAP began a campaign against Toronto’s biggest slumlord – Toronto Community Housing Corporation. We have knocked on doors, written letters and done case actions. In Moss Park, our strategy won $9 million in repairs. In Gordon Ridge, 100 tenants submitted letters demanding repairs be done and threatening to withhold their rent if the City didn’t take action. We continue to build momentum amongst TCHC tenants and repairs have taken place at every corner of the city as a result.

While we fight for justice across the city and the province, we also continue to struggle at our base in the downtown east end where poor and homeless people fight a constant battle to stay in their neighbourhood and be free of police ticketing, targeting and assaults. We have done shut down City Council on a number of occasions in response to the freezing death of someone on the streets, the loss of shelter beds and meals and to expose the devastation that the City’s “Streets to Homes” (more aptly, Streets to Slums) program is causing. Recently, we took over Allan Gardens to give people a safe space to sleep and throughout the two days we were in the park hundreds of homeless people came to take refuge from the weather and the cops. This fall, we also took over and took back Parliament Street with a loud and spirited march through the neighbourhood to tell the City and the yuppies that “we are here to stay.”

OCAP is an anti poverty, anti capitalist organization. We are in solidarity with First Nations Peoples. We join workers in their battles. We support struggles in other countries and act as part of an international movement that is rediscovering the politics of resistance. The unemployed in the 30’s and the workers who won the right to organize did not want to make a moral case to those in power. They fought for their rights and OCAP stands for just such course of action.
Voices of the New Radical Activism

MANIFESTO of the PAN-CANADIAN YOUNG FEMINIST GATHERING

We are the young RebELLEs who have answered a feminist call and we are proud to call ourselves feminists. We recognize that there are multiple interpretations of feminism and we celebrate and integrate this diversity. We are committed to the continual expansion of the plurality of our voices. We are committed to an ongoing process of critical self-reflection to inform and transform our movement. We acknowledge the historical exclusion of “Othered” women by the majority Western feminist movement. We strive to learn from the past, honour the struggles of our foremothers and continue to dream for the future. We value the allies of feminism who support us in our fight for equity and justice.

We are women of diverse abilities, ethnicities, origins, sexualities, identities, class backgrounds, ages and races. Among us are employed, underemployed and unemployed women, mothers, students, dropouts, artists, musicians and women in the sex trade. We state that transfolks, two-spirited and intersexed people are integral to our movement and recognize and respect gender fluidity and support the right to self-identify. Our women-only spaces include everyone who self-identifies and lives as a woman in society.

We are told that feminism is over and outdated. If this were true then we wouldn’t need to denounce the fact that:

In reality, many of the demands of our feminist mothers and grandmothers remain unmet. Women continue to be the victims of sexual violence. Our communities are haunted by the silence that follows these assaults. Throughout Canada, in spite of our right to it, access to abortion services remains insufficient. Across Canada as well, colonized, marginalized, racialized and disabled women are coerced and/or forced to undergo unwanted or uninformed abortions, forced to use contraception and are subjected to forced sterilization. The hyper-sexualization of women in the media has taught us to view women as sexual objects rather than complete human beings. Getting off, lesbianism and being queer are taboo and a women’s choice to seek sexual pleasure is seen as negative. Our identities are eroded as we are taught, from the time we are children, and through television and magazines, that how we should look, dress, and act is determined by our sex. Violence is normalized, sexual abuse eroticized. Our sexual health education is inadequate and our reproductive rights are disrespected. Our needs are not being met.

In reality, women still represent the majority of the underprivileged. Our government steals children from poor and Aboriginal women. Capitalism exploits working-class women and confines middle- and upper-
class women to "consumer" roles. We are told that equality has been achieved, but still the wage gap persists. Immigrant women are denied acknowledgment of their academic credentials and are forced to endure intolerable work environments in order to stay on Canadian soil. We lack affordable and accessible childcare. Women remain underpaid, underappreciated, and undervalued in the work force. We have gained the right to vote, yet gender-based discrimination keeps women virtually unrepresented in political office.

In this globalized world, we must construct international feminist solidarity. The actions of Canadian political and economic elites harm women around the world, and in a way that is specifically gender-related. War, genocide and militarization are characterized by the use of rape as a war weapon, femicide, and the sexual exploitation of thousands of our sisters. Free trade contributes to women's increasing social, economic and cultural insecurity. In response to Canadian imperialism, we will globalize our feminist solidarity.

In this so-called post-feminist world, our roles in society are still defined by traditional views on gender. Religious and political forces aimed at maintaining the pillars of power in our society silence us from voicing our rights. We denounce the current rise of right-wing ideology in Canadian society and the steps backward in women's rights that this has caused. We are being stripped of rights for which those who came before us fought hard. Geography marginalizes women, with remote, northern and rural women lacking access to basic services. Showing solidarity with our sisters means trying to understand all of the issues we face - including race, class and gender - and standing together against oppression.

Finally, we denounce the dismissal of the feminist movement as redundant. Our struggle is not over. We will be post-feminists when we have post-patriarchy.

**Feminists Unite!**

- DOWN WITH the colonial legacy of genocide and assimilation of Aboriginal peoples, particularly of Aboriginal women
- DOWN WITH the sexism and racism of the Indian Act
- DOWN WITH dishonoured treaties
- DOWN WITH assimilation
- DOWN WITH racial profiling
- DOWN WITH Canada’s fake multicultural policy
- DOWN WITH warmongers & military power
- DOWN WITH racist child welfare policies
- DOWN WITH stereotypes in the media
- DOWN WITH genocide and femicide

**RebELLEs Against**

- banks for hijacking the world
- drug companies for institutionalizing women's health
- public spaces that don't accommodate all bodies
- development that destroys nature
- the class system that keeps us impoverished and deprives us of safe, affordable housing
- the state that forces other countries to adopt the capitalist system
- the devaluation of women's paid and unpaid work
- corporations for making money off our backs
- the advertisers who destroy our self-esteem and then sell it back to us
- CAPITALISM

**RISE AGAINST**

- the industries that cause us to hate our bodies and our sexuality
- heterosexism that makes it seem that there is only one way of living, loving and being sexual
- the socialization of children in gender binaries, race categories and colonial erasures
- the education that reinforces the heteronormative nuclear family
- the religious Right and its influence on State policy and legislation
- rape and violence against women
- the objectification and control of women’s bodies
- all anti-choice bills, laws and strategies
- the sexual division of labour
- poverty and women’s economic disadvantage and dependency
- income support programs based on family status instead of individual status
- masculinists, their false claims and demagogic arguments
- sexual exploitation
- PATRIARCHY
We envision communities committed to:

☆ Eradicating all forms of violence – including sexual, institutional, emotional, economic, physical, cultural, racial, colonial, ageist and ableist
☆ Challenging all forms of oppression, power and privilege
☆ Recognizing that others’ struggles against oppression cannot be separated from one’s own, because all people are intrinsically linked; and being conscious of how one fits into the different structures of oppression while fighting to eliminate them all
☆ Freeing our children and ourselves from the gender binary
☆ Building institutions and structures that promote the principles of Justice, Peace & Equality
☆ Eliminating economic inequality
☆ Funding and supporting affordable, accessible childcare, and the economic freedom to mother in the way we choose
☆ Learning and teaching true herstory and histories of our victories and struggles, especially those of women of colour and Aboriginal women
☆ Fighting the stigma and shame of mental health and psychiatric survivors and supporting their struggles

We will: Change our attitude: get pissed off, refuse, resist, walk out, speak up!
We will: Transform our daily lives and relationships: actions can take place in small interactions
We will: Encourage people to learn about, care for and love themselves and their bodies
We will: Support safe and accessible space for individuals to define and express themselves without fear of judgement
We will: Create alternatives, write poetry, articles, letters, make art
We will: Join with others, find common ground, build community, create feminist spaces and gatherings, raise awareness, educate, spread the word
We will: Believe that a better world is possible and work to achieve it

We will: Organize and struggle: build alliances with existing feminist groups and create new ones, fight together in solidarity, be seen and be heard, disrupt, trouble, destabilize established powers, become culture jammers
We will: Build solidarity based on the commonality of our diverse struggles and perspectives
We will: Value people rather than profits
We will: Demand massive State reinvestment in social programs and the end of privatization
We will: Organize pan-Canadian decentralized days of feminist action against the rise of the Right
We will: Protest and resist sexist bills and laws that threaten our reproductive rights, racist immigration laws, war, free trade, repression, the criminalization of political movements, corporate exploitation and plunder of the earth, and violence against women
We will: Champion safety, respect, justice, freedom, equality and SOLIDARITY!

This manifesto was adopted at the Pan-Canadian Young Feminist Gathering Toujours RebELLEs / Waves of Resistance, Montreal, October 13, 2008.

It is a call to action!
Find out more, get involved!

www.rebelles2008.org
info@rebelles2008.org
The No One Is Illegal campaign of Montreal is part of a worldwide movement of resistance, struggling collectively for the self-determination of migrants and indigenous peoples.

We are in active confrontation with a colonial system built on the dispossession and genocide of indigenous peoples, as well as racist anti-immigrant laws. We maintain that there are no illegal human beings, only inhumane laws and illegal states. The very basis of labeling entire communities as "illegal aliens", "non-status" or "status Indian" aims to reinforce an apartheid system; we reject any government’s right to grant such status.

No One Is Illegal asserts the clear link between capitalist globalization and the displacement of people from the global south, increasingly women, who are migrating from persecution, economic injustice, exploitation, poverty, oppression and patriarchal violence. This migration traces its roots to the same forces of colonialism and neo-colonialism that have created and perpetuated the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the forcible displacement of indigenous peoples on Turtle Island and throughout the world.

We struggle and organize for the right of peoples to maintain their livelihoods and resist displacement, as well as to migrate freely. No government can determine who is allowed to stay, and under what conditions. We denounce the criminalization of racialized and indigenous people under the rubric of "National Security", and reject reformist approaches to "improving" an immigration system that accepts colonial control and administration, and that rely on false distinctions between "good" and "bad" migrants. We affirm the right to safe passage for migrants, and work actively to build networks of solidarity and support.

No One Is Illegal in Montreal comes together in a context where the policies of the Canadian state increasingly aim to consolidate "Fortress North America" using free trade to open borders to capital, while exploiting the people whose free movement is restricted. We reject the racist "War on Terror" and its domestic manifestations in various laws, policies and agreements.

No One Illegal acts to expose and educate against injustice from an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-patriarchal, anti-authoritarian and a queer positive perspective, while asserting a vision for open borders and social and economic justice. We work to combat racial profiling, detentions, deportations, police and state brutality, wage slavery and all forms of indignity. We respect a diversity of mutually reinforcing tactics, including popular education and direct action.

We organize to be part of the resistance movement within the walls of Fortress North America. We recognize that struggles for self-determination, and for the free movement of people against colonial exploitation, are led by the communities who fight on the frontlines. The No One Is Illegal campaign lends tangible support to these struggles in our capacity as both participants and allies. In doing so, we seek to contribute to building a global movement for justice and dignity, while building links between communities of resistance locally and worldwide.
Voices of the New Radical Activism

Basis of Unity, CAIA
Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid (2006)

The Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid was formed in January 2006 as part of a growing, global movement against Israeli apartheid.

We believe Israel is an apartheid state that resembles South African Apartheid. Palestinian citizens of Israel are denied from controlling and developing over 90% of land because they are Palestinian.

Palestinians expelled in 1948 and 1967 are denied the right to return to their homes and lands, despite the fact that anyone of Jewish background - from anywhere in the world - has the automatic right to become an Israeli citizen. In the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, Palestinians live under separate and discriminatory military law.

The Canadian government provides extensive political and economic support to the Israeli apartheid regime. Canadian corporations profit through investments and joint operations with Israeli companies. We work to end all Canadian complicity in this apartheid state.

We are a network of concerned individuals and organizations working to end this apartheid system.

We believe that justice will not be achieved without equal rights for everyone in the region, regardless of religion, ethnicity or nationality.

We understand Israeli apartheid as one element of a system of global apartheid. To this end, we stand in solidarity with all oppressed groups around the world, in particular, the indigenous people of North America.

We oppose all forms of racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.

Our demands are based upon a July 2005 call from over 170 Palestinian organizations in support of a global campaign of boycotts, divestment and sanctions.

Boycott, divestment and sanctions should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

1) Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands, dismantling the Wall and freeing all Palestinian and Arab political prisoners;
2) Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
3) Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN General Assembly resolution 194.

Voices of the New Radical Activism

Why We Resist the 2010 Winter Olympics
(2007)
Resist 2010

The Olympics are not about the human spirit & have little to do with athletic excellence; they are a multi-billion dollar industry backed by powerful elites, real estate, construction, hotel, tourism and television corporations, working hand in hand with their partners in crime: government officials & members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

TEN REASONS TO RESIST 2010

1. Colonialism & Fascism
The modern Olympics have a long history of racism, from its early founding members (i.e., Pierre de Coubertin, a French Baron who advocated sports as a means of strengthening colonialism) to recent IOC presidents. The 1936 Berlin Olympics empowered Hitler’s Nazi regime. Both the 1988 Seoul and 2008 Beijing Summer Games helped legitimize authoritarian regimes in Asia. The 1968 Mexico City Olympics (where over 300 student protesters were massacred by soldiers, days before the Olympics began) also helped legitimize state terror. IOC President Avery Brundage, an infamous US racist and Nazi sympathizer, didn’t even acknowledge the massacre. But when two Black US athletes raised their fists in a Black power salute on the medal podium, he had them immediately stripped of their medals and ejected from the Games! Another well-known fascist IOC president was Juan Antonio Samaranch (IOC president from 1980-2001), a former government official in Franco’s fascist regime in Spain.

2. No Olympics on Stolen Land
BC remains largely unceded and non-surrendered Indigenous territories. According to Canadian law, BC has neither the legal nor moral right to exist, let alone claim land and govern over Native peoples. Despite this, and a fraudulent treaty process now underway, the government continues to sell, lease and ‘develop’ Native land for the benefit of corporations, including mining, logging, oil & gas, and ski resorts. Meanwhile, Indigenous peoples suffer the highest rates of poverty, unemployment, imprisonment, police violence, disease, suicides, etc.
3. Ecological Destruction
Despite claims to be the “greenest Olympics” ever, and PR statements about ‘sustainability’, the 2010 Olympics will be among the most environmentally destructive in history, with tens of thousands of trees cut down & mountainsides blasted for Olympic venues in the Callaghan Valley (near Whistler) & the Sea-to-Sky Highway expansion. In the summer of 2007, a record number of black bears were hit on the Sea-to-Sky Highway, with at least 11 dying (attributed to loss of habitat). Massive amounts of concrete used in construction have also caused millions of Salmon to die in the Fraser River, where tons of gravel are being mined to make concrete.

4. Homelessness
Since winning the 2010 Winter Games in 2003, Vancouver has lost over 850 units of low-income housing; during the same period, homelessness has increased from 1,000 to over 2,500. It is estimated by 2010, the number of homeless may be as high as 6,000. Since the 1980s, Olympic Games have caused the displacement of over 2 million people (Fair Play for Housing Rights report, 2007). In Seoul 1988, some 750,000 poor were displaced, in Atlanta 1996, over 30,000, and for Beijing in 2008, an estimated 1.5 million have been displaced. Yet still today Olympic officials talk about ‘sustainability’ and ‘Olympic legacies’!

5. Criminalization of the Poor
To ‘clean out’ the poor and undesirables, Olympic host cities routinely begin a campaign to criminalize the poor. In Vancouver, the city has launched Project Civil City and new by-laws to criminalize begging for money, sleeping outdoors, etc. It has also included hundreds of thousands of dollars for increased private security (i.e., the Downtown Ambassadors). New garbage canisters on streets make it more difficult for the poor to gather recyclables, and new benches make it impossible to lay down. These measures fit with government plans to remove poor downtown residents to mental institutions, “detox centers” on former military bases, and the ‘fly-back’ scheme by police to return persons wanted on warrants in other provinces. This is nothing less than a process of social cleansing!

6. Impact on Women
Events such as the Olympics draw hundreds of thousands of spectators and cause large increases in prostitution and trafficking of women. In Vancouver, over 68 women are missing and/or murdered. Many were Native, and many were reportedly involved in the sex trade. In 2007, the trial of William Pickton occurred for six of these murders, and he is to be tried for an additional 20 more. In northern BC, over 30 young women, mostly Native, are missing and/or murdered along Highway 16. The 2010 Olympics and its invasion of tourists and corporations will only increase this violence against women.

7. 2010 Police State
Some 12,500 police, military and security personnel are to be deployed for 2010, including Emergency Response Teams, riot cops, helicopters, armoured vehicles, etc. The RCMP plan on erecting 40 km of crowd-control fencing along with CCTV video surveillance cameras. Special security zones will be established to control entry near Olympic venues. For 3 weeks, Vancouver will be an occupied Police State! And once the Olympics are over, there is no guarantee many of these security measures will not remain (i.e., CCTV).

Repression also involves attacks on anti-Olympic groups & individuals, including arrests of protesters, raids of offices, surveillance, media smear campaigns, cuts to funding programs, etc., all in an effort to undermine anti-2010 resistance. This repression has already been used against anti-poverty & housing groups, environmentalists and Natives, in Vancouver.

8. Public Debt
VANOC and government officials claim the 2010 Games will cost some $2 billion. However, this amount doesn’t include the Sea-to-Sky Highway expansion, the Canada Line Skytrain to the airport, the Vancouver Convention Center, or the lower mainland Gateway Project. Including these costs, since they were necessary to win the bid and had to be completed by 2010, makes the true cost of the Games some $6 billion, which must be paid for through public debt, money that could’ve been spent on social services, housing, drug treatment, healthcare, etc.

The modern Olympics are well known for their corruption, including both top IOC officials involved in bribery scandals (i.e. Salt Lake City 2002) or athletes found to be using performance-enhancing drugs (such as steroids). Yet the IOC still claims the youth need an inspiration and a “model” of good sportsmanship! Despite published reports of bribery scandals involving IOC members and host cities (i.e., The New Lords of the Rings, by Andrew Jennings), the Olympics continue to be seen as an honorable & noble enterprise, thanks to the corporate media.

10. Corporate Invasion

Government’s and business use the Olympics as a means to attract corporate investment. In BC, the Liberal government has ‘streamlined’ application processes, cut taxes, and offered other incentives to increase certain industries such as mining, oil & gas drilling, and ski resorts. This includes large increases in transport systems, including new ports, bridges, expanded highways & rail-lines. This is all part of their Investment to 2010 Strategy. The results have been dramatic, record-breaking increases in these industries, resulting in greater environmental destruction and more corporate power & influence over our daily lives.

Many of the main corporate sponsors of the Olympics are themselves responsible for massive ecological destruction and human rights violations, including McDonalds, Coca-Cola, Petro-Canada, TransCanada, Dow, Teck Cominco, etc., while others are major arms manufacturers (General Electric & General Motors).

-- RESIST 2010

“What causes opponents to come of their own accord is the prospect of gain. What discourages opponents from coming is the prospect of harm.” – Sun Tzu, The Art of War

For more Info: www.No2010.com

Environmental Justice: Race, Displacement, and Land

(30-01-09)

Statement by No One is Illegal – Vancouver

In light of the devastating reality of environmental destruction globally, there is an urgent and critical need to expose the root causes of environmental injustice as stemming from systems of domination. Predatory capitalist expansion and imperialist militarization has devastated the lands, resources, and communities of primarily people of colour locally and globally.

Toxic industries are largely located on Indigenous lands and closest to people of colour communities. While people of colour communities are disproportionately victims of environmental degradation, they are often scapegoated as responsible for the environmental crisis and excluded from the leadership of the environmental movement.

COLONIZATION AS ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION

Environmental degradation, with climate change as one obvious manifestation, is intimately linked to the forced displacement and migration of people. By the year 2050, an estimated 1 billion people will be displaced from their homes because of global warming and state-sponsored climate terrorism.

Populations of the global South and indigenous communities in the North have been ravaged by centuries of colonial-corporate theft and environmentally-destructive “development”. Colonization brought with it not only the displacement and genocide of peoples across the world but also
an exploitative view of the natural world. Early colonial imagery of nature presented it as something to be tamed, conquered and exploited; in the same way that indigenous peoples were.

The colonial project centred on gaining access to natural resources in order to fuel the growing capitalist industry. This continues today. For example the top five mining companies of the world are run out of the UK, Australia, Canada, Switzerland and the USA (with many of their headquarters in Vancouver). The mining industry is responsible for causing severe environmental devastation including loss of food supplies, flooding of entire communities, releasing lethal concentrations of acid into water supplies, and displacing millions of people.

Other industries such as fishing, cattle and dairy, farming, oil, and lumber are also responsible for displacement, the destruction of entire ecosystems, emission of toxic substances, and intensifying deadly natural disasters such as landslides, hurricanes and floods.

Within displaced populations, indigenous people – particularly women and children – are the most affected as their resources for survival, such as subsistence farming and hunting, rapidly disappear and they are driven to urban slums or refugee camps. For example in Canada, the Inuit who have lived harmoniously with nature in the Arctic North, are now facing reduction of their stocks of walrus, seals, and whales, and erosion of their coastline. In Mexico, farmers struggle to grow food as highly subsided US corn is dumped into their economy.

Yet the colonial and racist underpinnings of the nation-state system, is quickly revealed by the lack of response of those states who in reality have the most resources (as a result of theft) to protect environmental refugees. Indeed, these people are not even legally recognized as refugees. The borders of Western countries have remained tightly guarded against refugees of all stripes, and particularly so against those who have been displaced by environmental destruction.

This is despite the fact that such states hold the most responsibility for the global environmental crisis and hence the creation of soaring numbers of environmental refugees. For example, Australia, which has one of the highest rates of carbon emissions per capita in the world, refuses to open its borders to citizens of Tuvalu, a Polynesian island facing catastrophe from rising sea levels.

Racialized peoples in the First World are also victimized by this ideology, as witnessed in the handling of Hurricane Katrina. Most disgustedly, Katrina facilitated the government’s injection of funding into compliant NGOs to legitimize the current world order under the veneer of charity and awarded corporate contracts for “reconstruction”. Katrina made clear that beyond state lines, we are still thoroughly crisscrossed by borders of race, language, religion, gender, class, age, ability, sexual identity -borders continue to be socially, politically, culturally and violently enforced to divide us and discipline us into believing that some lives are worth less than others.

**GREENING OF HATE**

Unfortunately within the environmental movement, we have seen a rise in the "greening of hate". This ideology blames environmental degradation on poor populations of colour.

For example, the rhetoric of governments and many environmental organizations in the North place the blame of excessive CO2 and other pollutants on countries from the South such as India and China. This is done in order to shift the blame from the real culprits to those countries that have been exploited by the imperialist project for centuries. In reality, much of China’s pollution is generated by the North’s demand for cheap manufactured goods. Approximately 30% of industry in China is foreign-owned by companies such as Wal-Mart. And, greenhouse gas emissions are 1.2 tonnes per capita in India compared with 23 tonnes in the US and 18 tonnes in Canada.

Within the Western world, certain environmental movements propose restricting immigration in order to control population growth. The most well known example of the pervasive nature of such discourse is in the 1990’s when a large anti-immigrant bloc within the [U.S.] Sierra Club pushed for a ballot initiative supporting a reduction of net immigration as part of a “comprehensive population policy”.

In addition to promoting racism, such measures obscure the reality that the fundamental cause of environmental degradation is not overpopulation of the Earth by humans but overpopulation of the Earth by pillaging state and corporate interests! While policing borders, such measures regulate women's reproductive choice by blaming women - predominantly poor indigenous and racialized women - for having too many children.

One of the most significant ways in which racism is perpetuated within the environmental movement is the invisibility and marginalization of those most directly affected by environmental degradation. Indeed, in stereotypic fashion the environmental movement often traces its origins to the efforts of visionary white men to protect the natural world from industrialization, rather than acknowledging the historic ties that most people of colour communities globally have had to the natural world. They readily ignore the wealth of traditional knowledge that land-based peoples
have on how to live harmoniously with the land and how to appropriately steward the land.

The mainstream environmental movement has also perpetuated a mythology of the environment as separate from humans (the man vs nature myth). In Canada this has often meant the pitting of indigenous peoples against environmentalists as environmentalists become complicit in the displacement of indigenous peoples in order to support "conservation efforts" that ignores the ways in which indigenous peoples relate to the land. For example anti-fur activists do not recognize that non-commercial trapping is one of the main sources of livelihood for indigenous peoples in the North.

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CAPITALISM**

The ideology that capitalism and colonialism can co-exist with genuine social and environmental justice is disproven when we recognize that it is a social, economic and political system that is fundamentally and necessarily rooted in exploitation and expansion.

Sustainable development and creation of “green industries” within capitalism continues to remain heavily resource-extractive and costing the lives of millions of people. The production of bio-fuel, for instance, is directly linked to the food crisis in the global South.

We reject the developmentalist framework that guides so much of economic policy, including in Third World states. While the impoverishment and destabilization of the Third World has been one of the primary consequences of First World imperialism, so is the imposition of an environmentally-destructive capitalist social organization (a.k.a. “liberal democracy”) in the Third World.

Such development is not designed to alleviate the poverty and inequality of the Third World vis-à-vis the First World. It is designed to give corporations access to land, natural resources and cheap labour; to grant power to the state to police and regulate human beings as economic units and Mother Earth as a commodity; and to alienate people from their connections to the Earth, to themselves and to each other.

It is absolutely not meant to develop people’s ability to build self-sufficient and self-determining communities in harmony – indeed in reverence – of that which gives us life and sustains us day by day, the Earth itself.

**CONCLUSION**

In our struggles for social and environmental justice, we must insist on striving for a holistic understanding of issues and the complex ways in which they are interconnected; it is this understanding that must ground our visions for the future.

We demand that residency status be given to all migrants who have been displaced by environmental destruction. We are speaking especially to First World states that have through violence and exploitation reaped the most benefits from – and therefore bear the most responsibility for – the pillage of our earth.

We believe that indigenous women must be placed at the centre of the environmental movement as they are the most impacted by environmental degradation and they also possess generations of knowledge on how to protect the Earth.

We desire a world where people can move freely and no one is forcibly displaced. We envision a future of joyful and truly sustainable communities that are held together not by domination, but by a deep connection to each other and to the Earth.