

"what is wrong with the 2010 olympics?"

The Olympics are not about the human spirit and have little to do with athletic excellence. They are a multi-billion dollar industry backed by real estate, construction, hotel, tourism and media corporations, and powerful elites working hand in hand with government officials and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). While public pressure is unlikely to stop the 2010 Games from occupying Vancouver, critical resistance is needed to expose deceptions about the Games' impact and purposes, voice our dissent to the world, and strengthen social movement solidarity.

Occupation of Stolen Native Land: The vast majority of B.C. is unceded Native land, unlawfully occupied by B.C. and Canada. By Canadian law, Native title exists unless yielded by treaty and little of B.C. is covered, even by flawed treaties. Neglect of First Nations' social, environmental, and political rights by a state that benefits from Aboriginal resources is a serious political crisis ignored by Canada and the Games.

"Security" and Eroding Civil Liberties: Increasing political repression and security build-ups accompany modern Games. Estimates for Vancouver of at least 16,500 Canadian military, border guards, private security, VPD, RCMP, and CSIS agents (plus foreign security) are unrealistically low: the Sydney Games had 35,000 police and security (4 cops per athlete) with 4,000 troops and commando units and the Athens Games had 70,000 police, security, and military forces. There will be at least 40 km of crowd-control fencing, video surveillance, and airport-style security zones around the city, including on public property. The monitoring and intimidation of political opposition has already begun. Vancouver City Council has followed the IOC requests to create an environment free of protest by enhancing bylaws to restrict posters, signs, leaflets, marches, noise-makers, and any possible "disturbance" to Olympic entertainment. Many elements can become permanent (such as public video monitoring, new security bodies and policing rules, and the criminalization of protest) and security costs are up to \$1 billion.



Environmental Destruction

and Waste: The 2010 Games will be one of the most ecologically damaging in history, featuring clear cuts, mountain blasting, road construction (and expansion of traffic), gravel mining (damage to fish stocks), massive amounts of steel, plastics, cement, wood, etc., threats to animal populations, unnecessary luxury buildings, and expanded infrastructure (with accelerated



approvals) for mining, logging, oil and gas exploration, ski resorts, and tourism. Approximately 100,000 trees have been cut down for Olympic development.

Corporatization: The Games are entirely commercialized, with pro athletes, exclusive corporate sponsors, and crony deals for development, construction, and media companies. Image

control is crucial and all outdoor advertising in Vancouver has been sold to the Games and their sponsors for weeks around the Games. The anthem lyrics "with glowing hearts" and words like "friend" have become trademarks related to the Olympics. Games regularly benefit and are sponsored by companies with poor human rights and environmental records, like Nike, Shell, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Petro-Canada, Dow, Teck Cominco, TransCanada, and arms makers GE and GM.

Damage to Communities: Racial profiling and lock-downs of ethnic communities are common for the Games (black neighbourhoods in L.A. and Atlanta, Muslims in Athens, etc.). More tourists increase abuses in the sex trade. Host cities routinely criminalise the poor or homeless and socially cleanse their cities (Vancouver relocated the homeless out of sight for Expo 86 and Atlanta did the same for its Games). The Vancouver Police crackdown on visible poverty has led to hundreds of tickets for panhandling, jaywalking, second-hand sales on the streets, and sleeping in parks. The sacrifice of housing, social services, and environmental and labour laws also hurt the poor, homeless, women, minorities, Natives, and workers. Since the 1980s, Games and their construction have displaced over 2 million people.

Honouring Exploitation: Despite Olympic claims, Games occur in places that violate "international standards" (Nazi Germany in 1936, more than 300 students massacred in Mexico prior to the 1968 Games, political oppression in China during the 2008 Games, etc.). Games are used to rally for nationalist causes, impose social control, and attract corporate investment, more than to celebrate "pure sport." Past presidents of the corrupt IOC (including colonialists, Nazi sympathisers, and officials of fascist states) have used the Games to suppress dissent and serve their political and economic interests. Like the WTO, FTAA, G8, and APEC, the Games will use public funds to honour leaders from repressive regimes.

Lack of Affordable Housing: During a housing crisis, single-room-occupancies (cheap hotels) and affordable rentals are torn-down or converted to high-priced housing while the City lends money to build Olympic condos. Promises of affordable and social housing and shelter spaces are rarely met by host cities and Vancouver has already admitted that commitments will not be met. In fact, since the bid in 2003, we have lost over 850 low-income housing units and homelessness has tripled. Salt Lake City Games planned for 2500 units of affordable housing and created only 150; prior to Sydney's Games, tenant evictions increased 400%; and Calgary failed to build any of its pledged social housing.



Public Costs and Debt: The \$6 billion cost of Vancouver's Games keeps increasing with cost overruns and hidden transfers. Host cities take on huge debts: Montreal's 1976 Games were only paid off in 2002; Calgary had a \$910 million debt; Barcelona a \$14 billion debt; Sydney a \$2.3 billion debt; etc. Claims of long-term economic benefits have been proven false in previous Games. The Olympics are an expensive 17-day corporate circus (during an economic crisis) that will cost us all for years to come.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Check out www.no2010.com for extensive information (Indigenous anti-Olympics website in the Olympic Resistance Network).

Please email us to be added to the ORN-announce list, a low-traffic (2-3 emails amonth) digest of events, meetings and updates.