

W.O.O.D.S.Q.U.A.T. #52



CANADA IS ALL NATIVE LAND – DEMANDS – NEWS FROM ARGENTINA

DAY 85 – SATURDAY – 07 DEC 02

CANADA IS ALL NATIVE LAND NON-NATIVES ARE ALL SQUATTERS THE DEVIL+CANADA ARE ONE

by ABCNative

After 1492 there were lots of illegal aliens ...
Genocide of the Peoples of the western hemisphere
was the start of capitalism / wealth called LAND

The BC Treaty Process is the canadian govt's
colonialist land grab instead of an international
peace treaty ending the undeclared war on
Aboriginals of "Kanata" on OUR HOME +
NATIVE LAND for thousands of years.

Decolonization is the solution.
It did marvels for China + India ...

Where is the International solidarity against the
international terrorists called the Americas – vs.
the Indigenous Peoples of the Western Hemisphere?

What are you doing canaduh destroying
our home + NATIVE LAND ??

A crime of killing the planet is inexcusable –
for profit in the name of the prophet Jesus ...
Remember residential schools jesus / indian?

The Devil called Canada is hell on EARTH ...
Goddamn canada ...

Are you "canadians" thinking of peace in this land
+ for the world while having an undeclared war on
the NATIVES OF this land?

A lie called colonization built this white racist
country in 1867 after 10,000 years of Indigenous
Peoples existing with harmony not hermoney – the
queen is killing O canada – OUR NATIVES HOME
+ NATIVE LAND – for profits instead of saving
the Earth for her Prophet just the same as the R.
Church.

... hell is here + now ...

there is no heaven / haven

just the sun

+ the Universe in the heavens ...

DEMANDS

by Mike Krebs

WHY DEMANDS?

With actions like the Woodwards Squat, it is always important to have demands. This is how we make clear why we do what we are doing. It is a way to answer the simple question that people ask us when we take a stand: "What do you people want? Why are you doing this?" Demands also provide focus to the action. All the work in an action or campaign can be structured around its demands, providing a guide to always refer to before deciding on what course of action is the best. In the case of the Woodwards Squat, demands were drafted to define the movement for housing that is unfolding against the Campbell Government.

Generally, there are two types of demands that we put together: 1) demands that can be easily won in the short-term; and 2) demands that will build more involvement in an action, which may not be winnable in the short term but are appealing enough to draw more people in and make bigger gains in the long-run.

LIMITATIONS OF EASILY WINNABLE DEMANDS

Clearly we want to improve our lives through our actions, so in some cases, we definitely need immediate gains to put ourselves in a better position for self-defense. But we have to always remember that there is a reason for our poverty and suffering. There are people who benefit from the housing crisis in Vancouver: landlords, for example. By leaving buildings empty, landlords create a false shortage in housing, forcing people to compete for limited (and low-quality) housing. This pushes up rents, since people have less choice about where they can live, and have no choice but to accept high rents. People are also forced to accept substandard housing, since the landlord saves money by not maintaining and repairing the property. It is relationships like this, the relationship between landlords and renters, which not only maintain poverty, but also make it worse.

Short-term gains, like more homeless shelters, might make things a little bit less painful for the few people who are fortunate enough to find space in one. But they do not change the situation that creates homelessness: many buildings will remain empty, landlords will still squeeze profits out of the lucky ones that have found housing, and we are forced to live in substandard housing, or no housing at all. That's what makes these demands easier to win, because, for those in positions of power that are ripping us off, nothing really changes. To give in to these demands is no big deal to them.

Is this what we want? Do we really want all of our hard work and struggle to end with little results and no long-term change?

Temporary shelters are not a solution. If we want real solutions to the housing crisis, we need demands that will actually challenge the current relationship between us and the landlords. To do this, we need to increase the number of people involved in the movement for decent housing, since it is the strength of our numbers, as poor people, that will put enough pressure on those in control to give in.

ASKING FOR WHAT WE DESERVE

If we want to build our movement and expand, we need demands that will move people. If the demands are not appealing enough, people will not waste their time: “Do I really want to get involved in this mess for little or no gains?” We need to get people inspired, we need other poor people to realize that they deserve much, much more than what they have right now. People will get involved if they see that it is worth their while, that their lives will be improved in a meaningful way if they fight for it. It is with this approach that many of the Woodward’s Squat demands were designed.

THE SIX DEMANDS OF THE COALITION OF WOODWARDS SQUATTERS & SUPPORTERS

1. Develop Woodward’s as social housing immediately. (There must be an allotment of housing in the building for aboriginal people equal to or greater than the percentage of aboriginal people in the Downtown Eastside.)
2. Reverse the cuts to social housing and all social services.
3. Draft a civic anti-vacancy by-law to seize & convert empty, abandoned buildings into social housing.
4. Full disclosure of all information regarding the proposed sale and development of the building.
5. The Federal government must fund and support the development of aboriginal business in the proposed commercial storefronts on the ground floor of Woodward’s. These storefronts must also include an urban native self-governing office with drop-in / support services and culturally sensitive native liaison workers from the community.
6. Decent and dignified immediate shelter for all homeless squatters forced from Woodward’s and asked to leave the sidewalk in front of the building.

HOW THE SIX DEMANDS WERE GENERATED

The process to put together demands for the squat began during the first week, while people were still inside the building. Over several meetings, the squatters discussed and debated demands. The demands were then brought to coalition meetings for further discussion. This was a way to make sure that the voice of the squatters was at the forefront, and also allowed those outside supporters to have a say. Initially, there were four demands. Most of these demands showed the political nature of the squat: people wanted to fight for social housing, wanted to fight against the cuts to social programs brought in by the Liberal government, and wanted the city to deal with the hypocrisy where so many buildings are left empty and dilapidated while people are forced to live outside. These demands showed that people did not want quick-fix concessions: people were demanding solutions to the housing crisis.



DEBATES ABOUT THE DEMANDS OF FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

After the first set of demands was put forth, people involved with the squat raised concerns that certain issues were being left out. First Nations people brought up the fact that the demands did not address First Nations issues. This was a problem from the beginning, where First Nations concerns were ignored or swept under the rug.

First Nations people have always been in a key role in the Woodward’s Squat, and with good reason. Aboriginal people are among the poorest people in Canada. First Nations people make up 40% of the Downtown Eastside population, and 70% of Vancouver’s Native population lives there. Vancouver is located on unceded territory, meaning that, legally, the land belongs to the Coast Salish. Aboriginal homelessness is an especially disgusting crime of the Canadian government, where

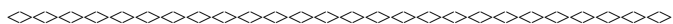
First Nations people are reduced to beggars on their own land.

Eventually the First Nations people were able to get the group to discuss new demands that would address their needs. During these discussions, both types of demands mentioned earlier were presented: on the one hand, there were demands that space be allocated for Aboriginal business, drop-in centres, etc. Other First Nations people wanted demands that directly addressed sovereignty and the land question: how can the police clear people off the street/out of the building if they don't have any legal right to the land?

The demand for Aboriginal business and centres was accepted in the end. Unfortunately, the non-Natives involved in the squat were not willing to support demands that addressed the land question. This is the standard approach: especially in an area like the DTES, the service-agency approach is the preferred "solution" to address the issues of poor people. For the most part, however, these programs do little to actually deal with our situation. Aboriginal business can only help a few people at the most, and does not address the poverty of First Nations people as a whole. The same is true for service agencies: they might make it a little bit easier for people to get through the day, but they don't actually work to end poverty, and they certainly don't empower people to gain more control over their lives.

CONCLUSION

If we want to make gains in the Woodward's Squat battle, or in any other campaign, we need meaningful demands that can actually create change. We already have homeless shelters: they don't provide a real home, and they certainly don't provide stability for poor people. We already have services for aboriginal people: they don't address the theft of Native land that led to poverty for First Nations people in the first place. We need to ask for what we deserve, and we need demands that will expand the movement for decent housing. If we don't have jobs or welfare rates that provide us with the money to afford decent housing, then we must demand that the government provide subsidized housing. We need long-term solutions, *and we have to struggle for them.*



Woodsquat is published by the Friends of the Woodward's Squat. Please note that FWS is a material support group. It does not represent the Woodward's Squat or Woodward's Coalition for Social Housing and does not speak for any other of the many groups and individuals currently in the DTES housing action. For daily updates, background info, or contacts visit our website: www.woodsquat.net. Photographs by Marwan Marwan.



NEWS FROM ARGENTINA

A-INFOS NEWS SERVICE <www.ainfos.ca>

BUENOS AIRES -- Thousands of Argentines marched through the streets of the capital Wednesday, stopping in front of supermarkets to demand food donations to feed the needy. Demonstrators carried Argentine flags and raised anti-government banners as they called on grocery store managers to willingly hand over bags of food. The largely peaceful protest was the second in as many days of what march organizers called a "demonstration to end hunger."

Similar protests were being held in other cities across Argentina. Most of the requests appeared to go unheeded as demonstrators quietly turned away from storefronts and continued marching peacefully toward a downtown plaza in front of the presidential palace. Some store owners pulled down metal gates over their storefronts, fearing violence similar to the food riots and looting that swept Argentina last year.

Buenos Aires Gov. Felipe Sola said he ordered police to tighten security during the protest to prevent demonstrators from lingering at grocery stores. Four years of painful economic recession, 22 percent unemployment and a collapse in social aid have led to widespread problems in Argentina, once considered South America's most prosperous nation. Now half of the country's 37 million people live below the poverty line. Each week piqueteros blockade main highways into Buenos Aires in protest at lack of work.