

Info ★ Usurpa

::: Weekly information bulletin of events in radical spaces in Winnipeg

#78 - week of August 29th to September 4th, 2007 :::

	wednesday.29	thursday.30	friday.31	saturday.1	sunday.2	monday.3	tuesday.4
EMMA GOLDMAN GRASSRTS CTR 91 Albert, 2 nd floor		2-6pm <u>Junto library</u> open				7pm Anarchist Environmentalisms Free School Class	
MONDRAGON 91 Albert Street Main floor		7pm? <u>Magnificent Sevens</u> , Rae Spoon, <u>Goodbye to Scott</u>					7pm <u>Copwatch Mtg</u> 8pm <u>New Usurpa</u> bulletin available
THE BIKE DUMP 631 Main st., access on south side of bldg	6pm <u>Volunteer Night</u>	5-9pm <u>Open Hours</u> Get help fixing your bike or building one			12-5pm <u>Open Hours</u>		
FOOD NOT BOMBS cooks and serves free recuperated food every Thurs. Show up at 4pm at the MERC (430 Langside street) to help out							
CRITICAL MASS Bring your bike to Central Park on Friday at 5pm							
100 MILE DIET KICK-OFF Saturday at the St. Norbert Farmers' Market at noon with a salsa tasting							

::: News :::

Big Brother Democracy: The Security State As Infotainment

by Naomi Klein on commondreams.org -- Recently, as protesters gathered outside the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) summit in Montebello, Quebec, to confront US President George W. Bush, Mexican President Felipe Calderón and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the Associated Press reported this surreal detail: "Leaders were not able to see the protesters in person, but they could watch the protesters on TV monitors inside the hotel.... Cameramen hired to ensure that demonstrators would be able to pass along their messages to the three leaders sat idly in a tent full of audio and video equipment.... A sign on the outside of the tent said, 'Our cameras are here today providing your right to be seen and heard. Please let us help you get your message out. Thank You.'"

Yes, it's true: Like contestants on a reality TV show, protesters at the SPP were invited to vent into video cameras, their rants to be beamed to protest-trons inside the summit enclave. It was security state as infotainment--*Big Brother* meets, well, *Big Brother*.

The spokesperson for Prime Minister Harper explained that although protesters were herded into empty fields, the video-link meant that their right to political speech was protected. "Under the law, they need to be seen and heard, and they will be."

It is an argument with sweeping implications. If videotaping activists meets the legal requirement that dissenting citizens have the right to be seen and heard, what else might fit the bill? How about all the other security cameras that patrolled the summit--the ones filming demonstrators as they got on and off buses and peacefully walked down the street? What about the cellphone calls that were intercepted, the meetings that were infiltrated, the e-mails that were read? According to the new rules set out in Montebello, all of these actions may soon be recast not as infringements on civil liberties but the opposite: proof of our leaders' commitment to direct, unmediated consultation.

Elections are a crude tool for taking the public temperature--these methods allow constant, exact monitoring of our beliefs. Think of surveillance as the new participatory democracy; of wiretapping as the political equivalent of *Total Request Live*.

Protesters in Montebello complained that while they were locked out, CEOs from about thirty of the largest corporations in North America--from Wal-Mart to Chevron--were part of the official summit. But perhaps they had it backward: The CEOs had only an hour and fifteen minutes of face time with the leaders. The activists were being "seen and heard" around the clock. So perhaps instead of shouting about police state tactics, they should have said, "Thank you for listening." (And reading, and watching, and photographing, and data-mining.)