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Response to ‘Anarchists in the Blind Spot, or the Necessity to Write Our Own Histories’

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Write Our Own Histories’

Retrieved from <https://bccounterinfo.org/2024/11/17/review-of-anarchists-in-the-blind-spot-or-the-necessity-to-get-an-editor/>
This essay is a response to Yintah film review: Anarchists in the blind spot, or the necessity to write our own histories which was posted to BC Counter Info on Nov 9th, 2024.

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‘Anarchists in the Blind Spot’ has the posture of a disappointed lover who didn’t make it into their songwriter ex’s latest LP. None of the songs are about them, so they leave a scathing review.

The anonymous author argues that *Yintah* should have included the history of anarchist participation in the Wet’suwet’en struggle. I agree that the film is incomplete without reference to anarchist action, but ‘Anarchists in the Blind Spot’ makes this commentary without the grace required for thoughtful critique. In ‘Autonomously and With Conviction,’ Tawinikay says she has to guard against settler anarchists “assuming too much” in Indigenous spaces. Far too much is assumed in this piece.

An insulting comparison is used to highlight the absence of anarchists in the film. A scene summary depicting Wet’suwet’en resurgence—harvesting berries on the territory, sharing traditional knowledge with youth—is placed beside a critique of the lack of screen time anarchists receive. This juxtaposition lands poorly, belittling the decolonial power of reconnection with land and culture.

“...there has been hundreds of anarchists who, from far away and traveling onsite, dedicated their hearts and their time and sometimes took immense risk to defend Wet’suwet’en land.” Beneath this grammatically incorrect and long-winded sentence, an underlying complaint whines: So why didn’t we make it into the movie?

Centering Freda Huson and Molly Wickham threatens to create a “cult of personality” according to ‘Anarchists in the Blind Spot.’ “There is a risk that countless people will watch *Yintah* and think that such a large scale moment of rupture rests on the shoulders of a few key figures...” This hollow assertion appears to reveal an ignorance of the fundamentals of storytelling. Focusing on select characters is an indispensable narrative device that allows audiences to build empathy and investment in the struggle. It is not a ploy to shrink the movement to fit inside a two-seater cab.

‘Anarchists in the Blind Spot’ disagrees with *Yintah*’s focus on the Wet’suwet’en’s attempts to secure legal jurisdiction over their territory. Over emphasizing the #landback movement’s work within Canada’s judicial framework does lend legitimacy to the colonial state. However, the author extends this criticism with a racial pejorative. “Relying on the judicial system to recognize indigenous governance also contributes to a new class of indigenous elite deciders (sellouts).” “Sellout” is a violent term in the mouth of outsiders. It suggests a homogeneous racial and political identity that Indigenous people should be loyal to. The implication is that any deviation is a betrayal of the assumed norm. That’s racist.

The author of ‘Anarchists in the Blind Spot’ is concerned that the exclusion of anarchists from *Yintah* will perpetuate confusion among Indigenous community members over the participation of non-Indigenous radicals in anti-pipeline fights. It’s ironic that a write-up advocating “an uncompromising and feral position against the colonial state” would complain that lack of representation in a CBC-sponsored documentary on Netflix could impede alliances in struggle. The more immediate threat to such solidarity

is that the clownish attitudes displayed in this article may be associated with anarchists across the region.

Note: This piece was revised on November 19th, 2024 by the author.