

Occupy and Aboriginals

Cheap Abuse of Traditional Religion¹

It's a well-known theme in history: Governments exploiting the forces of religion to bolster their power and to control their citizens. Western governments have been guilty of it. If anywhere today, one can probably point to Muslim governments as the current experts on using religion to legitimize their power and policies.

But now we find Occupy Vancouver cheaply exploiting Aboriginal religion by having them perform religious ceremonies in order to legitimize their occupation of public land, using the very tricks oppressors have used for centuries. I strongly sympathize with their basic protest, but to legitimize their illegal occupation of a prominent civic institution by exploiting Aboriginal religion is too much. Aboriginal elders ought to be ashamed for allowing themselves to be used this way. They are the representatives of a people struggling hard to move into the very economic mainstream against which Occupiers protest, real estate adventures, billboards and casinos being examples.

¹ Letter to the Editor, *VS*. Submitted 9 Nov/2011. *Every Square Inch*, vol. 4, pp. 32, 121-122.