

Public declaration
in support of the
AUTONOMOUS SOCIAL CENTER



MAY 29TH '09
Gathering at 5:30pm
St. Gabriel's Park
A rock's throw from
Charlevoix metro

Whereas:

- ★ In Montreal and other urban centers, low-income and working class neighbourhoods are becoming increasingly gentrified as they are invaded by profit-hungry developers.
- ★ People are being displaced from their homes and communities – the Plateau has been completely gentrified, it's happening in Little Burgundy, it's happening in St. Henri and now it's happening in Point St. Charles.
- ★ This growing threat of gentrification is but a continuation of a long process of displacement in the South-West, first of the Mohawk people and farmers, then of the workers who lived there and their families.
- ★ Low-income and marginalized communities have historically fought for control over the vision for urban planning and continue to do so.
- ★ Community groups in Quebec have a long tradition of taking things into their own hands and have set up many self-managed projects to meet housing, food, and other needs.
- ★ In Montreal there is an urgent need for accessible cultural and community spaces and infrastructure, especially in low-income areas.
- ★ In the South-West, attempts to create autonomous spaces within the system have had to deal with serious difficulties related to high rents and funding problems and most have been forced to close.
- ★ Those most affected have been deprived of any real decision making power in new developments in Montreal; supposedly public "consultations" have repeatedly been facades for decisions already made behind closed doors.
- ★ The system upon which our society is built is based on exploitation and the enrichment of the few at the expense of the many, and will rarely give us control over our lives and our spaces of its own volition.
- ★ Elsewhere in the world many successful social centers have been set up in reclaimed vacant buildings and have grown to play important roles in their communities, providing accessible self-organized projects and activities, and contributing to social and environmental justice movements and neighbourhood life.

We agree that:

- ★ Our communities must not be sold out to private interests and have to remain under collective control.
- ★ We must take things into our own hands.

Therefore:

- ★ **We support the installation of the Autonomous Social Center in a reclaimed unused building in Point St. Charles that will be a focal point for social and cultural projects such as a concert hall, a café-bar, food servings, workshops, an independent media center, an info-shop, a bike-repair workshop, a cinema, and more!**

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