



Expo leaves no room for "Bad British Columbians".

Photo: Kabir Khan

# EXPO 86:

**T**wo months before Expo 86 is set to open, the glistening silver geodesic dome that serves as the symbol for Expo 86 hovers tall and pristinely, overseeing 70 hectares of undressed modules and empty architectural hybrids that will house exhibits from over 40 nations, more than 30 corporations, the provinces and territories of Canada and two American states. Buffering downtown Vancouver from the fair site, which snakes along False Creek, is a wire fence supported by cement pillars. And on one of these protective pillars, one faction of "Bad British Columbians" has expressed itself in bright green neon: "Expo sucks".

Although most Vancouver citizens, businesspeople and would-be entrepreneurs are as happy and receptive of Expo as the provincial Socred government would like, small but well-organized groups of British Columbians have increasingly grown louder in their opposition to Expo. They believe that Expo 86 will do less to solve the province's economic woes and to heighten the city's world profile than it will increase Socred popularity at the polls in this provincial election year.

Four leading dissidents of the World Fair were gathered at last month's Canadian University Press national conference in Abbotsford, B.C. to counter what they believe is the propaganda surrounding the five-and-a-half month extravaganza.

**E**xpo 86 actually began life in 1979 as a transportation fair to celebrate Vancouver's 100th birthday as a city. Since then, however, the provincial-government initiated project has ballooned from an \$80 million baby to an \$800 million monster — complete with what Expo officials project will be a projected \$400 million deficit maw. The cost, B.C. Premier Bill Bennett still insists, will not be a responsibility of taxpayers, who in fact will benefit from job



Graphic: Hans Beckers



Photo: Kabir Khan

Jim Pattison and other Expo officials promised the fair would not cost the taxpayers; now they're expecting a \$400 million deficit.

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