

*RAINFOREST CRUNCH:*The Politics of Clayoquot Sound<sup>1</sup>

edited by

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Clayoquot Sound is a scenic forested area on the west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, where there have been ongoing protests about clear-cut logging. The protests have attracted widespread international attention, and some of the major environmental organizations have adopted Clayoquot as a poster-child. The territory in question is subject to aboriginal land claims, and it is coveted as much for eco-tourism as it is for forestry. Despite its apparent remoteness, Clayoquot is very much part of the urban reality of the Pacific Northwest. We can observe there the complicated interplay of globalization and community in the ongoing tensions between local and international environmentalism, aboriginal and settler communities, industrial and post-industrial models of local economic development, workerist and feminist conceptions of personal identity, and modernist and post-modernist models of political action. Clayoquot is a site where the structural forces and political practices that characterize emerging forms of power and authority have become particularly visible. To understand what is happening there, we have to go beyond the familiar categories of statist politics. Not only have the struggles at Clayoquot had a dramatic impact on local and regional politics, but they have also brought about important changes in economic policy, provided influential models for environmentalist, feminist, and aboriginal activism, and broken open the neat divisions between types of politics. To many observers, the politics of Clayoquot Sound exemplify all the opportunities and dangers of emergent modes of "progressive" political action.

This book (and the workshop that precedes it) will explore those opportunities and dangers, by focusing on Clayoquot as a microcosm. The specificity of the site will enable us to explore a wide range of difficult theoretical issues, without losing focus. As indicated in the attached Workshop proposal, the editors expect this book to develop organically out of a conversation between a select group of local activists, an equally select group of critical political economists and others interested in environmental issues, and a number of influential and innovative social and political theorists whose concerns transcend the particularities of these struggles. Almost all of the existing literature on environmental and related movements remains thin in its exploration of fundamental principles of political organization, and it is most persuasive when most descriptive. By contrast, this project seeks to go beyond descriptivism -- and, indeed, beyond the familiar frames of environmentalist critique and post-Marxist political economy -- to

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<sup>1</sup> This is a brief of a proposal for an edited book about recent political struggles at Clayoquot Sound. The full proposal -- which is now under consideration by an American university press -- is available on request..