

ICGC COLLOQUIUM SERIES

Indigenous forestry and the nondeferral of the decolonial: lessons from Ada'itsx

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In the spring and summer of 2021, thousands of forest defenders descended upon the unceded territories of the Pacheedaht First Nation on the southwest coast of Vancouver Island to defend a remote watershed known as Ada'itsx from the imminent threat of industrial logging. However, claims that forest defenders were not only standing up for the trees but also in solidarity with the Pacheedaht people were immediately put to the test when the Pacheedaht Nation issued a statement asserting that the protestors were not welcome on their territory and called for the nation to be “left in peace” to “determine our own way forward.” While much attention has been placed on forest defenders’ refusal to leave (a refusal that we explore elsewhere), far less attention has been paid to a development informing the conflict: the rapid growth in Indigenous participation in industrial forestry on the West Coast, including by the Pacheedaht, through state-mediated revenue sharing agreements, joint ventures, and forest tenures. In this talk, I develop a conjunctural analysis of this development to understand the conditions under which many First Nations in British Columbia have embraced forestry as decolonial strategy and consider what such an analysis might offer to a politics of solidarity.

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