

Can't stop the signal

A new history of pirate radio celebrates outlaws of the airwaves

BY KELLI KORDUCKI

While the word “pirate” may carry a few centuries' worth of unfortunate baggage, in the world of radio broadcasting the term has been reinvented as a badge of honour. The radio pirates behind *Islands of Resistance*, a collection of essays that gleefully sing the praises of broadcast rebellion, “have eschewed the fixed maps of entrenched power in favour of a cartography of autonomy.” Arr, indeed.

Driven by motives both political and artistic—and the sheer exhilaration of transgression—radio pirates chart a history of unauthorized broadcasting both in and outside of Canada, tracing the impact of illegal radio signals on the consolidation and mobilization of communities. The book points out that unlike NGO radio models (say, Radio Free Europe), grassroots radio stations “arise from the participatory process of the community itself.” To be a pirate is to be empowered.

Whether describing pirate radio as an integral platform for Oaxacans rarely given a voice in mainstream Mexican media (via the community-run Radio Plantón station) or chronicling the role of short-wave broadcasting in challenging the gender binary at a British Columbia university campus, *Islands of Resistance* makes a convincing argument for the continued relevance of pirate radio as a means for liberating the marginalized and emboldening the radical.

**ISLANDS OF RESISTANCE:
PIRATE RADIO IN CANADA**
edited by **Andrea Langlois,**
Ron Sakolsky,
& **Marian van der Zon**
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