

BALACLAVA!

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When All Else Fails

by Isaac Oommen

TORONTO - An unusual calm settled over Toronto's Yonge street by 6pm on Saturday, June 26. Bits of glass lay strewn through the street as the thus-far-persistent clouds parted to let in some sun.

"I don't know what happened, but they called us out an hour ago," said a muscular security guard in a white uniform outside a Starbucks that was having its windows restored.

Starbucks was not the only shop on Yonge St. that had the unfamiliar presence of security forces in front. A number of outlets that had been targeted had brought out security guards onto the streets as the street's population confronted several "closed" signs. American Apparel had its windows smashed and fecal matter thrown into the building. A number of pornography and strip club establishments also had their windows smashed.

At 1pm on the same day a large number of organizations ranging from unions to non-profits organized a thousands-strong rally at Queen's Park called People First. The march to Queen St. included several anti-capitalist groups, from No One is Illegal to unaffiliated anarchists and Maoists.

"We're working closely with the organizers [of the rally] to facilitate a peaceful protest," was the standard line from a member of the riot police stationed at an early point of the march. But the police had not coordinated with the black bloc and other groups, which after three attempts broke away from the larger protest and ran through downtown Toronto, breaking anything associated with capitalism along the way.

flux photos

Two of the first targets were police cars, which had their windows smashed and doors battered. Shouting out against capitalism, authoritarianism, and fascism, protesters smashed every bank they could find as well as fast food outlets, large fashion stores and telecommunications companies. The police museum was also a target.

At one point during the run through downtown, Sikh restaurant owners came out of their establishment to make sure it did not get smashed. As the restaurateurs raised their fists in solidarity with protesters, members of the black bloc ran around them to smash the windows of a fast-food chain next door. The rampage through downtown Toronto came after weeks of marches, talks and other peaceful actions on the part of thousands of organizers.

Running through several blocks of downtown, hundreds of protesters got to three police cars that were being hastily evacuated at King W. and Bay St. Just a few minutes later one of the cars was totaled and slowly beginning to smoke as flames ruined the upholstery. "We're here in solidarity with those going to the fence," said a pink-clad CUPE marcher. "We're not going to smash anything but we'll help out in any way."

These were refreshing words from a representative from one of the select unions that followed anarchists and other protesters through downtown. Other union activists chose to march in a circle back to the starting point at Queen's Park. After the protest Toronto residents and visitors looked shocked and rather disoriented. People walked on the streets as well as the sidewalk on Yonge, taking pictures of broken glass. Transit had stopped, leaving some waiting at stations or hailing cabs.



G-20 Arrests and Organizing for Freedom: Letter Excerpt

By Harsha Walia

The largest operation of mass arrests in Canadian history will be justified, and is already being justified, by pointing to and focusing in on a few key organizers (or as they call them, 'ring leaders').

The charges and multiple counts that I was specifically facing were extremely serious and fabricated. Throughout my detention it became evident that it was largely an exercise in intimidation and political targeting. I was consistently taunted by police officers saying "We have been waiting for you Walia", "Oh you got her, I was looking forward to getting her", "We've finally got the one from B.C." etc. While I was being processed, one court officer suggested to me that "they have f*ck all on you but they are out for your blood." Even after I was ordered released, several police officers were insistent on laying further charges.

Many long-time community organizers, including several people of colour, from Ontario and Quebec continue to face ongoing incarceration on similarly serious charges, with little chance of bail for possibly another few weeks. These clearly politically-motivated arrests, with flimsy evidence, are intended to criminalize and silence particular activists who are committed, effective, and unapologetic in their daily defiance of state and corporate exploitation. The particularly serious nature of the charges is intended to demonize and isolate them by characterizing them as 'dangerous' within their diverse communities.

Our response should be clear: that we do not allow the courts, the police, or the media to divide us into those who were unjustifiably arrested versus those who were justifiably arrested. All those who were arrested should be released immediately, and our support efforts need to focus on those facing these serious charges - with serious consequences for their deprivation of liberty - and developing strong public support to ensure their release.

The conditions of detention are already widely known: steel cage cells with up to 30 people per cell, sleeping on concrete floors with open bathrooms, denial of food and water, illegal

confiscation of medications, sexual harassment, severe threats and intimidation, being refused access to legal counsel or phones, denying access to bail hearings in a timely manner, property theft, constant exposure to bright lights, and extreme exposure to cold. I went through multiple searches which I did not consent to including a strip search and more.

While I think it is important to highlight the inhumanity and violence of our detentions, it is critical to remember that humiliation and dehumanization is the purpose of the prison-industrial complex. I was personally not expecting a better 'experience' than the horrific one I did

have given the inherent nature of the police state. For those 'innocent bystanders' (who were explicit about not being protestors), this is an opportunity to be made aware that the horrors they experienced at the hands of the police or while in detention are not unique moments in Toronto or Canadian history. We run the risk of exceptionalizing this moment, at the expense of normalizing the daily violence of police and prisons and the criminal (in)justice system for Indigenous communities, people of colour, low income neighborhoods, street-involved youth, and trans people.

In moments of movement repression, it is understandably difficult to develop pro-active and long-term strategies for winning. I believe our organizing to free all G20 arrestees needs to be rooted within the social movements that many of the arrestees are part of: labour, anti war, migrant justice, Indigenous self determination, anti-oppression, environmental justice, and anti capitalist. While this lends itself to the all the challenges of sustained community organizing, it has the potential of building a powerful revolutionary grassroots movement that incorporates the reality of social movement repression and criminalization of dissent within a broader analysis and experience of colonization, poverty, marginalization, and daily police violence.



FREEXERO.COM GRAFFIX

Vancouver Demo in Solidarity with T0 Resistance

by Oshipeya

VANCOUVER - On June 26, about 75 people attended an anti-G20/G8 demonstration in Vancouver, taking the streets in opposition to the extremes of global corporate and government control, and in the case of most demonstrators, the entire capitalist system. The three-hour-long march went along Commercial Drive, Hastings Street and to the Clark Drive overpass leading to the Port of Vancouver along the city's main trucking route, and then back again.

It was also an explicit show of solidarity with the G20/G8 protests in Toronto, including the rioters there, as the small crowd in Vancouver loudly cheered upon hearing of the rebellion on the streets of Canada's financial capital.

The Vancouver march circled back on itself after trying to cross the Port of Vancouver overpass at Clark Drive because a line of crowd-control police blocked the way. A banner against the tar sands was hung across the overpass for a while as speeches were made.

The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) deployed several vans full of riot police along with cops on bikes and on foot who followed alongside, behind, and in front of the march. A police helicopter also hovered overhead throughout.

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EVENTS!

Sunday July 4 2010, 2:00pm
Demo in Solidarity with the Toronto 900! China Creek Park South - West of Clark on Broadway

Friday July 9 2010, 7:00pm
Alt Media: Fundraiser and Report Back from G8/G20 Summit, Rhizome Café, 317 E Broadway. Cost: \$10 includes a copy of Upping the Anti Issue 10. No one turned away for lack of funds.

Saturday July 24 2010, Noon
The People's March v. Jason Kenney! Central Park. Outside Patterson Skytrain Station, Burnaby.



Free the Toronto 900!

For more info, and to support our comrades facing charges from anti-G20 mobilizations check out the

Movement Defence Committee!
movementdefence.org

Freedom for all Political Prisoners!