

Jail solidarity action attacked by Toronto police



BY STEFAN CHRISTOFF

TORONTO—A prisoner solidarity protest in downtown Toronto Sunday faced an unprompted attack by police forces.

Over 100 people gathered at Jimmie Simpson Park in east Toronto at 10am this morning, moving onto the streets for a high energy protest to support over 500 social justice activists arrested in the past 24 hours, during protests against the Toronto G20 summit.

As they approached the G20 protest jail on Eastern Ave., people began clap-

ping in unison and chanting “Free our Prisoners!” outside the jail gate flanked by armed police.

The protest mood was spirited; one person played rhythms on a guitar while people chanted along to the music.

Organizers from Toronto Community Mobilization Network appealed to people at the intersection to stay calm, leading solidarity chants for the hundreds of jailed activists on the street. Quickly and without warning police lines moved in on the protest. Both heavily armed riot police and undercover agents charged at the people

gathered, trampling over some protesters who sat on the road chanting. Police swung batons randomly into the crowd and pushed the solidarity gathering away from the warehouse jail.

Police also rushed into the crowd, violently tackling people to the ground, including an accredited member of the G20 Alternative Media Centre. Faces hit the hard pavement as police in full riot gear randomly arrested rally participants.

After numerous arrests the police charged the protest, pushing it to the north. Demonstrators moved away

from the police line, some running. As people ran north, gunshot sounds rang out, white smoke filled the air and riot police ran towards the protest swinging batons.

As G20 leaders meet behind the multi-layered security perimeter that has turned downtown Toronto into a fortress, the shocking security budget, now totalling well over \$1 billion, illustrates the chilling face of a systematic affront on public dissent. This is happening in Toronto as world leaders speak rhetorically about global cooperation.

PHOTOS BY ACTIVESTILLS

Civilian discontent

BY GWALGEN GEORDIE DENT

TORONTO—Toronto Community Mobilization Network (TCMN) headquarters were locked down by police today when over 50 police officers and six vehicles blocked all building and street entrances and arrested several members for breach of the peace.

According to a TCMN member who was called during during the lockdown, police had rounded up a number of people congregating outside of the space and detained them for three hours, threatening them repeatedly with extreme violence and arrest. The protesters were shuttled to the sidewalk and then asked for their ID and questioned. A number of the protesters were let go while a number were arrested and removed.

Earlier on in the day, 4 police managed to enter the TCMN headquarters asking for information on their lease. The Alternative Media Centre was also investigated by police today and asked about their lease.

During the police lockdown, a large crowd formed on Queen St. near the police line. The crowd, made up mostly

of residents from Parkdale, the tight-knit community in which the TCMN is located, demanded the police stop the lockdown.

Tim, a Parkdale resident, said that the police had lowered his feeling of security. “I feel a lot less safe. I live in this neighbourhood. I live down the street and I feel safe walking these streets everyday, but I do not feel safe walking these streets right now. Because [the police] don’t care whether I’ve done anything wrong or not. All they care about is whether I say something they disagree with and if so, they will haul my ass in jail.”

Earlier at 4pm, a mass of protesters, estimated at between 200-1000 people, had converged and began marching towards the TCMN headquarters to show support for the Network. The march, which began as a vigil and was joined by a bike protest, became boxed in at Queen St. and Spadina Ave.

According to an observer who e-mailed the Alternative Media Centre, “The group was completely surrounded and were slowly arrested. It started raining at 7:00pm. At this point people inside the

intersection appeared to be arrested and held on the street. The arrestees were not removed from the rain and loaded into vans until 8:00pm.”

According to a AMC journalist embedded in the protest, several bystanders who had accidentally got caught up in the march had medical issues but were only released after hours then being left to fend for themselves. One man had kidney issues and was hypothermic while another had type II diabetes. At the same time, police sat in transit buses that were hurriedly brought in to keep them dry.

Meanwhile back at the TCMN headquarters, MPP Cheri Di Novo stated “This is outrageous. I would like to know what provoked a raid on such a place, when its supposed to be a safe place for out of town, or even in town demonstrators. The police are not given this job to do out of their own consciousness. They are given orders, they are acting under orders. To me it’s the people who give the orders, and it’s the political leadership that needs to be held accountable.”

PHOTOS BY SEAN DECORY (TOP) AND GARSON HUNTER (BOTTOM)



TCMN member, later arrested



This man required medical attention for the duration of his detention

Courtroom harassment by police puts fair hearings in question

BY BLANDINE JUCHS AND EMILIE BRETON; TRANSLATED BY TIM MCSORLEY

On Sunday, G8 leaders released communiques, the city of Toronto police applauded themselves for the job well done, and the mainstream media continued their sensationalism. But families and friends of those arrested over the past days were in courtrooms. Protests against the G20 had, by Sunday night, ended with over 600 arrests.

By 10 am Sunday, several members of the legal defence committee were already at Finch Street courthouse to meet the friends and families of the hundreds set to appear before a judge that morning, although hearings would only start around 2pm. But few supporters were out since there was little way of know that their loved ones would be in court. Constructed specially to try street gang cases, visitors were subjected to two searches and needed to pass through two metal detectors to enter the courtroom.

“Who knows the parents of Steven X?” could be heard from one side. “Five thousand dollars for the guy without an address,” from the other. Bail amounts were generally around \$1,000.

Police presence outside the courthouse was heavy; by 3pm, people in the parking lot were being stopped and asked

for ID. According to witnesses, two women were followed by a police car as they arrived in the parking lot. After having received tickets totalling over \$1000 for vehicle infractions from one police car, another police officer came to threaten to give them another set of tickets for the same infractions if they did not leave the area. The police systematically took down the licence plate numbers of all cars.

Around 3:30pm, the court parking lot was invaded by dozens of police officers wearing helmets and blocking the entrance to the parking lot.

There were reports of a few arrests, intimidation, harassment and demands for ID. Several people were kept from entering the courthouse, discouraged from advancing by a police barrier blocking the building. A few people arriving to deliver bail needed to wait on the periphery, worried they would be arrested if they step on the premises.

Court hearings are part of our rights guaranteed by the justice system. For those present, though, it was shameful that lawyers would agree to continue the trials under conditions where law enforcement and fair hearings were no longer separate.

Today's Events: Monday, June 28

17:30
Jail Solidarity Rally
Toronto Police Headquarters
40 College St.

Support, counselling and resources are available for those who have experienced trauma, sexual abuse and police violence this week.

Please contact
peertopeersupportforactivists@gmail.com

Agents Provocateurs in Toronto?

BY DRU OJA JAY

TORONTO—The conspicuous presence of abandoned police cars in the midst of a well-publicized demonstration route on Saturday has stoked speculation about whether police invited the burning of vehicles. It has also revived speculation about the use of agents provocateurs, or undercover police who are planted in order to incite violence. There is no conclusive evidence to substantiate

such speculations, but past instances are well-documented.

The Toronto Police Association called for the resignation of Ontario Federation of Labour President Sid Ryan after he voiced concerns that police would plant undercover officers to incite violence, calling his comments “idiotic, irresponsible and inflammatory.” Similar words were used to describe Quebec’s provincial police in 2007, after black-

In Solidarity Scenes from the Eastern Ave. Prison



PHOTOS BY ACTIVESTILLS

blockers exposed two rock-wielding undercover police at protests against the North American Leaders’ Summit in Montebello, Quebec.

During the 2009 G20 summit in Pittsburgh, a crowd of protesters outed three burly men sporting black masks, who refused to interact with other demonstrators and eventually left the group.

Both incidents were caught on video.

The Prime Minister’s Office and top police refused to rule out the use of agents provocateurs in the lead-up to Toronto’s G20 summit.

Independent journalists documented numerous undercover police officers participating in several demonstrations during the last week. Some were caught on camera refusing to deny that they were police, while others were spotted stepping out of police cars.