

THE SPOKE

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THE NEWSPAPER OF THE ANTI-G8/G20 CONVERGENCE,

A PROJECT OF THE TORONTO MEDIA CO-OP



An estimated 20,000 people marched in downtown Toronto today to oppose the G20, the capitalist system, and fight for justice on a wide array of issues. Participating groups included environmental, migrant justice, labour, indigenous, feminist, queer and peace activists, as well as groups opposed to military occupations in Kashmir, Palestine and Tibet, among others. Police abandoned cars in the street, which were smashed and later set on fire. There were widespread reports of police beatings, but no reports of violent acts by demonstrators. A few banks and corporate retail outlets were targeted with graffiti and largely symbolic property destruction. Thousands of riot police blocked streets leading to the G20 security zone. Protesters, led by the black bloc, eventually maneuvered around the reams of police to reach the security fence. Demonstrations stretched on into the evening. Police on horseback charged protesters in Queen's Park, which had been designated as a government-sanctioned protest area. One woman was trampled by police horses, and badly injured. After dark, police hemmed in hundreds of protesters, preventing them from leaving the area while officers escorted media from the scene, and subsequently began violently arresting protesters one by one. Several journalists, including two National Post photographers and at least four member of the Alternative Media Centre, were arrested. As of 5am, the number of arrests was at least 300.—DOJ PHOTO: ACTIVESTILLS

Free market stealth economics at G20

BY STEFAN CHRISTOFF

Behind razor sharp security walls and thousands of armed police, Canada's Conservative government is utilising the G20 summit as a political platform to push forward bilateral trade agreements globally, according to recent statements from the Canadian government.

"Our government's aggressive free trade agenda ... will be [delivered] to our existing and future trade partners at the upcoming G-20 meeting," outlined Canada's Minister for International Trade in a recent speech leading-up to the Toronto summit.

Canada has been particularly vocal on pushing bilateral trade at the G20: "Canada and many other governments are committed to more aggressively pursuing bilateral and regional trade deals as a way of kick-starting the process, while we see the Doha talks remaining stalled," outlined Stephen Harper at a news conference in Toronto, referring to the 2003 WTO negotiations in Cancun, Mexico, which broke down amid

mass protest and unrest, and have not been reopened. Since then, the world's powerful economies have pushed towards bilateral and regional agreements.

"At first bilateral trade agreements were seen as a fall-back option, as western governments were attempting to pass through these stealth agreements, which included elements that weren't possible to secure through institutions WTO," explained Aziz Choudry of bilaterals.org. "After the collapse of the [2003] Cancun WTO talks bilateral trade accords are being pursued as the tool of choice by both governments and corporation; Today there are many weapons of corporate capital which will be utilized at different times and in different variations depending on the moment, with the simple goal of guaranteeing corporations the most power and control."

Canada is currently perusing bilateral deals with multiple countries throughout the global south and has recently signed accords with Peru, Jordan, Panama and the European

Free Trade Association: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Canada's recent bilateral accord with Colombia was on full display during the G8 summit, as out-going right-wing Colombian president Alvaro Uribe was a featured guest. Colombia has a dismal human rights record, including extra-judicial assassinations targeting labour activists and journalists. U.S. Congress has stalled ratifying a similar bilateral accord with Colombia due to opposition from Democratic politicians concerned about its record of human rights abuses.

Inherent in the politics involved in bilateral and regional trade deals is often a deeper imbalance in power between national negotiating partners. In the multilateral negotiation process at the WTO, demands fronted by southern countries – particularly Brazil and India – derailed the negotiation process, whereas bilateral accords often see small southern nations negotiating trade terms with the world's most powerful economic giants.

Deaf demonstrator released on bail

BY TIM MCSORLEY

Yesterday's Spoke reported the case of a deaf mute man who was aggressively arrested and held without access to an independent American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter on Friday. Instead, he was given access to speak to his lawyer through a police interpreter – a situation denounced by many who argue it violated his basic right of access to a lawyer without police presence.

Emomotimi Azorbo was released on bail Saturday afternoon, under charges of assaulting a police officer and resisting arrest.

Supporters have described the charges as bogus, saying the man passed police without heeding their calls to stop because he could not hear them and could not read their lips.

Letters of support for Azorbo and his right to access an independent interpreter have come in from around the world, including London, England; Washington, DC; South Africa; Gallaudet University (an American university of the deaf); and the CEO and staff of the Canadian Hearing Society. His next court hearing is scheduled for August 23.



PHOTO: ACTIVESTILLS

Organizers' Homes Raided

BY TIM GROVES

TORONTO—Three houses where G20 protesters have been staying were raided by police early Saturday morning. Six or more arrest warrants were issued and at least four of the people named in the warrants were arrested and charged with conspiracy.

Police arrived at one of the houses, where 15 activists were staying at approximately 4:45am.

“They were kicking people out of bed, kicking people awake,” said Niki Thorne a resident of the house. “They did not have a warrant, we asked for a warrant.”

Even when a warrant was eventually shown, it was taken away before it could be read, Thorne said.

Police had papers with the names and faces of activists on them. They arrested one man staying at the house.

The upstairs neighbours of the activists were also visited by police.

“I was awoken to four police officers in my bedroom ... the officer in charge ... was pointing a handgun at me and asked me my name and who else was in the house,” wrote John Booth in a complaint to the police. “They repeatedly said they had a search warrant and arrest warrant for me. At no point did they produce this warrant to prove my name was on it and I



One of the houses raided.

suspect they were lying.”

“They woke up my wife and child upstairs while searching our apartment. They repeatedly asked me my connection to the people living in the downstairs apartment and I explained we are simply tenants living in the same building,” he said. “After searching the entire premises, they decided it was appropriate to handcuff

me and charge me with ‘conspiracy to commit mischief’.”

30 minutes later, the police apologized to Booth and released him.

Another house had its door kicked in and a warrant left on the table. The three activists staying in the house were arrested.

Today's Events: Sunday, June 27

6am: Getting Down to Business - Autonomous Direct Action! Everywhere.

10am: Jail Solidarity rally. Toronto Film Studios jail, Pape and Eastern.

1pm: Bike Bloc. Bloor and Spadina.

2pm: Nonviolent Prayer Vigil. St James Park, King and Jarvis.

3:33pm: Make Believe Tea Party. Anywhere, including 299 Queen St. West.

5pm: Fire Works For Prisons. Bruce Mackey Park, Dundas and Wardell.

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Tent City Takes Back Allan Gardens

BY SHAILAGH KEANEY

TORONTO—As the rain spat down on Allan Gardens early Saturday morning, Tent City still stood strong amidst sleepy-eyed urban campers and distant gangs of bike cops. Sarah Reaburn, a Toronto Street Medic, explained that poor people, homeless people, and people without citizenship status face particular barriers when accessing health cards. “Even a clinic

wall can be a fence to those without I.D. or Medicare,” Reaburn told The Spoke.

Reaburn described the purpose of street medics at the tent city as twofold. “Basic first aid is important to any tent city because it highlights the need for adequate health care, while providing access to health care services.”

“But basic first aid is only a drop in the bucket in terms of what we need,” she added. Shaun Hodgson from the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty explained his reasons for participating in the Tent City. “I’m here to make a statement that the homeless get pushed out for any major event like the G20. Police have been telling people for months that the G20 is coming, and that they better consider going elsewhere. [Tent City] highlights how Canada lacks a national strategy for affordable housing. It is one of the only nations in the west that does not have one.”

Tent City was dismantled later on Saturday.



The tent city at Allan Gardens. PHOTO: MAYA ROLBIN-GHANIE

Jail Solidarity starts at 10am



Jimmie Simpson Park
870 Queen St East

Cops in front of Much Music Activestills