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“MARTIAL LAW IN THE STREETS OF TORONTO”:

G20 SECURITY AND STATE VIOLENCE

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Abstract

This paper examines the events, microgeography and broader context of the effective siege of downtown Toronto by Canadian security forces during the June 2010 meeting of the G20, and the unprecedented assault on peaceful protestors and innocent bystanders alike. An extraordinary clampdown of Toronto streets was organized by integrated security forces at the international, federal, provincial and local scales, leading to the arrest and jailing of a larger number of people (overwhelmingly released without charges) than in any other event in Canadian history. Whereas popular consternation emerged immediately against police brutality with many commentators aghast that this could happen in “Toronto the good,” suggesting that this represented an exceptional event, this paper argues that to a significant degree the crisis in the streets was precipitated by the security forces themselves, an argument buttressed by the refusal of the Canadian government to investigate the events. The paper connects the G20 to the larger issues of global political economic power and urban securitization, and puts the Toronto G20 police riot against protestors, if that is what it was, in the context of state power and the state’s claimed monopoly over violence. Far from an exceptional event, this repressive assault expressed the DNA of capitalist state behavior and the selectivity of its targeted social violence.

Key Words: Toronto G20, violence, police brutality, urban security, urban protest.

“LEY MARCIAL EN LAS CALLES DE TORONTO”: LA SEGURIDAD EN LA CUMBRE DEL G20 Y LA VIOLENCIA ESTATAL

Resumen

Este artículo estudia los eventos, la microgeografía y el contexto más amplio de sitio del centro urbano de Toronto por parte de las fuerzas de seguridad canadienses durante la Cumbre del G20 en junio de 2010, y la inédita agresión tanto a manifestantes pacíficos como a lxs transehúntes inocentes que presenciaban los hechos. Fuerzas de seguridad internacionales, federales, provinciales y locales trabajaron en forma integrada y organizaron un impresionante cepto (*clampdown*) en las calles de Toronto, llevando a la detención y prisión de una mayor cantidad de personas (la enorme mayoría dejadas en libertad sin cargos) que en cualquier otro evento en la historia de Canadá. Una consternación popular contra la brutalidad policial emergió inmediatamente, incluyendo a muchos analistas aterrados de que ello pudiera ocurrir en “Toronto la Buena”, sugiriendo que los hechos representaban un hecho

excepcional. Sin embargo, en este artículo se argumenta que la crisis en las calles fue en buena medida provocada por las mismas fuerzas de seguridad, un argumento alimentado por la negación del gobierno canadiense a investigar lo ocurrido. Además, en este artículo se vincula al G20 con los grandes temas de poder económico y político mundial y de seguridad urbana, y se analiza el accionar de la policía antimotines de la Cumbre contra los manifestantes (si es que fue así) en el contexto del poder del estado y del pregonado monopolio de la violencia estatal. Lejos de ser un suceso excepcional, esta agresión represiva puso en evidencia el ADN del comportamiento del estado capitalista y la selectividad de su violencia social.

Palabras clave: Cumbre del G20 en Toronto, violencia, brutalidad policial, seguridad urbana, protesta urbana

I

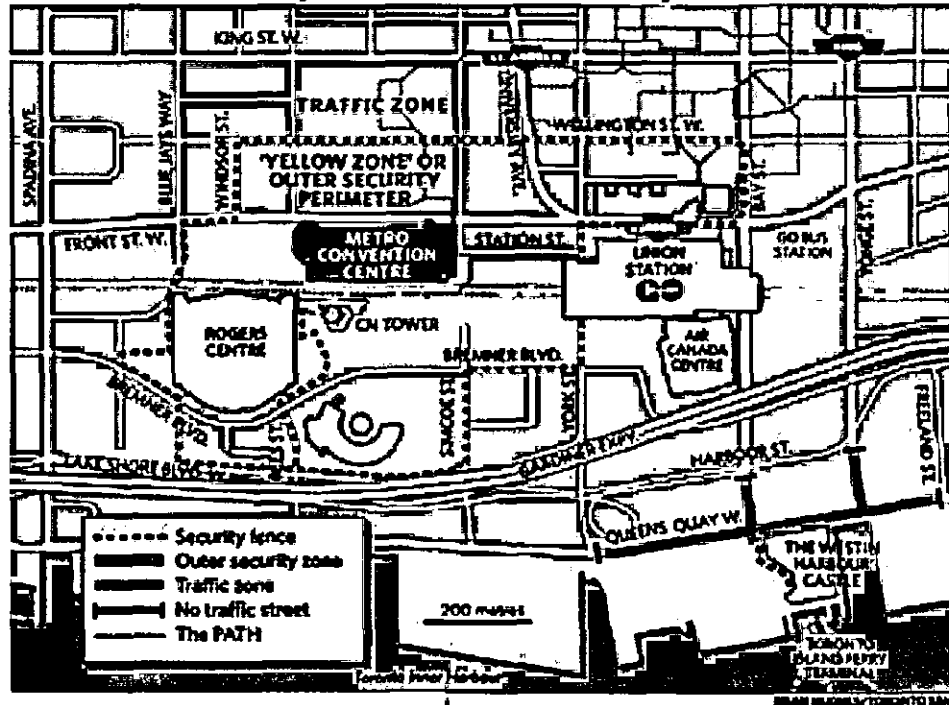
The first sign that something was amiss came quickly, on Toronto's University Avenue, as more than 15,000 demonstrators against the G20 left the Queens Park staging area and chanted their way south, turning westward along Queen Street. An empty police cruiser sat askew at an intersection, its windows down, keys in the ignition and a pair of sunglasses atop an otherwise bare dashboard. Odd. Marchers pondered its presence and purpose and why it was so exposed amidst a demo long hyped by police and politicians alike as sure to have a sinister outcome. A few curious protestors photographed the car on cell phones as they walked by. Led by dozens of labour unions including CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees), Communications, Energy and Paper Workers Union (CEP), Ontario Nurses Association (ONA), Canadian Automobile Workers (CAW), Telecom Workers Union (TWU), and supported by various provincial and national labour federations, among them the Canadian Labour Congress and the Ontario Federation of Labour, the demonstration on June 26th 2010 marched to the theme "People First" and it was loud and militant. Marchers protested the oppressive and exploitative neoliberal policies the G20 stands for; the destruction of work conditions

and wages that come in the wake of neoliberal capitalism; the racist and class discriminatory policies this mode of production promotes; global poverty and starvation; gender and sexual oppression; the rapacious and persistent theft of land and resources from indigenous people, not least the longstanding grievances of Canadian First Nations people; wholesale environmental destruction when nature gets in the way of profit; the acidic corrosion of already meager social support for means of reproduction (health care, housing, education, etc); the outrageous cost of the G20 to Canadian taxpayers; and it featured an array of other groups ranging from "Free Tibet" to 9/11 conspiracy theorists. While the Saturday march was a labour-focused event, a wider series of protests in the lead up was coordinated by the Toronto Community Mobilization Network (TCMN).

To protect the delegates from the people they putatively represented, the security forces wrapped the G20's ground zero, the Convention Center and its surrounds, with 6.5 km of fencing, 3m high. They denied all public access, designating this no-go area the "yellow zone" (think Baghdad but yellow instead of green), and effectively militarized almost 2 sq. km of downtown Toronto. The Province passed a "Kafkaesque" law without public knowledge, set to expire before it was announced, that allowed police to arrest and jail anyone refusing to produce identification or be searched in the security zone. Amidst the secrecy and confusion, police took it upon themselves to extend that authority beyond the fence, invoking the so-called '5 metre law'.¹ As marchers carried banners and placards along Queen Street, which lies almost 400m north of the yellow zone, they were blocked to the south by three layers of police, the first in uniform, the second behind them in riot gear, and a third behind that on horseback, truncheons at the ready. "This is what a police state looks like," went up the deafening protest; "this is what democracy looks

1. Activists termed this the '5 metre backtrack' after Police Chief Bill Blair eventually announced that the law never actually extended police authority beyond the security fence. The one man charged under the '5 metre law' found that his charges had mysteriously vanished - "lost in the mail" -- when he appeared for his court date.

A world of security in the heart of the city



Source: Toronto Star, 29 June 2010

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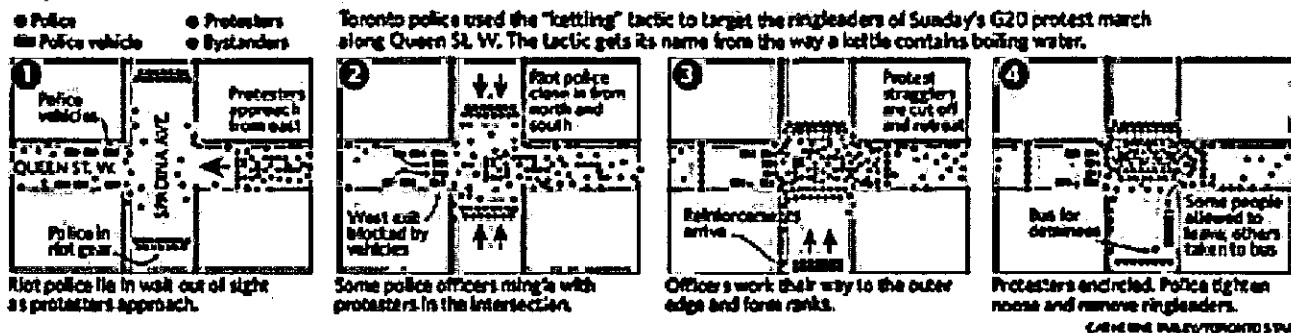
like," they yelled looking back toward protesters on the street. At the corner of Queen and Spadina (a wider divided boulevard beyond direct access to the yellow zone), marchers pushed south but were soon blocked by the triple layer of riot police. Turning back, several hundred protesters retraced their steps along Queen Street and turned south. It was now obvious that not just one but several police cars had been left along the march route, looking very much like bait, and it was here that the first of four police cruisers was trashed and set on fire that afternoon, sending plumes of smoke into the air. At the same time, several stores, mostly multinational corporations such as Starbucks and the Gap, as well as banks, had windows and facades vandalized by a group of protesters.

Heavily armed riot police, gas masks in place, did nothing to protect their cars or pursue those who had damaged the cruisers; rather as widely documented in the media they stood idly by 100m away and watched. Nor did they make any serious attempt to prevent property damage. Instead they lined up

and began advancing, in timed waves, against the peaceful protest, pushing people with no connection to the attack on the cars, back to Spadina Avenue. They unleashed tear gas and rubber bullets at point blank range on peaceful demonstrators, picked out people for apparently arbitrary mass arrest, swung billy clubs at people's heads causing bloody injuries, captured in the mainstream press, and otherwise assaulted them, often viciously. (The next day the *Toronto Star* newspaper printed a photograph of a cop, his name tag illegally removed, wielding a baton and kicking two retreating protesters in the back; another photo showed a demonstrator with blood streaming from his head) As protesters dispersed ahead of the police violence, many aiming

to regroup at Queens Park where an outdoor rally followed by a concert was planned, the attacks fanned northward. The cops effectively played cat and mouse with the protesters, pushing them as much as 3km north of the yellow zone (Bloor Street), while other protesters asserted their rights to be on public streets and continually outflanked the police. Worse was yet to come.

One of the protesters sitting with his daughter near Queens Park that evening was 57-year old John Pruyn. Queens Park had been designated a "free speech zone," a telling euphemism that presumably concedes a lack of free speech everywhere else, but literature sales had already been banned in this free speech zone and riot police now cordoned off the park. As protesters returned northward they were squeezed by waves of riot police pushing them toward the park cordon. Approached by police barking "Move!" John Pruyn struggled to his feet but fell back. A federal government employee from Thorold Ontario, 120 km



Source: Toronto Star June 23 2010

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from Toronto, Pruyn had lost a limb in a farming accident. "Give him time. He's an amputee," shouted his daughter, as police piled in on him. They hauled his walking sticks away, tied his hands behind his back, ripped off his prosthetic leg, then taunted him "to get up and hop." Unable to do so, he was dragged across the pavement as police accused him of resisting arrest and labeled his confiscated leg a "weapon".²

Riot police and plain-clothed police arrested dozens of similarly peaceful protestors at the park. Pruyn (and his daughter) spent 27 hours in jail – a makeshift steel-mesh cage – where the generally younger detainees were equally incredulous about why they had been arrested, were denied water or access to lawyers or phone calls. One of Pruyn's cellmates, who was paralyzed on one side, was strapped to a wheelchair and repeated pleas to be taken to the toilet were ignored until he eventually wet his pants. This entire account appeared not in the energetic alternative press which documented many of the hundreds of parallel stories that emerged in the aftermath, but in Pruyn's hometown newspaper in Ontario's farming country, and was picked up by the right-wing *National Post* as well as *McLean's* magazine (the *Time* magazine of Canada).³

2. Wallace, Kenyon "G20 police 'yanked' off prosthetic leg: amputee" *National Post* July 7 2010. Available online <http://www.nationalpost.com/police+yanked+prosthetic+amputee/3244056/story.html>

3. See: <http://niagaraatlarge.com/2010/07/05/thorold-ontario-amputee-has-his-artificial-leg-ripped-off-by-police-and-is-slammed-in-makeshift-cell-during-g20-summit--at-least-one-ontario-mpp-calls-the-whole-episode--shocking>

Various altercations continued after dark. Workers at the Novotel Hotel, adjacent to the yellow zone and home to some G20 delegates, had gone on strike days earlier over work conditions and wages, and it became the scene of another unprovoked attack. Some protestors went to the picket line to support the workers and although the event was entirely peaceful, police waded into the crowd swinging their truncheons and hitting picketers, then carrying out mass arrests. Among the arrested was a journalist for Britain's *Guardian* newspaper who, despite exhibiting his press credentials, was punched, given a black eye, and kned to the ground before being thrown into a police van and detained for more than a day.⁴ That evening, riot police invaded the University of Toronto's Graduate Student Union and hauled away 75 people, most of whom were billeting from out of town, there to register their disapproval of the G20. Other night-time raids without warrant saw Toronto residents wake to find police guns pointed at their faces; among those arrested – the TCMN childcare organizer.

The second day of protests brought different tactics; "kettling" came to Canada. Several thousand protestors gathered in the late afternoon for a demonstration originally billed as a day of direct action. The peaceful march moved north away from the yellow zone and as new protestors filtered in, they were pushed by police toward Queen Street and Spadina where ranks of riot police, out of site, blocked egress on two sides. As new infusions of riot police spilled

4. <http://toronto.mediacoop.ca/story/guardian-journalist-assaulted-arrested/3865>

from vans, escape forward was blocked by police vehicles while riot police closed in from behind, sealing the fourth and final exit. In a cold torrential rain, the police began grabbing selected individuals, like fish in a barrel, and then systematically arrested almost all of the several hundred peaceful demonstrators they had trapped in the kettle. As with the day before, mass illegal searches were the norm. It took 2 hours before the last shivering demonstrator was handcuffed, searched and processed then driven in waiting municipal buses to a makeshift jail.

Again, all of this was recorded in the establishment press. Unluckily for police authorities, several reporters were included in the indiscriminate arrests, and it is difficult not to be affected by their testimony. Here for example is Joe Warmington, whose account appeared in the right wing *Toronto Sun*: "It is not every day that one is witness to martial law on the streets of Toronto," he began. Stunned by the injustice and insanity of this assault, and the abrogation of rights, he likened the kettle to "a virtual street jail." Some cops, he observed thought the whole thing "was pretty funny" and "wanted a fight." Indeed he recounts the malice felt by one riot cop: "I just wish I could have pummelled the little bastards the day before ... it would have been great to wring their skinny little necks." "The entire scene," Warmington commented, "bordered on sadistic."⁵

Nor did the police assaults and arrests end there. Much as detained protestors at the Republican National Convention in New York in 2004 were squirreled away for days in a dirty old bus depot, anti-G20 protestors and bystanders in Toronto were jailed in a temporary "detention center" (a disused film studio). Several hundred protestors converged on the facility on Saturday night demanding the release of those detained, and the police soon resorted again to tear gas and rubber bullets. Indignant protestors were kettled and arrested, often violently, and charged mostly with the vague, catch-all charge of breaching

the peace. Another demonstration on Sunday night produced a similar result.

In all, more than 1100 people were arrested and detained in the Toronto G20 protests of 2010. This represented by far the largest mass arrest at any single event in Canadian history, more even than in the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, and in the aftermath personal stories documenting widespread police brutality filtered out appearing not just in the city's newspapers but globally. The who's who of arrestees would be laughable were it not so tragic and abusive and their treatment so violent. Apart from numerous reporters (and one TV producer), many peaceful protestors and innocent bystanders – wrong place, wrong time – were indiscriminately detained and arrested: a woman walking her dog, a municipal transit worker going on shift, a teacher trainee at a prayer vigil, a scared 17-year old high school student, activists pre-emptively picked up far from the events and driven around for hours, a mayoral candidate, a jogger, a deaf kitchen worker who did not respond to barked commands to move, several lawyers, a handful of doctors and nurses attending to victims of police violence (including one whose emergency medical kit brought him the trumped up charge of trafficking heroin). And so on. One incarcerated reporter asked a young man in the same jail cage what his beef was against the G20. "What's the G20?" he responded. There were other surreal moments. One constable, part of a police line ranked against the protestors, was videotaped threatening a young woman blowing bubbles that if one of the bubbles touched him he would arrest her for assault. "Officer Bubbles," as web and paper media dubbed him, not only faced instant ridicule but quickly came to symbolize the insanity of security force tactics.

Elsewhere it was far more serious. By Monday June 28th, protestors and the press were referring to the detention center as "Torontanamo Bay." Inside, the conditions were deplorable: 40 people to each steel cage cell, only the concrete floor to sleep on, limited or no access to food or water, no phone calls or lawyers, and limited or no access to medical care; toilets were doorless, open to view, and lacked toilet

5. Joe Warmington, "T.O. has never seen the like," *Toronto Sun* June 28 2010, p. 8. See also: Jayme Poisson, "Tactic controversial everywhere it was used," *Toronto Star* June 29 2010, p. GT1.

paper. The jailed also related episodes of sexual harassment, physical threats, humiliation, and intimidation. Relating their own story to a colleague, three journalists reported that two of them "were threatened with rape and the third was tasered even after he indicated he had a pacemaker." In later video testimony, one of the journalists reported: "I was told that they were going to make sure that I was never going to want to act as a journalist again by making sure that I would be repeatedly raped while I'm in jail."⁶

The independent group of volunteer health care workers, "Toronto Street Medics," which treated the injured, reported that police confiscated some of their medical supplies and prevented them from accessing injured protestors behind police lines. According to their account: "All of the serious injuries we treated were inflicted by the police. While violence against property received a great deal of coverage, violence against people -- broken bones, cracked heads and eyes filled with pepper spray - rarely featured prominently in the mainstream media. "Our teams of medics witnessed and treated people who had been struck in the head by police batons, had lacerations from police shields and had been trampled by police horses."⁷

The figures speak for themselves: of more than 1100 arrested, 827 were released without charges within 72 hours, and 263 were released pending charges. 20 of the original arrestees were held for bail hearings. What was the unspoken police strategy and intent if more than three-quarters of those arrested were released without charges?

II

The G20 is the latest in a long line of ostensibly globe-spanning organizations intended to stabilize and restructure the world capitalist economy. The germ

6. "I will not forget what they have done to me: 20 people arrested tell of 'inhuman' treatment at the hands of police" Toronto Star June 28 2010, available online: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/article/829921--i-will-not-forget-what-they-have-done-to-me>.

7. Andrew Pinto, Malika Sharma, and Michaela Beder, "Medics at G20 protest speak out against police brutality" July 5 2010, available online at: <http://rabble.ca/news/2010/07/medics-g20-protests-speak-out-against-police-brutality-0>.

of the G20 came in response to the economic crisis that unfolded after 1997, widely if opportunistically (and erroneously) referred to as the Asian economic crisis whereas of course it was global in scope. The G7 had been formed in 1975 by the leading industrial economies (4 European, 2 North American, plus Japan). It would coordinate a rearguard response to the most serious economic crisis of the postwar period and, with the global economy now unhooked from the gold standard, to plant the US dollar as the global economy's universal currency, but more positively it would also implant the broad social rule of market logic as the bedrock of a pupating neoliberalism. The G7 morphed into the G8 in 1997 with the addition of post-Soviet Russia, and the G20 effectively superceded its predecessor in 2008 amidst the global capitalist crisis fuelled by the virtual collapse of the US financial system.

Its rationale is twofold. First, the G20 resulted from the perceived need to manage a restructuring of the global economy which in turn had three major elements, extant or desired: (i) the globalization of capital (cross-border labour, commodity and financial movement), however uneven; (ii) the dramatic expansion of the Chinese, Indian, Brazilian, South Korean and other national economies (erstwhile seen as "underdeveloped," now included among the G20); and (iii) the emergence of the European Union and the euro as a major economic force (also included in the G20). With a nod toward diversity of representation and a pragmatic embrace of the short-lived "Washington Consensus," its membership additionally came to include, among others, South Africa, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. The second rationale is related. The swath of Bretton Woods institutions produced in the late 1940s, such as the IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organization (WTO - previously GAATT), although revived in the 1980s as key institutions of a strategic neoliberalism, had more narrowly defined remits and long term agendas and were less adept at an alacritous response to the scale of the global economic crisis. Accordingly, and as befits a conclave that came to maturity amidst the post-2007 crisis, the overarching goal of the G20 is

the negotiated management and regulation of the global financial system. It brings together the leaders of national governments, but increasingly too national finance and treasury ministers, and whereas Bretton Woods institutions had policy making authority the G20 has none, its informality making it more not less powerful. It is free to make coordinated decisions over the global economy while answerable to no global constituency.

In Toronto, not surprisingly, the agenda for the leaders of the G20 was dominated by one issue: how, despite tentative signs of revival, to restore growth in an economy that had melted down to a near repeat of the global depression of the 1920s and 1930s. There were widespread fears that, as happened eight decades earlier, any recovery would be mild and presage a "double dip" in which the second crash was worse than the first. Economist and Nobel Laureate Paul Krugman was far from alone suggesting that a new depression may already be in its early stages.⁸ After all, the various national stimuli packages enacted in 2008 and 2009 -- according to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), such packages topped a total of \$7 trillion -- had now largely run their course, and while the Gross National Product (GDP) measures of many economies had stabilized or even begun to grow again rather than shrink, the danger signs were mounting: official unemployment rates, chronic in much of the world, reached or threatened double digit figures in most of the wealthier economies, standing at almost 20% in Spain, with real unemployment much higher; the global financial system was drowning in debt and many smaller banks continued to go bankrupt even as many of the largest banks, especially on Wall Street, registered multi-billion dollar profits and again doled out record bonuses; state fiscal deficits hit record and unsustainable levels. The central debate among G20 leaders heading into Toronto therefore pitted neoliberal diehards against those stirring a Keynesian sweetener into the neoliberal punch. The former sought to slash fiscal budget deficits largely at the expense of

the poor and working class while cutting taxes for corporations and for the rich. The latter, chastened however mildly by the failures of neoliberalism (to wit, the global economic crisis), sought to nurse it back to health with new round of state economic stimuli. Taking the first path, most European elites (especially Britain) positioned themselves as the avatars of a neoliberalism on steroids while the US government, itself having already instituted various budget cutting measures, pushed the stimulus path.

This of course was a debate largely within the capitalist class more than between countries, and the interests of capital were very much to the fore. For protesters in Toronto and for a wider global resistance to the G20 and the broader class interests it represents, the emblems of neoliberalism's supposed economic successes, measured in profits, stock prices, GDPs and asset aggrandizement, were precisely the emblems of its failure. For neoliberals the world was or would be made into a flat playing field, but this is increasingly revealed as at best a wan dream, at worst an ideological smokescreen. This depiction hid the fact that the global playing field actually steepened drastically for most of the planet's population as poverty escalated, more and more workers were precariously employed, wages for the majority failed to keep up living costs, work conditions deteriorated, unions were attacked as antithetical to free market principles, environmental destruction robbed people of decent living conditions, and access to necessary social services such as healthcare, housing and education also deteriorated for hundreds of millions as states slashed budgets. Generally, the gap between rich and poor yawned wider than at any time in living memory. This pertained not just within the wealthier nations and between nations but also, perhaps especially in those "new" economies admitted to the G20 -- the apparent jewels of neoliberal success. To cite one obvious case, the historically low level of social inequality in China, perhaps the paradigm of neoliberal success since 1978, has skyrocketed to levels never before recorded.

At different scales, of course, from the local and the urban through the national state to the global, the extent of such inequality and deprivation is highly

8. Paul Krugman, "The Third Depression" *New York Times* June 28 2010.

uneven, but it accounts for the issues raised most prominently by anti-G20 protesters in Toronto: anti-poverty activists, unions, community movements, environmental organizations (BP's massive Gulf of Mexico oil spill was a prominent target), socialists, housing advocates, and a range of groups and movements that put global neoliberalism squarely in the dock. Drawing special ire was the range of national stimulus packages which exposed the naked opposition of social interests at the root of capitalism: financial institutions and banks and the "banksters" who ran them had caused the global crisis in the first place but were bailed out with billions in tax money while the victims – those experiencing layoffs, banked housing evictions, wage cuts, dismantled social services – were handed the invoice.

There was of course the obligatory window dressing at the G20, in an effort to put a human face on the main event, namely the rescue of global capitalism on the backs of working (and workless) people. In the lead up to the Toronto G20, failure not optimism dominated the historical memory of such summits. It was widely recalled that the 2005 G8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, had made as its central commitment the alleviation of poverty in Africa, and specifically the provision of health care to every HIV-infected person in the world. The leaders committed US\$50 billion over five years for the purpose, but five years later barely half of that figure had been produced, and with little accountability it was unclear that this very public gesture had had any effect at all. Estimates suggested that 9 million HIV sufferers, 27% of the world's total and most in sub-Saharan Africa, still lacked medical care. Confronting this public failure, the G8 quietly shelved and abandoned this promise, probably the biggest of its history. Now it was the turn of arch conservative Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper, as G8/G20 host, to propose an initiative and he plumped on maternal health care. With fraternal backslapping (only two of the G20 leaders were women) and before the summit got down to business the proposal was agreed in perfunctory manner and the paltry sum of \$5 billion over 5 years was committed, barely a fifth of what the

UN deemed their share. Canadian women's health activists were livid about such hypocrisy insofar as Harper had not only attacked health care funding at home but aggressively vetoed any use of Canadian funds for international abortion care. Accordingly, abortion care and provision was deemed irrelevant to women's health and was excised from the Toronto initiative.

The question of geographical scale came to play a strategic role in the Toronto summit. Like all such previous summits, this was a major global event, hosted by a single national state, dominating the life of a metropolitan area and held in a dense, highly localized urban space. More important and beyond the obvious, the state security strategy for the event was also politically scaled. The Toronto Police Department was centrally involved but so too was the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and, crucially, in addition to the Canadian military and security apparatus as well as private security forces, the federally authorized and powerful Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) which sent 5,000 officers. In all an estimated 19,000 Canadian police and security officers were sent into action. The entire operation was overseen by a shadowy new security umbrella group called the Integrated Security Unit (ISU), first established to coordinate anti-terrorist security for the Vancouver Olympics in February 2010. Adding to this mixture, each national delegation brought its own security personnel and the US sent helicopters that were used not only to ferry some of the 1,000 US delegates attending the summit but were also clearly visible in the skies above Toronto patrolling and circling above the various marches and demonstrations.⁹ By the same token, protesters came not just from Toronto but from around Ontario, from other provinces including British Columbia, and as many as 2,000 from Quebec, including Montreal members of the Anti-Capitalist Convergence. Quebec protesters were especially targeted by security forces. Vehicles with Quebec plates were apprehended en

9. "G8/G20 Summit Security Map and 'Fortress Toronto,'" *Toronto Star* June 25 2010. US helicopters were also used in the Vancouver Olympics under the guise that they were participating in a routine North American security exercise.

route and people detained; of 450 who came by bus, 300 failed to catch homeward bound buses, many presumably arrested. There were also international protestors from the US, Europe and elsewhere.

On view in Toronto was a new phase in the *securitization of the city*.¹⁰ The language of "Fortress Toronto" made banner international headlines in the establishment press even before the event began.¹¹ Beyond the physical geography of Fortress Toronto, with its locked down "island of non-constitutionality" (the yellow zone), the securitization of the city was obviously visible in the strategic street geography of the security forces and the broader social experience of the city during the G20. "For the past few days," editorialized a *Toronto Star* postscript on the entire "brutal spectacle," "the city has looked like a vast reality TV set, where heavily garbed gladiators in black, burdened under bullet-proof vests, guns, walkie-talkie, shields and batons."¹² Access to the city was also restricted in less tangible ways: border security at airports, and at international rail and car crossings was intensified; airspace was restricted below 5,500m within a 30km radius of the city; access from Lake Ontario was likewise subject to security checks, as was pedestrian and road traffic into and around the downtown securitized zone. Most chilling perhaps, was the explicit suspension of civil rights: several protesters who objected to their arrest and asserted their rights to be there were gruffly told by police: "You have no rights here today."

Historically there are countless precedents for this insofar as most cities other than the newest were

10. See, for instance, Jon Coaffee "Urban Renaissance in the Age of Terrorism: Revanchism, Automated Social Control or the End of Reflection?" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29(2), 2005, 447-454; Steve Graham "Cities and the 'War on Terror.'" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30(2), 2006, 255-276; and Peter Marcuse "Security or Safety in Cities? The Threat of Terrorism after 9/11." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30(4), 2006, 919-929.

11. "Tourists Fleeing Fortress Toronto," *Toronto Sun* June 19 2010; Christopher Hume, "City Walls: A Modern Comeback," *Toronto Star* June 26 2010; <http://nationalpostnews.files.wordpress.com/2010/06/g20-fortress-new.jpg>

12. "Editorial. A Brutal Spectacle that Failed a City and its People," *Toronto Star* June 28 2010.

heavily secured military strongholds at one time or another. Walled cities were the norm in the feudal period, but today too, many cities are variously militarized for greater or lesser time spans, from Medelin to Mogadishu, Belfast to Baghdad, Jerusalem to Guantánamo. Yet there is also contemporary precedent a variant of such securitization in specific communities in Canada. There too the seemingly exceptional is the everyday: pre-emptive, militarized 'targeted policing' in poor and racialized neighbourhoods, and the explicit use of military force for policing Indigenous communities.¹³

And yet such public securitization of North American and European cities today does connote something new. In many ways it betokens, at the urban scale, the strategic political geographic expression of neoliberalism, its political wing, as it were. There are two ingredients to this contemporary securitization of the city, none of them especially unique to Toronto 2010. First, while various security forces could claim with some plausibility that their purpose lay in the defence of civil rights, increasingly the issue today is less one of defence than of active social control. Of course the state has always been an instrument of social control, but at least in the era of Keynesianism from the 1930s to the 1970s many of these social control functions were, except under exceptional circumstances, sublimated into the cultural and economic apparatus. The broad social service, welfare, and social security systems of the mid-twentieth century did precisely this as generations of political activists -- Black power, marxist and feminist, and gay and lesbian liberation -- well recognized. The lesser or greater dismantling of such state provision in the subsequent neoliberal era, comparative waning of opposition and resistance, and the shift toward marketization all opened a potential vacuum in the architecture of social order. This vacuum was quickly filled by direct and often militarized means of

13. Amy Siciliano "The year of the Gun," Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Toronto. See also Leo Panitch, "Whose Violence? Imperial State Security and the Global Justice Movement," Socialist Interventions Pamphlet, n.d.

control. Direct repression broadly substitutes for the defter ameliorative hand of bureaucracy and bribery.

In addition to the shift in emphasis from defence to control, a second significant ingredient of the increasingly securitized city is the intensified *weaponization* of social control. Technological developments have always been harnessed to security strategies, or may have derived directly from military innovation, and from Tasers to the internet (itself born of the US military) today is no exception. In terms of weapons aimed directly at the body, the military makes the distinction between lethal and non-lethal, and recent innovations have focused especially on so-called non-lethal weapons. While knowledge of many such weapons is classified there is a seamless continuum from instruments of physical torture, for example, to better known devices. As the case of Tasers vividly shows -- their use has led to numerous deaths -- any supposed distinction between lethal and non-lethal is a fiction; conversely, the use or threatened use of hand guns is commonly non-lethal. For the G20, a new generation of weapons graced the Canadian police arsenal. A week before the event, as if to intimidate would-be protesters, shock a complacent public into recognizing the indispensability of a heavily armed police force, and or to prescribe the public response to policing, the security forces rolled out for journalists a veritable weapons bazaar complete with glitzy demonstrations.

The jewel in the crown was a sonic cannon -- the American Technology Corporation's "Long Range Acoustic Device" (LRAD). The "ear splitter" might be a more apt description. Initially developed for the US Navy following the 2000 attack on USS Cole off the Yemeni coast it has been in use in the Persian Gulf since 2003. Since that time, its use has proliferated; LRADs were used to quell opposition demonstrators in Tblisi, supposed looters in New Orleans, striking car workers in Bangkok, and 'pirates' off the coast of Somalia. Its debut on US soil came with the 2004 Republican National Convention in New York City. Intended for "fending off insurgents, dispersing

crowds, and flushing out buildings,"¹⁴ the LRAD is designed to induce nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. At its highest volume it can cause human bones to resonate. It can be used to deliver thunderous crowd control commands in public space or switched to an elevated "alert" function which delivers high pitched ear piercing blasts measuring as high as 135 - 155 decibels. The generally accepted upper limit of safe noise is 85 decibels above which ear damage is likely. Indeed according to the Toronto judge who sanctioned the ear splitter's use: a "very real likelihood exists that demonstrators may suffer damage to their hearing from the proposed use of the Alert function at certain distances and volumes."¹⁵

It is possible to date the new phase in the securitization of the city back to September 11th, 2001 when New York's World Trade Center was stunningly demolished by suicide hijackers, a third plane crashed into the Pentagon and a fourth crash-landed in Pennsylvania. This event unleashed a "war on terror," spearheaded by George Bush but joined willingly or under pressure by governing elites in the majority of the world's capitals. This perceived crisis of security certainly ratcheted up the securitization of the city. Yet intensified securitization of everything from national borders to travel to the merest nooks and crannies of daily life was not simply the result of a single event but rather the outcome of more systemic shifts that were already in process. The securitization of the city is a response to the vacuum of social control attendant on the rise of neoliberalism, as well as a lucrative multi-billion dollar business opportunity for the growing industry of private security provision. The city as shocking, in need of securitization, can be seen as one strand of the "shock doctrine."¹⁶

14. Marine Capt. D.J. McSweeney, quoted in Baiker, B. "Master Blaster: A New Noisemaker" *Newsweek* July 12 2004. Available online at <http://www.newsweek.com/2004/07/11/master-blaster-a-new-noisemaker.html>

15. Martin Lukacs, "Judge Green-lights Sonic cannons," Toronto Media Co-op, June 26 2010. Available online at: <http://toronto.mediacoop.ca/story/judge-green-lights-sonic-cannons/3818>

16. Naomi Klein *The Shock Doctrine*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007.

While it is obvious that 9/11 was opportunistically used in this power grab, fostering deep-seated fears and insecurities, this event worked more as trigger rather than cause, and it came in many respects as a gift on a silver platter to a ruling class that had hitherto only been able to dream of the power thus conveyed. Staying a moment with the US, if one compares the response to the Los Angeles riots of 1992, for example – an event precipitated by the brutal and wanton police beating of an innocent African American -- with the response to the civil rights movement in the 1960s, it may be that the LA uprising represents a more accurate historical fulcrum for the advent of the securitized city. In the 1960s, which certainly drew a violently repressive response from the state, an effort, however half hearted, was made toward ameliorative repairs to the impoverished social fabric of the city and the bolstering of social welfare provision, as represented by the Kerner Commission report and Model Cities program. In contrast, by 1992 repression was the sole response to the LA uprising. This stripped down securitization of the city acutely symbolizes the new and continuing pattern of response.

III

In the aftermath, as city workers began dismantling Toronto's G20 fence, replacing removed trash cans and newspaper boxes, opening the downtown again to vehicle and pedestrian traffic and planting sapling trees where the security forces had ripped them out as potential weapons, the erstwhile no-go zone came back to life. Yet as revelation after revelation emerged, public outrage continued to mount over whom to blame for the "cascade of failures," as the city councilor for downtown Toronto called it. The city police chief weighed in heavily, describing a "large and dangerous demonstration" and attributing the violence to "a mob," while Mayor David Miller concurred that the police "distinguished themselves" in handling the protests. *MacLean's* magazine was even more incendiary, blaring "LOCK THEM UP" across a doctored cover photo composite of a gas masked, guitar-toting protester in front of a burning

police car.¹⁷ Throughout the corporate media a certain hysteria took over concerning the "black bloc," who were invariably portrayed as violent anarchists conspiring to bring the city to its knees.

In fact, this script was effectively pre-written. In preparation for the G8/G20 meetings, security forces fuelled the mainstream media with sensational stories about coming "violence." Obliging journalists fixated on the skyrocketing sale of gas masks at local army surplus stores, even donning the devices themselves to provide a graphic glimpse of a coming alien invasion. The anticipation of imminent mayhem was intensified by heavily publicized pre-emptive measures to protect property and by daily lists of closures mandated or leveraged by security forces, or else out of fear. Roads, schools, museums, banks, restaurants, parking garages, commuter train stations, shops and businesses, bars, universities, a sports stadium were all shuttered. What could be moved was moved; what couldn't be moved was locked down. (Several corporations even fortified their "plop art" – large, heavy art installations often plopped into forecourt space by helicopters.¹⁸) At the same time the media picked up on the unprecedented cost of the G8/G20, an extraordinary \$1.2 billion (Canadian), of which almost \$1 billion was devoted to security. The media scratched their collective head when comparison was made with other such summits. The London 2009 G20 summit, for example, cost a total of US\$30 million while the security portion of the Pittsburgh summit later the same year came in at only US\$12.2 million.¹⁹ By way of context this budget

17. See David Rider, "Arrests, Tear Gas, Outweigh Glory" *Toronto Star* June 28 2010; Kelly Grant, "Police Chief Offers no Apologies for G20 Tactics," *The Globe and Mail* June 28 2010; Kelly Grant, "Toronto Mayor Backs up Police Chief" *The Globe and Mail* June 29 2010; *MacLean's* July 19 2010.

18. <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/g20streetlevel/2010/06/photos-chinatown-graffiti-and-the-hocky-hall-of-fame.html>

19. Oakland Ross, "G20: 'Canada's billion-dollar Summit Mystery,'" *Toronto Star* June 24 2010. Available online at: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/torontog20summit/article/828308-g20-canada-s-billion-dollar-summit-mystery?bn=1>. The London and Pittsburgh figures are in US dollars but with the Canadian dollar hovering close to parity, they are reasonably comparable. The scandal around financial squandering on the events took an other worldly turn when it was revealed that \$1m was spent on a fake lake for the pleasure of G8 journalists and delegates even

for the G8/G20 is almost as high as Canada's annual budget for the Afghanistan war.

Ideologically collapsed in the corporate media was the not-so-subtle distinction between plans to commit violence and preparations intended as defence against violence, thus amplifying the singular police narrative of imminent *protester* 'violence'. Nowhere was this clearer than in the media's gas mask fetish, which evacuated the crucial distinction between activists preparing for police violence and the pro-corporate state, with all its sophisticated military weaponry, preparing to inflict violence. Activists' defensive preparation for police assault was morphed into a form of violence in and of itself. In fact, gas masks were not only paraded as weapons at a subsequent police press conference, but their use was itself treated as an act of aggression. On Sunday June 27, asthmatic protester Natalie Gray donned a painter's respirator she had purchased after riot police carrying tear gas guns confronted a jail solidarity protest on Eastern Avenue. Stephanie would later hear police explaining that she had become a target for rubber bullets and arrest precisely because she had put the respirator on her face.²⁰

The resulting jumble of media images and vignettes, from gas masks to ear splitters to multinational banks fortifying their fixed capital all added up to an impending threat of violence on the streets. A symmetry of violence was written over a quite asymmetrical contest of powers. As if to cement the collusion of policing and the media, as many as 400 security personnel were based in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) building inside the yellow zone.

though the picturesque Huntsville site of the earlier meeting sat amidst a landscape replete with glacially rather than politically inspired lakes.

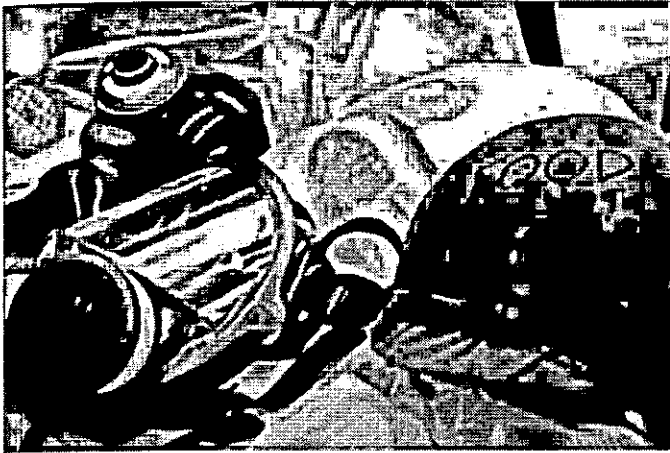
20. Krystalline Kraus "G8/G20 Communique: Police finally admit to using rubber bullets on Sunday June 27, 2010 during the G20 protests," Rabble, July 28 2010. Available online at: <http://www.rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/statica/2010/07/g8g20-communique-police-finally-admit-using-rubber-bullets-g20-protest>. (For a full month the police denied any use of rubber bullets despite emergency room photos confirming their use.)

When the anti-G20 protests began in earnest and the police moved into action, the same media outlets seemed genuinely surprised at the fulfillment of their own prophesy, and the tenor of coverage changed. While many TV news stations played ad nauseum the same footage of a burning police car, the print media often sported side-by-side accounts of police brutality and protester vandalism. Reporters and editors often seemed taken aback by what they saw, as if working without a script. In the days after the delegates had left for home, the issue refused to die as press reports of police brutality continued to emerge, and defenders of the security forces in turn escalated their own rhetoric. The script of danger and threat was thereby "post-written" as well as pre-written, and the press gingerly began talking about the whole episode as a "riot" while right wing provincial and other politicians tried to argue that the event only proved that the suspension of rights and the expenditure of \$1.2 billion was justified.²¹ But the language of "riot" was a risky gambit insofar as mounting evidence now existed to suggest that if in fact it constituted a riot it was surely a police riot.

At the same time, as the clamour rose for an independent investigation, the security forces themselves became increasingly defensive. Two days after the close of the summit the Toronto police held a news conference to display the cache of "weapons" they claimed to have confiscated from protesters. In truth, the haul looked more like yard sale brick-a-brack than the makings of urban terror. Apart from the obligatory gas masks, it included water bottles, bamboo tomato canes, a suit of chain mail, vinegar-soaked bandanas, stapler, penknives, tennis balls, camera, handcuffs and chain, an activist publication ("Upping the Anti"), goggles, a saw, a motor cycle helmet reading "food not bombs," an alternative media ("mediacoop") logo, notebooks and pens, and so forth.

It is challenging to isolate a single object here that could legitimately be identified as a weapon, an object designed to inflict bodily injury, or at least a serious threat to the heavily armoured police. In fact

21. Robert Benzie, "Rick Bartolucci: Riots prove extra powers were needed," *Toronto Star* June 28 2010.



Police Display Weapons Seized During G20, Accuse Activist Network Of Complicity In Summit-Related Violence.”

Available at: <http://www.citytv.com/toronto/citynews/news/local/article/80159--police-display-weapons-seized-during-g20-accuse-activist-network-of-complicity-in-summit-related-violence>

this display did more to affirm the self-justificatory desperation of the police than to convince anyone of a violent conspiracy. Like the gas mask, the inclusion of the “food not bombs” helmet, an object intended to *protect* from injury rather than inflict it, simply showed that the police evidential cupboard was bare. And it is tempting to assume that by including a pen, the Toronto police were claiming to have settled a two-century-old debate: whether mightier or not, the pen is indeed a violent weapon just like the sword. The inclusion of both Mediacoop, a democratic and grassroots alternative media group, and the journal “Upping the Anti” published by a radical anti-capitalist group, are more serious. Executing another false symmetry of violence, it equates the power of ideas, in this case radical ideas of anti-capitalism, anti-oppression, and social equality with the physical violence of guns, tear gas, rubber bullets and ear splitters in a way that drowns out the very real police violence of the Toronto G20.

However there were on the table some real weapons including a crossbow and some arrows. Challenged, the police chief conceded that some of these had been apprehended prior to the G20 in completely unrelated cases and did not really belong on the table. The crossbow, it was later revealed, came from the car of a farmer with a mental disability who was in Toronto

for a dentist’s appointment. It was also conceded later that the safety-protected archery arrows, which the police chief claimed were incendiary devices, had no arrow heads and, along with the chain mail, belonged to a young man stopped on his way to the far suburbs for a role-playing medieval fantasy game. Likewise, the tomato canes were anything but weapons, but rather the masts for rainbow flags confiscated from a professional middle-aged gay couple en route to a Stonewall anniversary celebration. Even the pen knife turned out to belong to a passerby who used it to cut fruit and who had no involvement in the protests.²²

In the weeks following the protests against the G20, still further revelations kept up the pressure on the security forces, and as it became clear that global reportage of the mayhem in Toronto streets did not showcase the city quite in the manner intended, the corporate media joined in the call for an independent investigation of the police and security forces. At first, the city, provincial and federal forces all deflected or bluntly refused such calls, but with the behaviour of their security forces increasingly under attack, they eventually relented, and within three weeks five separate investigations had been announced – at the

22. Jill Mahoney, “Weapons seized in G20 arrests not what they seem: Police display items confiscated in unrelated incidents,” *The Globe and Mail* June 29 2010.

city and provincial levels as well as by protest organizers (TCMN) and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. A defensive Toronto police force responded with a highly defensive public relations campaign, a list with photographs, of the 20 "most wanted" in connection with G20 violence, and promised further lists. Several of these protestors voluntarily turned themselves in while others had already been detained or arrested, their addresses well known to the police, only to find their "apprehension" trumpeted as a major security success. This Bonnie-and-Clyde style "most wanted" list conjured up images of mass murderers, rapists and global terrorists, and the police PR effort was immediately transparent.

However uncertain at times about its script, the establishment media persistently conflated 'violence' (injury to a person) with small-scale property damage, yet remained largely silent about the systemic, global violence perpetrated by free market capitalism which the G8 and G20 sought to shore up. In every basic category of everyday life the figures are sobering:

- Medical care: almost 200 women in the developing world die every day from backstreet abortions.
- Housing: the major factor behind the deaths of an estimated 225,000 people in the 2009 Haiti earthquake was unsafe housing.
- Wages: in China the urban proletarianization of rural workers since 1978 combined with continued state control of the economy has led to record levels of worker suicide.
- Clean water: an estimated 884 million people lack access to clean water while almost 9,800 people, disproportionately children, die every day from water related diseases.
- Starvation and hunger 30,000 people (85% of them children under 5) die daily from hunger, malnutrition and hunger-related illnesses.

The point here is less to evoke liberal lament than to take a further step toward analytical comprehension.

The juxtaposition of this very real global violence with attempts to claim minor attacks on a building as comparable highlights starkly the ideological work done by the latter claims. This equation of attacks on property with violence is a hallmark of liberal capitalism, variously compounded in a neoliberal era whereby corporations in various legal systems have been granted the legal status of individual persons. A particularly cruel irony resides in this shift. In the transition to capitalism "corporations" were formed via the incorporation of a group of individuals precisely to *limit* (hence 'Limited') their legal responsibility, while today the positing of corporations as legal individuals provides the corollary, an *expansion* of corporate right. There is, however, a long alternative political tradition, harking not just to anarchists and marxists but to multifold worker and peasant movements, past and present, that have resisted the privatization of land and property previously possessed and used in common. Private property, they adduced and as Prudhon said, is theft. Put differently, "violence" is an ideological keyword that can only ever be fathomed in the context of the social, spatial and categorial order of things.

The classic discussion of the state and violence, certainly the best known, is probably that of Max Weber. For Weber, a monopoly on legitimate violence is not simply a feature of the state; this authority over violence is precisely what defines statehood. A "compulsory political organization with continuous operations will be called a 'state,'" he argues, "insofar as its administrative staff successfully upholds the claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its order."²³ Thus for Weber, it is not simply the state's capacity to mobilize and deploy violence, but to define the *legitimate use* of violence that matters. The state mobilizes and deploys police and military forces, and yet at the same time stands above itself as the arbiter of any distinction between (legal) force and violence. State violence, following Weber, *is the law*. Lenin would not so much have disagreed except to specify the source of state power in

23. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Volume 1, Berkeley and Los Angeles: UC Berkeley Press, 1978, 54.

class relations and class struggle. Equally compatible is Walter Benjamin: "the law's interest in a monopoly of violence vis-a-vis individuals is not explained by the intention of preserving legal ends but, rather, by that of preserving the law itself; that violence, when not in the hands of the law, threatens it not by the ends that it may pursue but by its mere existence outside the law."²⁴ This argument was expressed too in the stance of the Toronto protesters. Quick to point out that the contempt for democratic rights, hostility towards free speech, the criminalization of dissent (even the prospect of dissent), and the aggressive use of force were far from exceptional, activists refused the equation of violence with attacks on property and emphasized the continuities of state violence between Toronto city streets and oppressive conditions around the world. Economic violence and repressive political violence represent the everyday experience for so many people around the world who are subject to G20 actions and the policing of its member states. Right wing commentators often portrayed these activists as naive and spoiled middle class white youth,²⁵ but in truth their anticipation of state repression represented an astute analysis of the state. "There's nothing safe to me about ten thousand fully armed cops," observed Syed Hussan, a TCMN organizer, several days before the G20 curtain rose.²⁶ Protest organizers understood the behaviour of the state not as exceptional but as systemic and they maintained an emphasis on commonalities across struggles. Quite reasonably, the actions of the G20 security forces shocked many in the middle class, but should also be seen as a microcosm for the workings of the G8 and G20 around the world. Introducing the cache of weapons ostensibly stripped from protesters, Toronto police chief Blair explained that he wanted to drive home "the extent of the criminal *conspiracy*" his police faced.²⁷ To charge people openly committed

24. Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence" in *Reflections*, Peter Demetz (ed.) New York: Schocken, 1978, 281.

25. Christie Blatchford, "'G17' defendants mostly white kids with good teeth." *The Globe and Mail* July 6 2010.

26. The Torontoist, "With the G20 Ahead, Police and Protesters Prepare for Each Other," 23 June 2010. Available online at: http://torontoist.com/2010/06/police_and_protesters_g20.php

27. Jill Mahoney, "Weapons' seized in G20 arrests not what they seem." *Globe and Mail*, 29 June 2010. Available

to collective action aimed at transforming the status quo with conspiracy verges on tautology of a sort that Weber, Lenin and Benjamin would readily recognize. There is no question that the protestors "conspired" to organize a series of events, some of which might become disruptive, and the police knew this well ahead of time. As became clear, police had infiltrated meetings of the TCMN in Toronto and meetings of organizers in several other cities, masquerading as activists. Needless to say, as regards conspiracy the security forces conspired secretly with others to execute their own plan. But with its billion dollar G20 "security" budget, the state's own conspiracy, from the ISU, US forces and the RCMP to the city level, took place at a whole different level of magnitude, and for hundreds of thousands in Southern Ontario, it disrupted everyday life for more than a week. Using hi-tech hand-held, mobile, building based and airborne cameras, they conspired to provide surveillance of every minute movement made by protestors and by anyone in and around the yellow zone. Using their considerable institutional power, they conspired (quite transparently and not very successfully) to spin news accounts in their favour. They clearly conspired too in an effort to deny basic civil rights, and to commit seemingly criminal acts against demonstrators. With mass, arbitrary and pre-emptive arrests on trumped up charges that were later dropped, they conspired to clear the streets of protesters until the summit was over. (They borrowed this tactic from New York police who arbitrarily rounded up 1800 demonstrators during the 2004 Republican National Convention, holding them illegally for as long as 72 hours until the Republicans left town, only then releasing them, there to mostly without charges.) "The key was to take these people out of play," explained a senior police officer.²⁸ They conspired to construct a sophisticated command centre to coordinate the surveillance and the movement of security forces, as well as a logistics depot in Barrie, Ontario about 90

online at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/toronto/weapons-seized-in-g20-arrests-not-what-they-seem/article1622761/>

28. John Intini, "The fallout from Toronto's G20 protests," *Maclean's Magazine*. 8 July 2010. Available online at: <http://www2.macleans.ca/2010/07/08/showdown-in-the-streets/>

kilometers away. To accomplish all of this they were assisted by the political apparatus, most notoriously at the provincial level where the secret law was passed giving police extended arrest authority. This point was not lost on community organizer Farah Miranda at a news conference announcing an investigation of the police: with tongue firmly in cheek and fist in hand, he declared: "we are aware that the rogue officers displayed here and that we're talking about today were not acting alone.... They were part of a coordinated conspiracy by police chiefs and politicians."²⁹

Many aspects of this official conspiracy were so ineptly executed that they quickly became transparent. A startled member of the civilian board charged with overseeing the Toronto police explicitly likened police undercover tactics to those of protesters: "It's as if whoever was in charge is using Black Bloc tactics. They've taken off their uniform and dispersed into the crowd – nowhere to be found."³⁰ But other aspects of political and security planning for the event remained hidden from public view. Unlike TCMN meetings which are open, democratic with dates and times widely announced, the Canadian cabinet of government ministers which decided on Toronto as the G20 site is not, and protesters had no infiltrators or agents provocateur in the Harper cabinet. How and why was such a cabinet decision suddenly made to move the G20 to Toronto? Why was the original location several kilometers from the centre suddenly passed up, over strenuous objection from the mayor, in favour of the downtown? Even before the G20 arrived, it was widely proposed that Prime Minister Steven Harper, whose governing conservative party won not a single parliamentary seat in the Toronto metropolitan area, was cynically setting the city up. Perhaps not accidentally,

29. Wendy Gillis, "Anti-G20 group seeks evidence of alleged police brutality: Organization hoping to determine 'masterminds of coordinated conspiracy'" July 13 2010, available at: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/torontog20summit/article/835277--anti-g20-group-seeking-evidence-of-alleged-police-brutality>

30. Robyn Doolittle "Chain of command questioned in G20: Toronto police wasn't always in charge." Toronto Star July 10 2010, available at: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/torontog20summit/article/834287--chain-of-command-questioned-in-g20?bn=1>

the Harper government's surprising announcement of the relocation to Toronto came on December 7 2009, the first day of the Copenhagen climate change conference coordinated by Toronto mayor David Miller who criticized the Harper government for refusing to act on climate change. Subsequently, Harper and the conservatives have resolutely blocked efforts at any federal-level inquiry.³¹

Leading up to the G20 many Torontonians reasoned that with so much publicity given to the astronomic cost of the event, the security forces would have to provoke a confrontation in order to justify the security expenditure and their own mass presence. The unfolding of events did nothing to contradict that expectation and much to support it. On the Saturday (June 26th) protest, marchers began to speculate that the mysteriously abandoned police cars in the middle of streets and intersections were deliberately left as bait, and later that police provocateurs masquerading as black bloc cadre participated in the first assaults on the cars. Others reported that one targeted car had already been stripped down of valuable accessories such as computer and radio. So widespread was such speculation that the Toronto police felt forced to rebuff it directly: "Those cars were abandoned because officers' lives were in danger," insisted police superintendent Jeff McGuire. "We didn't leave these there intentionally."³² But either officer McGuire was entirely out of the loop or absent from the event, or else lying: Thousands of protesters, some with young children, peacefully passed one or more of the abandoned cruisers a good hour before any confrontation, so it would be a sad commentary on the Toronto police force if the erstwhile drivers were indeed scared for their lives by people walking in the street.. Further, various press accounts reported that frustrated front-

31. Steven Chase, "Tory filibuster seeks to block hearings on G20 policing," *The Globe and Mail*, 12 July 2010, available at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/tory-filibuster-seeks-to-block-hearings-on-g20-policing/article1637756/>. Tomitheos Linardos, "Toronto's David Miller Joins 100 Mayors at Copenhagen Conference," *Now Public* December 10, 2009. Available at: <http://www.nowpublic.com/environment/torontos-david-miller-joins-100-mayors-copenhagen-conference>.

32. Intini, "The Fallout"

line officers were directly ordered by superiors “not to get involved,” not to defend the vehicles or properties under attack. Several officers confided that “they could have rounded up all, or most of them, in no time.” Another claimed: “It was awful There were guys with equipment to do the job, all standing around looking at each other in disbelief ... The Montreal riot guys were livid They just wanted to get in there and do the job.”³³

IV

Throughout the summer of 2010, three sets of public inquiries dominated national debate in Canada. Intimately connected as lenses into the world of state violence, taken together they dramatize the events of the G20 summit as everyday rather than exceptional. The first, addressing the 2007 RCMP Taser murder of arriving Polish passenger Robert Dziekanski at the Vancouver airport, found clear evidence of outrageous police misconduct and culpability. Second were the multiple inquiries into police violence against protesters and passersby at the 2010 G20 summit in Toronto, while a class action law suit was also launched on behalf of as many as 800 people arrested during the event. The third, addressing systemic police neglect of the disappearance and serial killing of mostly Indigenous women from Vancouver’s Downtown East Side, finally began to receive serious consideration after exhaustive lobbying by the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs and the B.C. Civil Liberties Association. Except for activist networks, few direct connections were initially drawn across these three major public controversies even though they frequently appeared side by side in print media. In each case, national and/or local police forces committed violence, including violence by neglect, against the citizens they are ostensibly paid to protect. Together these cases offer a diagnostic not only for the strength of the security arm of the Canadian state or its hyperactivity in cities but also for the selectivity of its targeted violence: the foreigner who

33. Joe Warmington, “Warmington: Cops had hands ‘cuffed.” The Toronto Sun, 30 June 2010. Available at: http://www.torontosun.com/news/columnists/joe_warmington/2010/06/30/14564416.html

doesn’t speak the language, the indigenous sex trade worker, the political opposition criminalized as “black block.” If Dziekanski was accosted “in a paranoid space where security officials are terrified that every foreigner is a terrorist,”³⁴ then the murdered women were in necropolitical space where sex trade workers and indigenous people alike are “third class citizens,”³⁵ their lives valued as a percentage of some norm. These cases provide a vital parallax for understanding the systemic rather than simply episodic nature of G20 state violence during the G20 summit.

Yet “events belie forecasts,” as Henri Lefebvre once observed. They “may even overturn strategies that provided for their possible occurrence.”³⁶ But as he also quickly says, however much discrete events upset the day to day flow of expectability, they may also “become reabsorbed into the general situation.” Preventing that from happening is crucial. Lefebvre, of course, was reflecting on far more momentous events than the 2010 Toronto G20 police rampage, namely the May 1968 uprising in Paris, but his analysis travels well in time and space, if at a different scale. In the case of Toronto, the strategic complicity of the federal government, the quivering response by local politicians, the superordinate aggressiveness of the various police forces, all lay unusually bare the fact that however predictable the police assault, state strategy is both changing and yet contested from within. Similarly, the stunned response by many in Toronto to police suppression of rights and the confused response by a press that seemed not to know its script, suggest a political opening and at least in the short term a critical eschewal of innocence concerning the inter-

34. Dawn Moore, “Who or what killed Robert Dziekanski.” Rabble, 5 December 2007. Available online: <http://www.rabble.ca/news/what-or-who-killed-robert-dziekanski>.

35. Marilyn Kraft, mother of one of the Vancouver missing women suggests that systemic neglect of their disappearance was possible because the women were ‘third-class citizens.” Quoted in Robert Maras, “Revelations about Pickton’s 1997 arrest fuel calls for inquiry.” *Globe and Mail*, 5 August, 2010. Available online at <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/british-columbia/revelations-about-picktons-1997-arrest-fuel-calls-for-inquiry/article1663782/>.

36. Henri Lefebvre, *The Explosion. Marxism and the French Upheaval*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969, 7.

ests involved in state policing. Further, the various inquiries, the launching of the class action suit over widespread suppression of rights, and the broad failure of the G20 summit itself to tackle the economic crisis, will not only keep “the event” under the microscope but will also embolden the opposition. The prospect is there that, as Lefebvre puts it, this and related events can “reactivate the movement of both thought and practice.”³⁷

Coda

Two months after the G20 eruption, Toronto police claimed its “most wanted” campaign had netted precisely twenty suspects, two fewer than the number of officers assigned to the effort, and they “embedded” an officer with the NYPD and another with US border authorities in search of American miscreants. On Monday August 23, 2010 one of the largest mass court appearances in Canadian history brought over three hundred people with G20 related charges to the overcrowded Ontario Court of Justice on the city’s suburban fringe. In what the *Toronto Star* called a “judicial farce,” sixty-seven had their charges withdrawn or stayed including Natalie Gray – the woman shot twice by police rubber bullets. Of this group, the court found that nine were either fingered mistakenly or had been charged twice for the same crime, twenty had their charges flat out withdrawn, and thirty-one had their charges stayed. In twenty-two cases prosecutors offered to “divert” charges if defendants agreed to make a donation to a charity or do community service -- an outrageous judicial imposition of guilt without conviction. Only six who were charged and processed that day actually pled guilty to anything. A *Toronto Star* editorial, revealing the media shift in tone that accompanied dwindling police legitimacy, confidently asserted that “the sheer flimsiness of some of the charges ought to embarrass the Toronto police and other forces.”³⁸

37. Ibid., 8.

38. The Star (2010) “Growing Case for G20 Probe.” August 24. Available online at: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/article/851464>; Thomas Walcom, “The G20 Protests and Judicial Farce,” *Toronto Star* August 25, 2010. Available online at: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/torontog20summit/article/851906--walkom-the-g20-protests-and-judicial-farce>.

As the media spotlight shifted from the events themselves to other concerns, continuing coverage of G20 fallout became more critical. Former city mayor John Sewell, for example, cited the “appalling display of how police power can trample the rights of citizens” and the “repressive bail conditions” that followed, and he concluded that a “policing crisis” was the “scary legacy of the G20.”³⁹ Just as scary perhaps was the global response. Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said he was “shocked by TV images showing [Toronto] riot police beating demonstrators,” implying in a *New Yorker* article that police action against Iranian environmental activists was mild in comparison.⁴⁰ G20 policing was increasingly seen as an instance not simply of the criminalization of dissent but as the criminalization of *potential* dissent.⁴¹ Indeed, the count so far: over 1100 arrested; approximately 600 released without charges; 304 charged; 6 convicted. The remaining two hundred and twenty seven had their cases adjourned to a later date. Meanwhile organizers and activists, in addition to mounting a sustained and multi-targeted assault on the police conduct and its political roots, embarked on an intensive evaluation of the lessons that could be learned from the G20 events.

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39. Sewell, John (2010) “City’s policing crisis is the scary lesson of G20.” *The Bulletin*, online edition. Available at <http://www.thebulletin.ca/cbulletin/content.jsp?crid=1000009&cnid=1002576>.

40. Anderson, John Lee (2010) “After the Crackdown.” *The New Yorker*, August 16. Available online at: http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/08/16/100816fa_fact_anderson?currentPage=all

41. Walkom, Thomas. 2010. “The G20 Protests and Judicial Farce,” op.cit.