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(continued from inside)

Anti-prison agitators are also making efforts to move their activity beyond the veil of night actions in an attempt to communicate and share struggle with prisoners. On August 10th, also known as Prisoner Justice Day ever since prisoners at Millhaven Institution issued a call-out and staged a one-day hunger strike in 1976 in order to remember those who died in prison, prisoners across the country carry out collective acts of resistance. This year, noise demonstrations took place outside prisons in Kitchener, Hamilton, and Montreal, and in several prisons, like the Toronto East Detention Centre, hundreds refused to eat for the day or participate in programs. In some prisons, inmates also wore t-shirts with upside-down Canadian flags and hands grasping prison bars across it, in protest of the conditions in the state's prisons. These efforts to share struggle with prisoners must gain momentum in order for us to develop a necessary base of communication that can make ongoing solidarity a possibility.

This possibility only increases with the overwhelming incarceration of less desirable parts of society. Two days after Prisoner Justice Day, officials in British Columbia rounded up 492 Tamil refugees and locked them up in several prisons, like the Burnaby Youth Custody Prison and the Fraser Regional Correctional Centre. Noise demonstrations outside the prison in Burnaby have been a regular occurrence in response to this repression.

The state's policies on immigration and its "tough on crime" legislation only serve to fill existing prisons well beyond capacity. Even with the overall decline in police-reported crime in most jurisdictions since 1991, and the overall decrease in the severity of police-reported crime between 1998 and 2008, both federal and provincial governments continue to expand and restructure their prison infrastructure amidst what they call a fiscal crisis.

By 2015, the federal government intends to double the budget for corrections and add to it the security budget for the G8 and G20. They have introduced new taxes and austerity measures, while building the prisons they intend us to fill when we can no longer pay the bills. The state, architects, developers and company are sucking up ever-increasing profits off of mass incarceration and prison labour. This is a major reason for the expansion of the prison system in times of economic and social instability: to extend the most stable industry and repressive capabilities the state has at its disposal, as a capitalist amongst capitalists.

Prisons have not and will not make our lives any safer. This accelerated "tough on crime" transformation of correctional practices and expansion of the slave-labour economy only shows us that the state is more inclined to restructure itself in order to wage war on its citizens than it is to protect us. These are the conditions under which we live, and against which we should struggle. It's up to us to create the means to defend ourselves; by developing a practice of solidarity we'll learn to exercise our power and gain ground in our struggles. The state and capitalists have already shown us their cards and thrown in their chips; it's time we see their bid and raze them out of the game.

**To do away with all prisons and  
the world that needs them...**

**LET'S STIR  
UP A STORM**

*Fall 2010*

# DOWNPOUR

A contribution to the struggle against prison and its world

*"Governments... declare that their principle mission is to maintain order, which is to say a generalized condition of servility, and to wage a merciless war against the criminal, which is to say against the individual classed as such by their statutes."*

We are in the midst of a widespread transformation of Canadian "corrections." In the next few years, Correctional Services of Canada (CSC) will become the largest building contractor in the country. In times like these of economic downturn and social conflict, the monumental amount spent on prisons and policing illustrates the type of world the state wishes to sustain. The increasing of police control and surveillance, the court system that vomits out its clientele into freshly built prisons, or more simply, the enlarged budget for punishment and control, give a fresh perspective to the function of the Canadian state and its institutions.

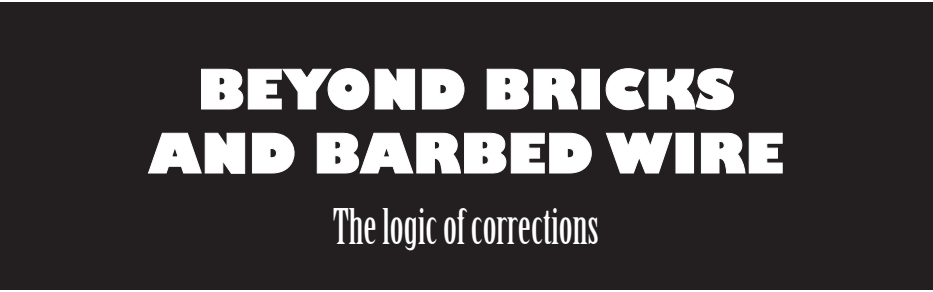
As individuals looking to destroy the current social order, the institutions that police, judge, and incarcerate will always stand against us. Anytime we look to change the conditions under which we live we find ourselves confronted by the states' police, courts, and prisons. As government officials orchestrate the transformation of these repressive institutions, we see them fortifying the weapons used against us.

However deplorable it might be, the restructuring of the penal system does bring a whisper of good news: it reveals weakness. An extensive initiative like this one doesn't come from desire, it comes from necessity. Likewise, its far-reaching properties also open up possibilities for widespread solidarity amongst those who oppose the restructuring and transformation of correctional practices. With this publication, we look to spread information and analysis in the hopes of connecting with others, and to sharpen our weaponry, in the form of ideas and practice, in order to better put an end to the state and its projects.

*"It's likely  
that the exploited  
masses will eventually see  
that their worst enemy is not the  
criminal hunted by the police and sacrificed  
as a scapegoat to ensure that  
the law remains an indispensable  
sanction. After all, hunger drives  
the wolf from the woods ..."*

*-Georges Darien, Le Voleur*





Prisons and correctional apparatuses start with the assumption that society as a whole is an efficient, functional body, albeit with a few deficiencies, and therefore any instances where the norm is broken must be the result of some flaw within individuals, not a symptom of a broader problem. In this way of thinking, troubles or unrest are caused by a few bad eggs who “act out” because in one way or another, they are not cut out to interact with the world around them; thus, for the preservation of the world around them, these bad eggs need to be dealt with in one way or another.

Criminologists often create the illusion of scientific validity for this ideological construction, amongst which a predominant notion is that criminality is, for the most part, behaviourally pre-determined, as opposed to a calculated response to a situation; just as some people are predisposed to excel at sports and others are clumsier by nature, some people are predisposed to commit crimes. Thus, the source of crime is behavioural, not social; it is the moral and psychological depravity of maladjusted individuals, not society.

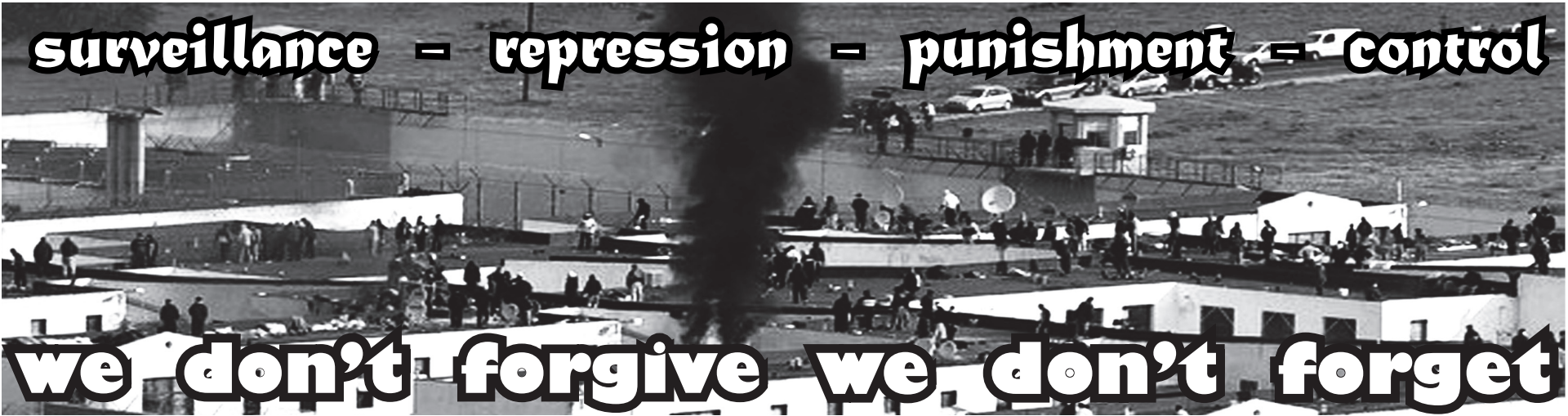
Enter the logic of corrections and its subsequent prisons: those that display any anti-social trends should be locked away for their benefit and everyone else’s, and controlled and monitored in isolation until any problematic behaviour has been corrected out of them. Of course, over time, the method of corrections has changed. Although brute force, and the threat of it, are still very much part of the jail guard’s tool kit, these days guards are increasingly trained to use augmenting levels of isolation and denial of certain concessions and privileges such as prison transfers, food access, yard time, etc. until prisoners start complying rather than more corporeal forms of punishment, like beating someone into submission. In 2007, a report on Correctional Service Canada’s operations called A Roadmap to Strengthening Public Safety, providing over 100 recommendations for improving the prison system, encourages the notion that prisoners should have to work to earn anything above and beyond basic rights. According to the Roadmap, it is no longer enough to go along willingly with one’s incarceration and just do one’s time; now, in order to access things that were once considered fairly standard practice within prisons, prisoners need to show an interest and a will in their own “rehabilitation” to be granted the same services that have been re-conceptualized as privileges. On the flip side, prisoners who don’t cooperate and bend their will are even further removed from social networks and thrown into isolation units and put on lockdown.

Already, early parole, and even statutory release in some cases, is at the discretion of a board that looks for signs of self-improvement, reforms, and changes in a prisoner. The more a prisoner cooperates within the prison, whether it be by going along with work programs, consenting to random searches, etc., the more likely an “inmate” is to be granted requests while in prison, and eventually declared “cured” of their criminality and eligible for release.

However, corrective measures don’t dissipate into thin air outside the prison walls. Even after someone is deemed adequately reformed to be released from custody and is granted parole, the strict conditions of release can continue for years after one’s original sentence. Prisoners then become responsible for their own surveillance and monitoring when they are on parole. But at the same time as parolees are expected to manage their own rehabilitation, their jailers prepare for them to renege on the arrangement. Ex-cons are treated with suspicion of recidivism, and even after a corrective sentence, they are still seen as potential criminals; and so they are monitored by a parole officer whose job is to uphold the correctional process beyond the prison walls.

In France, a new type of prison has been introduced to further control and confine. Described as a “medical-social-judicial” centre, it will house prisoners who have served an original sentence of 15 years or more, but who are still considered a risk to public security. The extended sentence is reviewed annually and can be renewed indefinitely. The construction of this sort of prison is a move toward reinforcing the idea that one can be incarcerated not for something one has actually done, but on the suspicion that one is likely to commit a crime in the future. In other words, one can be incarcerated for crimes that have not been committed.

In parallel, no one in this world is trusted on their own. Because it is possible that one person or another could be a criminal, we are all assumed to be potential criminals, and thus we need to be monitored, supervised, managed (more and more).



Photos clockwise from top: Royal Bank of Canada arson, Ottawa, ON, May, 2010; A burning prison; Prison uprising in Malandrinós, Greece, 2007



The greatest threat to this society isn’t anything external but comes from the many people who make it up; with logic like that, having cops on the block suddenly starts to make sense. Just think of all the lengths used to catch people in their disobedience: CCTV cameras abound in stores and office buildings, and on street corners and public transit; private security watch over banks, storefronts, and empty parking lots 24/7; volunteer police, neighbourhood watch, and crimestoppers tip lines encourage good citizens to watch their own neighbours with suspicion; random ID checks in workplaces hunt down people working under the table. When surrounded by such consistent surveillance and suspicions of potential criminality, we begin to take on our own correction in the constant checking of ourselves and the people around us.

In the UK, surveillance technology takes this one step further. Some CCTV systems are programmed to pick up and zoom in on common traits that suggest anti-social and/or criminal activity. For example, a frequent shoulder-checker or slouched walker would be followed more closely by the camera than a person walking with their shoulders back and head up. Further, the UK police are trying out new software that helps to determine where crimes are more likely to take place based on a variety of data including offender reports and past criminal patterns. The police are also considering the use of unmanned drones, similar to the ones developed for military use, to monitor from on high (more info: 325 #8, 325.nostate.net).

The use of military technology for policing only clarifies the reality in which we live. It should come as no surprise that police operations themselves have been restructured over the past two decades to function as more of a military organization. Even the stark difference between police and military work, that of protecting the state and its citizens from outside threats rather than threats coming from the citizenry itself, is distorted by the increasing use of military personnel in policing matters. Since the Oka Crisis in 1990, the state has frequently called in the military to manage conflicts within what it believes to be its borders. The soldiers called in to police summit-style protests in Montebello 2007, Vancouver 2010, and Toronto 2010, are just a few examples of this shift in the use of military troops.

When the police act as a military structure and the military act like the police against the citizens who pay their taxes, we would be blind to see these organizations having any regard for our safety. Along with the prisons, these state institutions are primarily concerned with the defence of their master the state, and are willing to go to war against the people who fill its coffers in order to preserve it. Life itself, beneath the regard of the police, cameras, prisons, probation, etc. is a constant war for social control orchestrated by the state, through its institutions and the private sector that looks to profit from the repression of society itself.

Because society is supposedly infallible, there will always be people who need correcting. Thus, there will always be a need for prisons, creating ample need and opportunity for their reform. Accordingly, the current restructuring in Canadian prisons isn’t intrinsically remarkable; more so, it is the sheer volume of procedural, infrastructural, and fiscal changes required to respond to the ballooning prison population, and the increasing degrees of isolation –both from outside as well as inside the prison- that is noteworthy.

The Canadian Ministry for Public Safety itself has identified increased policing and better information about offenders as significant contributors to the increasing prison population. To respond to this, they propose a strategy of crime reduction to include “action to prevent crime before it occurs, and the management of prolific and high risk offenders once they have been identified” (Strategies to Mitigate Remand Population Growth). The same document goes on to say: “In the short term, initiatives to make the justice system work faster and more efficiently will reduce the remand population, albeit displacing most of them into the sentenced population.” While their strategies to reduce crime sound a lot like more of the same police and cameras that already overrun our lives, they acknowledge that these actions won’t actually keep down prison populations, but will simply move people from one cage to another more efficiently.

With all the force of police, prisons, and punishment converging and expanding to find just the right way to coerce us into obedience and submission, it’s a foregone conclusion that as far as the state is concerned, the well-being of the whole holds greater value than the sum of its parts.



The summer left us in a downpour of repression that sought to bury its discontents beneath the bureaucracy of courts and behind the walls of prison. The end of June marked an encounter between radicals, outlaws, rebels, etc, and the G20 police state in Toronto. A series of prison reforms and amendments to the criminal code led up to that explosive encounter, and continue today. Bureaucrats in the Correctional Services of Canada (CSC) have begun to lay out their plans for prison expansions and the development of new super-max model prisons, hoping to deepen prison’s isolating capabilities with large warehouse-style labour facilities.

As the overcrowding in prisons intensifies with new federal “tough on crime” legislation, conditions within them lead to explosive outbursts of violence and unrest. With more and more people finding themselves embraced by the brutalizing totality of prison, it becomes essential to organize against them: to demystify the illusion that the people in prison are a threat to our safety, in order to clarify that prison is the threat and, like the police, does not make our lives safer.

Beginning in April 2007, CSC moved to coordinate an extensive restructuring of the federal prison system. After taking a trip to Colorado in order to visit the ADX Florence super-max isolation prison, CSC returned to implement their improved ideas on incarceration, isolation, and prison labour. The implementation of American Security Housing Unit (SHU) infrastructure is evident in a financial consultation done in partnership with CSC and Deloitte Touche Tohamatsu regarding the cost of building new prisons with SHU wings.

Following this trip, several pieces of legislation were changed, while new laws await approval to transform the prison system’s legal framework. The elimination of statutory release under Bill C-43, the suspension of pensions for federal prisoners, and the axing of the two-for-one credit rule, all contribute to a “tough on crime” attitude and subsequent overcrowding in prisons.

Bill C-25, the Truth in Sentencing Act, is a new law that will change more than just the face of the courts. The bill intends to limit the credit a judge can grant for time served by a prisoner before sentencing. Kevin Page, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, estimates that this bill will result in an average addition of 159 days to sentences. With the existing overcrowding in prisons, he predicts that this change in legislation will require the construction of a dozen new prisons. All this interests the Budget Officer because by 2015, the budget for corrections in Canada will need to increase from its current \$4.4 billion to \$9.5 billion in order to manage the growth of prison populations.

In 2009, the CSC Transformation Team in charge of the sweeping restructuring of the federal prison system gave their explanation for the budget increase. They pointed out the need to “adjust interim capital plans to respond to potential population increases associated with pending legislation.” This capital adjustment seems to be what Craig Jones of the John Howard Society referred to when he stated that CSC is on the verge of becoming “the largest building contractor in Canada.”

By fall 2010, CSC followed up on their “capital adjustments” by announcing plans to expand 19 federal prisons at a cost of over \$400 million. The planned expansions total some 1,650 new beds between Mission, Kent, Ferndale, Matsqui, Fraser Valley, and Regional Training Centre / Pacific Institutions in British Columbia; Drumheller and Bowden Institutions in Alberta; Rockwood and Stony Mountain Institutions in Manitoba; Bath, Collins Bay and Millhaven Institutions in Ontario; the Federal Training Centre, Montée St-François, and Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines Institutions in Quebec; Renous and Dorchester Institutions in New Brunswick; and Springhill Institution in Nova Scotia.

These federal prison expansions follow a similar provincial trend. The current wave of provincial prison expansion started as far back as 2004. To date there are at least 21 new facilities and 17 expansions that are at different stages of completion from coast to coast (see: thevultures.info). The cost of construction for these prisons is already above \$2,829 billion; when these facilities become operational, they will augment the capacity of provincial prisons by at least 6,514 beds.

We are now witnessing one of the largest prison restructurings in the history of the Canadian state. From coast to coast, CSC ministers have carried out sweeping reviews of the prison system, in partnership with architects and consultants of different stripes, on both a provincial and federal level. Found in these reviews are the concrete plans to transform Canada’s “correctional services” into a knock-off of the American prison industrial complex. The CSC trip to ADX Florence Supermax and the “cost estimate” of SHU prison wings carried out by Deloitte Touche Tohamatsu only reinforces this direction in the transformation of the state’s correctional practice.

In the streets of Toronto a similar intensification of repression and harmonization of Canada-US security took place. However, 19,000 security personnel with a \$1 billion budget were unable to defend Toronto’s social peace during the G20 meeting from the operative potential of a decentralized and anti-authoritarian practice. On June 26th, hundreds of people broke away from a union march and proceeded to attack police, burning three or four police cars, smashing several other police and media vehicles, and trashing over 40 banks and corporate storefronts along the way. Throughout the weekend, the police mass-arrested over a thousand people, and made some strategic arrests of radicals with the



help of informants based out of Guelph and Kitchener, Ontario. A response of solidarity actions and demonstrations took place from Quebec to Vancouver (more info: [againstprison.wordpress.com](http://againstprison.wordpress.com), [snitchwire.blogspot.com](http://snitchwire.blogspot.com)). For updates on the accused and their trials, check out [abc-calgary.anarchistservices.ca](http://abc-calgary.anarchistservices.ca).

In the meantime, summer was just as active in the belly of the state’s prisons. Inmates revolted from within their cages in diverse forms and with differing amounts of participation. Twenty prisoners in New Brunswick started a riot. In Ontario, around 70 inmates collectively refused to obey the guards and return to their cells. In Manitoba, 11 inmates ransacked their cages (more info: [againstprison.wordpress.com](http://againstprison.wordpress.com)).

The reality in prisons today is not always so vibrant. Daily expressions of violence, humiliation, and abuse come from both the staff and inmates of these institutions. Prisoners stab each other, guards fire off shots, and riot squads are called in to control situations. At least four people died in prison this summer from the end of July to mid October; some of these deaths took place while pushing back against the jailers and their jails.

On July 21st, two people died from smoke inhalation and eight were incapacitated after 14 prisoners refused to return to their cells, fought the guards, and lit fire to a mattress and some clothing at Orsainville Jail in Quebec. They were killed when the guards fled the riot, locking up the F-Wing of the prison along with the inmates, fire, and smoke. It took 55 minutes for the paramedics to arrive after the first sounding of the fire alarm and another hour for the first ambulance to ferry the injured to local hospitals.

Others have chosen to act in kind with the riot at Orsainville and turn their frustration against the ones who jail them. In August, a prisoner in the Central Nova Scotia Detention Centre decided to turn the shiv against the jailer, sending the screw to a hospital with a stab wound to the stomach. Prison guards in Manitoba and Nova Scotia have been issued puncture-proof vests after an elevated level of riot and stabbings.

On the outside, anti-prison activity turned New Year’s Eve 2009-2010 into an expression of solidarity with the struggle against prison, as a noise demonstration took place outside of the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre in Ontario on the last day of an international hunger strike carried out by anarchist prisoners. In April and July, noise demonstrations took place against prisons and in solidarity with social combatants outside of the Vanier Centre for Women and the Maplehurst Correctional Complex. Another demonstration at the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre also took place in July, in solidarity with the hunger strike of prisoners in Korydallos prison in Greece.



In Kingston, Ontario, a campaign was fought against the sale of prison-farm cattle, the closing of the federal prison farm program, and the expansion/ restructuring of the prison system. In June, hundreds marched to the CSC regional headquarters to protest this stage of the prison system’s transformation. Then in late July, demonstrators blockaded CSC headquarters. The herd of cows were auctioned off in August and, after a two-day blockade at the Collins Bay Institution and 24 arrests, the cows were driven away on trucks, giving way to the redevelopment of the prison grounds. Today, former prison farm workers repair Canadian military vehicles at the Frontenac Institution and prospective developers are bidding on the federal expansion of Collins Bay.

In August, following the deaths at Orsainville, it was made clear once more that fire is not just the weapon of the jailer. A new police station under construction in Guelph, Ontario was set on fire. The blaze was quickly extinguished, but caused close to \$500,000 in damage, set the development back 6 to 8 months, and showed us that no amount of police infiltration can stifle the potential of decentralized attacks.

Within the past handful of years, decentralized and clandestine tactics have been used more and more by those seeking to attack the ones responsible for their exploitation. Those who target collaborators in the prison system or other forms of authority have taken it upon themselves to vandalise and burn corporate and state property, from banks to government offices, from police vehicles to construction equipment, from Vancouver to Halifax.

(continued on cover)