

# ***THE OSCAR GRANT PLAZA GAZETTE***

**Wednesday, October 22, 2011. Day 13.**

***LOVE AND SOLIDARITY WILL DEFEAT  
GREED AND SELFISHNESS!***

***THE POWER OF MUSIC : REDEMPTION SONG***

One of the most beautiful things I have heard since being down on Oscar Grant Plaza (where, as we all know, there have been an unbelievable amount of beautiful things to hear, see, and experience) was an a capella rendition of a Bob Marley song at the amphitheater. The power of music is a power that our struggle needs right now -- it heals us and gives us the strength to resist the forces of cruelty and injustice. Rastafarians borrowed the language of the Old Testament to describe the forces which enslaved their ancestors & impoverished their communities as BABYLON. This is the same foe we fight today. Our weapons against this foe are the same as they have always been : love & solidarity. They seek to divide us by racism, classism, sexism, and a thousand other methods. We say : love is simple. We say : love & solidarity. We say : Love is my shield. We say : Set a seal on my heart, for love is as strong as death. We struggle against the forces of death in this world with the power of our love. With that love we work to make what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called "the beloved community."

One of the best things about Bob Marley's songs, which no amount of commercial cheapening can ever truly tarnish, is the fact that everyone knows them. We can all sing along, we can all add our voices -- just as we add our voices when we cry together to the police who attempt to invade our plaza : COPS GO HOME ! COPS GO HOME ! (If you see them, say this. And always remember : The First Amendment to the constitution *GUARANTEES* the *RIGHT* to *PEACEABLE ASSEMBLY*. The City of Oakland's assertion that they have the right to regulate the time, place and manner of our exercise of that right is a *LIE*. And like all *LIES* it must be refused, resisted, rebutted and decried.)

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE HERE.  
WE ARE EXERCISING THAT RIGHT.  
WE WILL NOT RELINQUISH THAT RIGHT.  
THE POLICE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE HERE TO PROTECT THAT RIGHT.  
INSOFAR AS THEY FAIL TO ACT TO PROTECT THAT RIGHT  
THEY ARE BETRAYING THEIR CIVIC OBLIGATION  
AND REVEALING THEIR TRUE ROLE AS PROTECTORS OF THE PROPERTY OF THE WEALTHY  
AND THE FACE OF STATE FORCE AGAINST THE POOR.

So, yes, we all know the words to Bob Marley's songs, but I'm going to write down the chorus I heard that man singing in the amphitheater, just to remind us all of the power of Bob's songs, and the power of song, to harness our strength and power, in love & solidarity, against Babylon, which can never overcome us.

*Won't you help me sing  
These songs of freedom?  
Cause all I ever had*

*Redemption song  
Redemption song*

*All I ever had*

*Redemption song*

*The Oscar Grant Plaza Gazette aims to be a voice & record of the historic Occupy Oakland movement, part of a national & international movement of resistance. Please consider writing your thoughts, reflections, opinions, and what you've seen -- you are part of this movement & we want to get your words out there!*

## **"THERE IS NO HONOR IN THIS" : SGT. SHAMAR THOMAS CONFRONTS COPS IN NYC**

Sergeant Shamar Thomas, of Roosevelt, NY, makes no bones about his opinions of police in a powerful YouTube video which documents his righteous anger and vehement denunciation of their cowardice (check it out at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmEHcOc0Sys> -- it must be seen to be believed). Thomas is a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps and served two tours in Iraq. He comes from a military family including his mother, stepfather, grandfather, and great-grandfather. It's our hope that Sgt. Thomas' example will lead more and more veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to speak out against police brutality, against the wars, against the criminal disproportion of wealth & the destruction of the social safety net. Following is a partial transcription of the YouTube video, as heard by us here at the OSCAR GRANT PLAZA GAZETTE. (Sgt. Thomas, please forgive any mistranscriptions!) Sgt. Thomas is speaking directly to a group of cops:

*"This is not a war zone. This is not a war zone. These are unarmed people. It doesn't make you tough to hurt these people. It doesn't make you tough to hurt these people. It doesn't. It does not make you tough to hurt these people. There's nothing tough about it. If you want to go fight, go to Iraq and Afghanistan. Where is that in the contract? Where is that in the contract? Leave these people alone. They're U.S. citizens. U.S. citizens. U.S. citizens. U.S. It does not make you tough to do this to them. It doesn't. Stop hurting these people, man. Why y'all doing this to our people? I been to Iraq fourteen months for our people. These are our people. They don't have guns. They don't have guns. They don't. Why are you hurting these people? It doesn't make any sense. How do you sleep at night? These is no honor in this. There is no honor in this. There is no honor in this, man. There is no honor in this shit. There is no honor in this shit. There is no honor in what you are doing to these people. How do you do this to people? How do you do this to people? How do you sleep at night doing this to people? [...]*

*I was here October 5, I saw them beating people, people that have nothing to do with anything, just grabbing people out of the crowd. There is no honor in that. My mom, my father, everybody has served in Iraq / Afghanistan, where I did fourteen months [in] Iraq, my father was in Afghanistan, my mother did a year in Iraq, Where I did fourteen months in Iraq. We fought for this country, I don't come home I am in New York City, I am from New York City, and these cops are hurting people I fought to protect. There is no reason for this. There is no honor in hurting unarmed civilians. And I won't let it happen. Have a good night.*

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### **COMMUNIQUE FROM A COMRADE IN ILLINOIS**

In response to "*This Is A Model Of The Society We Want*," previously published in The Oscar Grant Plaza Gazette, a Quaker comrade from Illinois wrote a letter from which we excerpt below. From anti-slavery activist John Woolman to heroic resistance during the Vietnam war, American Quakers have always been a model of deeply moral nonviolent activism. *Muchos gracias comrade!*

We hear you, all the way here in Chicago, or rather, the smaller suburb of Highland Park, to be precise. Our Quaker group had gathered to discuss the violence being unleashed against Occupy Protesters. It was at this gathering that one of our group, Linda, pulled out an email sent by her husband's son. It was a moving piece originally published in the Oscar Grant Plaza Gazette. We hear from reporters that Occupiers do not know what they want. I listened to the beautifully articulated and powerful message conveyed in your letter and knew that though the swelling ranks of the disenfranchised in our nation may at times seem incoherent to some as they speak in so many voices of so many obstacles and injustices, that there is at the core a powerful root connecting all. The love of money has caused some to lose sight of their own humanity and the humanity of others. The Occupiers know this and stand firm demanding that we see.

We hear you, we see and we pray that when detractors step in to derail you, to pit one against another or to threaten with violence -- trying to induce you to violence -- that you will hold to your vision. Your peaceful, steadfast insistence is a triumph. Keep fast to your vision - "the society that we want -- a society organized around the needs of everyone" We watch as you work on streets and park grounds in an effort to give birth to that vision. You have inspired a great many. We are proud of you. And though we all can not stand -- physically --with you each day, we are with you, and we will join you -- physically --as we can, on a lunch hour, when our children are at school when there is a neighbor present to whom we can pass along the message. Some will write letters to newspapers, some will call mayors and police precincts, some will make sure you are fed, some will find an Occupy presence in a relatively nearby town, if only for a Sunday afternoon, so that others in all corners may see. Some will try, still, to engage with elected officials pleading that they free themselves from the influence of money that has all but destroyed our democracy. Some will listen patiently, insisting on love. Some will wonder at their own crippling worship of money. Some will quietly resolve. Some will step forward. In whatever form it may take, the nitty-gritty Love that pushes past fear, discomfort, ignorance and hatred will bring us into the light. Thank you to all who are peacefully and powerfully leading us forward ...

## **OCCUPY!**

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*Please send submissions to [oscargrantplazagazette@gmail.com](mailto:oscargrantplazagazette@gmail.com) or drop a hard copy by the information tent at Oscar Grant Plaza. We will endeavor to publish all materials received. For the purposes of collective self-defense we will reserve the right to decline to run materials which would render us legally liable.*