

# The Oscar Grant Plaza Gazette

*Tuesday, October 25, 2011*

*Day 16*

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## ***THIS IS WHAT A POLICE STATE LOOKS LIKE***

Starting at about 4:45am this morning, Tuesday, October 25, approximately 500 police in riot gear attacked and destroyed the Occupy Oakland encampment at Oscar Grant Plaza. Eyewitness reports as well as coverage from the *San Jose Mercury News* confirm the presence of officers from the Alameda County Sheriff's Department, Oakland, Berkeley, UC Berkeley, Pleasanton, Hayward, Fremont, Walnut Creek, Union City Newark, Santa Clara, San Francisco, and San Jose, as well as the California Highway Patrol.

*In other words, it takes the better part of the police force of central California in order to violently repress the legitimate political will of the people.*

Police attacked the peaceful protest with flash grenades, tear gas, and rubber bullets after moving in with armored vehicles. Police established barricades as far apart as 11th and 17th. Over 70 people were arrested and the camp gear was destroyed and/or stolen by the riot police.

The LA Times confirms eyewitness reports to the *Gazette* that the police assaulted the peaceful protest with tear gas, rubber bullets, and flash-bang grenades after moving in with military-style armored vehicles. (A military veteran mentioned concerning this type of grenade : "They use them in Iraq. And also in parks in downtown Oakland.") Barricades were established as far apart as 11th and 17th Streets. Between 70 and 90 arrests are reported.

A call has gone out for all concerned persons to gather at the Oakland Public Library, 25 14th Street -- phone number (510) 238-3134. Please join us & show your solidarity! Occupy Oakland is not finished. It has only begun.

Also please consider contacting the office of Mayor Jean Quan, to let her know what you think of the outrageous behavior she signed off on : (510) 238-3141.

<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/Mayor/a/ContactUs/index.htm>

Let Arturo Sanchez, Mayor Quan's Special Advisor on Public Safety, know how safe 500 riot cops make *you* feel : (510) 238-7542

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***"NOW IN THE MIND INDESTRUCTIBLE" :***

# ***OUR GAZETTE WILL NOT CEASE !***

The following is a personal report from *Gazette* staff on what we saw in the incredible two-week flowering of Occupy Oakland at Oscar Grant Plaza, brutally destroyed this morning by a paramilitary operation of 500+ police. Despite this criminal abuse on the part of the city and the police, we here at the *Gazette* have committed to continue to report on an movement that the cops can repress, but whose spirit can never be destroyed.

In his epic *Cantos*, poet Ezra Pound wrote of the African city Wagadu, destroyed four times by men but "now in the mind indestructible." Because we have seen it, we can rebuild it from our hearts and with our hands. The spirit of the *Gazette*, and of Occupy Oakland, is, we believe, "now in the mind indestructible."

*Before this morning's paramilitary attack on the peaceful (sleeping!) occupation of circa 200 tents, Occupy Oakland had celebrated its two-week anniversary at Oscar Grant Plaza (renamed in honor of Oscar Grant, a African-American victim of police murder aboard a BART train in Oakland). The stories are far too numerous to tell in short compass : over the past weeks I've met literally hundreds of people, of all races & class backgrounds, and shared unbelievable stories of economic injustice and police abuse, but also hope for the future, a hope literally being born out of the miraculous social space that we collectively created. Thousands of hours of love & work went into that encampment. Literally thousands of people were fed in a free kitchen which ran on donated food and donated labor. An honor-system lending library to which I donated dozens of books (along with other supporters including local presses AK Press & PM Press) was set up in the Raheim Brown Free School -- an educational institution named after another young African-American man, shot dead by police in a parked car. Daily General Assemblies drew crowds of hundreds daily, who learned how to participate in direct-democratic decision-making processes which were based on consensus models evolved in activist and anarchist communities, but whose spirit descends directly from Athenian democracy.*

*The Oscar Grant Plaza Gazette, a daily one-sheet, has been appearing since the third day of the occupation. Today will be its twelfth issue. On the model of New York's Occupied Wall Street Journal, the Gazette was designed both to let interested passersby know what the occupation was about and to serve as an information outlet for the camp itself.*

*Like Occupy Oakland itself, the Gazette will continue despite this morning's cruel, brutal and disgraceful police repression. Today's issue will report on the state violence brought by the office of Mayor Jean Quan on a group of American citizens exercising their right to peaceable assembly, as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and will call on all readers to come out today at 4pm to the Oakland Public Library (14th & Oak in downtown Oakland), so that we can collectively decide as citizens how we will respond to this criminal action on the part of our elected officials -- a default on their basic responsibility, which is to defend the highest law of the land.*

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## ***"LIKE A WAR ZONE": REPORT FROM THE RAID***

The *Gazette* spoke with an eyewitness to the police invasion of Oscar Grant Plaza this morning. (This informant, a veteran of the US Army, was able on account of military experience to recognize the weapons wielded by the 500+ police who attacked Occupy Oakland this morning ; the officer above is pointing a tactical shotgun -- presumably at an unarmed protestor just out of the frame. Below is a direct transcription of the report offered by our eyewitness.

*They destroyed the camp. Batons.*

*Pleasanton, UC Berkeley, Walnut Creek, San Francisco, Oakland. Hundreds (Five hundred.)*

*Tear gas, batons, Mark 19 grenade launchers, riot gears, shotguns & tear gas guns. Batons in free use.*

*People dragged out en masse from tents in Snow Park, six cops per person.*

*The camp was devastated, it was like a bomb went off.*

*Wherever people were massing, they sent hordes after them. Closing off all points of exit, leaving a pressure valve, but if you went the wrong way you just ran into more cops.*

*Tons of paddy wagons.*

*It was a paramilitary force.*

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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!

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## ***OAKLAND'S SHAME : COPS WRECK OUR FREE KITCHEN, WHICH HAS FED THOUSANDS***

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## ***WE SMELL A RAT : LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER SPEAKS OUT ON "SANITATION" AT THE PLAZA***

*[NOTE : This article was written yesterday [Monday, 10/24/2011], before the brutal paramilitary raid on a peaceful protest of sleeping U.S. citizens by a paramilitary force of 500+ police. It is published today to underline the way in which the misleading stories told by corporate media in cahoots with city government serve to justify state violence and brutality against citizens exercising their constitutional rights.]*

Foremost among the pretexts that the city of Oakland is offering for the "necessity" of shutting down the peaceable protest at Oscar Grant Plaza is the sanitation problem raised by rats, which apparently, according to the mayor's office, only became a problem when the protest started two weeks ago. (Happy Two-Week Birthday Occupy Oakland!) The Oakland Tribune, faithfully parroting the city's line, even headlined a front-page story "Oh, Rats!" & reported that the city "may have to" shut down the "tent city" (i.e. the encampment of two hundred tents peacefully engaged in protest, a right guaranteed to all citizens by the First Amendment to the US Constitution, the highest law of the land.) We may remark in passing that the pressing political concerns that the national & international Occupy movement as a whole is forcing to the attention of the world, clearly and powerfully trump the pathetic pretexts of safety and sanitation that the city is attempting to present as an excuse to destroy the peoples' encampment with the state violence of armed police, who are ready at a moment's notice to wade in with batons and "show these people what law and order is all about" (a sentence uttered by a National Guard officer on the day when four American students were killed by our government at Kent State University -- a social disaster which we would all do well to remember in these days of political resistance to state oppression and the threat of violence from police).

By now it's clear to everyone that if violence is going to come to Oscar Grant Plaza, it's going to be brought by the police and other forces of state violence traditionally levelled against oppressed minorities and political dissidents. The Oakland Tribune and other city-friendly media are working hand-in-glove with the state to create a narrative according to which it is "inevitable" that state violence be brought to bear on the rabble. (That's us -- you know, the 99%.) "We had no other choice," they'll say in the days to come ; "They left us no alternative." (Those of us who are old enough to remember the Vietnam War will remember this sentence : "We had to destroy the village in order to save it." Remember that logic when the state brings its hateful violence to our peaceful occupation at Oscar Grant Plaza.)

These sentences, that we're all going to hear, from city flacks up and down the line, are LIES, and LIKE ALL LIES THEY MUST BE RESISTED, REFUTED, DENOUNCED, with all our strength.

This is not inevitable. They do have a choice.

Occupy Oakland at Oscar Grant Plaza is a peaceable assembly. All American citizens are GUARANTEED the right to PEACEABLE ASSEMBLY by the FIRST AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION. The city's claim to be able to regulate that right, is a LIE. REFUSE IT.

For a reality check on the city's claims, we asked a local food vendor who has worked in the area for the years to respond to the city's claims -- here's what that vendor had to say (brackets are editorial emendations for clarity ; we have not altered any factual statement):

"I [have been] in business at the Frank Ogawa Plaza for the past 7 years. A problem I had to contend [with] every day was and is ... the infestation of rats in the plaza. Since I serve food, I made sure that we did not generate food residuals that will land in the plaza and attract rats, but the homeless population always generated enough food scraps to feed the rats. I brought this issue to the city authorities and the Alameda County -Vector control management. I have not seen much change during the 7 years I [have been] operating my shop, still the problem of rats is of our concern."

In other words, rats have been a problem on the plaza for seven years, but as long as it was only the concern of the homeless population and some small business owners, the city didn't give a rat's ass. Only now that a vibrant and powerful political protest is underway (a protest which, by the way, has already fed thousands of people, free of charge with donated food and labor, in the two weeks of its existence to date) do they suddenly care -- in fact, they care enough to use it as a pretext to try to evict the protest, to foreclose on us the way the banks have foreclosed on million of homeowners in recent years. Down here at the Gazette we smell a rat. Take a deep whiff of what's coming out of the Tribune & out of city hall, and we bet you will too.

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## ***JUDGE FOR YOURSELVES : WHICH GROUP*** ***PICTURED ABOVE IS ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HISTORY?***

### **OCCUPYOAKLAND @ TWITTER : VOICE OF THE MOVEMENT**

The corporate media's deliberate blackout of the Occupy movement has meant that technologies of social media have become the best ways not only to communicate, but to get the news about what's going on in real time. It was true in Egypt, now it's true in Oakland. As 500 riot cops descended on Oscar Grant Plaza, we were all kept informed by the Media Committee's Twitter feed. (To follow Occupy Oakland's twitter text "follow occupyoakland" to your carrier's shortcode.) Below we reproduce selections from this morning's communiques -- follow the reports chronologically by reading down the left column first, followed by the right.

#OccupyOakland facing eviction threats tonight: come support. also, everyone check out the legal website Occupylegal.info	#occupyoakland emergency reconvergence plan activated. Reconverge 4pm at oakland public library main branch 14th & madison.TELL EVERYONE
#Leave a comment on the mayor's FB page if you want: facebook.com/MayorJeanQuan	#This is what freedom of assembly looks like in America: yfrog.com/klq26mcj OPD drag protester at #OccupyOakland
#Happy 2 week birthday #occupyoakland !!!	#OPD had breakdown in communication, they tear-gassed their own officers!
#Cops are here please come help	#OPD raiding #SnowPark now.
#Full on alert.. Livestreamers needed on the scene	#Let oakland's mayor, @jeanquan know how you feel about her choice to abrogate citizens right to freely assemble at #occupyoakland
#Cops sighted. No encounter yet.	# arrestees being taken to north county jail at 6th & washington; overflow
#@Occupy_USA Send warriors, send peacekeepers... The struggle intensifies! Looks like a Police raid	#Confirmed 1-150 cops raiding snow park.
#Police raid not confirmed. Officers sighted marching in formation.	#70 occupiers arrested.
#Cops staging at federal building, seen with helmets in large numbers 2 blocks away	#RT @garonsen: There are dozens of Oakland PD here, as well as cops from Vacaville, Emoryville, and Fremont.
#Cops are here	#RECONVENE AT 4PM OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY
#POLICE HERE. NOT A DRILL	#STAY STRONG #ows
#Police have arrived at occupy Oakland	#The only thing "unsafe and unsanitary" in Oakland is the damn cops. Filth filth filth.
#Police have declared #occupyoakland an unlawful assembly. Ordering people to disperse.	#Because of heavy police activity, those who work in downtown Oakland are advised to not come into work until further notice.
#Massive numbers of cops at #occupyoakland. Totally surrounded!	#to the proud people of #occupyoakland: stand strong. the people of #occupymelbourne support you.
#cops surrounded us - riot cops, armored vehicles, projectile guns At least 100 cop cars, vans and hummers... hundreds and hundreds of cops	#RECONVENE AT 4PM OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY, 14TH & MADISON
#gas projectile guns spotted, marching band is playing hard still	#their rubber bullets, tear gas, flash grenades, rubber bullets, and helicopters cant stop the movement
#flash grenades rubber bullets fired camp has fallen	#Meet at public library - 14th and Madison at 4pm instead.
#@Occupy_USA Live from Oakland - rubber bullets, flash grenades fired	#Nobody in downtown oakland is being allowed to go to work today.
#Tear gas and rubber bullets being used	#hayward, union city police brought out the bearcats [armored military vehicles] this AM
#The Police are the army of Capital!	#Rolling into the jail. Loads of comradery. Occupy together!!!
#"courageous" Jean Quan, first Asian American woman mayor of the US, decides to send 500 cops at 4am to teargas & raid #OccupyOakland	#Horrible, am ashamed of my city.
#occupyoakland attacked by 500 cops in surprise assault. tear gas, rubber bullets, shotguns, flash bang grenades. Many injured.	#OPD trashed our camp, but we'll be back bigger and stronger.
#Still no word from expansion camp. We march back to the plaza at 4pm tomorrow.	#March today from Dewey in solidarity with occupyoakland #occupyboston
#Marching band still goes on	#Those working in downtown Oakland should not stay home but should come witness how this city demolished democracy.
#Police protect the 1%!	#Emergency demonstration 4PM OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY, 14TH & MADISON. Bring your love & rage !

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. We are committed to continued daily publication despite state repression. Please send us your writing – you are part of this movement ! & Send submissions to [oscargrantplazagazette@gmail.com](mailto:oscargrantplazagazette@gmail.com) -- we'll strive to publish all materials received. We reserve the right to decline to run materials which would render us legally liable.