



Wednesday, JANUARY 25th, 2012

DAY 107

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WE WANT YOUR WORDS.
PLEASE SEND YOUR REFLECTIONS, ANALYSIS, ROGUE REPORTING,
STORIES & POEMS ABOUT OCCUPY TO
GAZETTE@OSCARGRANT PLAZA GAZETTE.COM

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KEEPING SOLIDARITY WITH OUR JAILED COMRADES: TRUTH

Last friday I went to Glenn Dyer jail to meet with Truth, thirty seven and a lifetime resident of West Oakland, our comrade since day one. The first day he came down because he heard there was a place starting where he could speak his mind. He stayed because he saw the opportunity to build a new society of cooperation and mutual respect, without the “money that causes the ‘I’m better than you’ or ‘you’re better than me.’” He was arrested at the general strike on November 2nd and has been held in custody ever since, ostensibly because his charges from Nov. 2nd constitute probation violation.

Truth believes otherwise.

“When in history,” he said, “have you ever seen a Black man stand up for a group of his brothers and sisters that were every color. I saw thirty of my brothers and sisters on the ground, hog tied, I stood up.” Later on in our conversation he elaborated, “they scared ‘cause we all coming together, all nationalities learning how to make it all happen together, without money. Something *big* is happening, all over the world, and they’re afraid. That’s why they keep me here.” Before his incarceration, Truth was a regular attendee of morning camp meetings. He said that after the camp meeting he would patrol the plaza, picking up trash and trying to stop conflicts so the rest of the day’s meetings could go on unhindered. “I love our world,” he said, “it’s a different world we built, I had the life I always wanted. I finally felt like I was home and then they put me in jail, back in *their* society. But the more hate they show me, the longer they keep me inside, the more I want to get out and occupy.”

“The camp was a way to have everyone participate. We want to be heard. We want to be loved, not judged. Everything has to come from the heart. We’re doing what we’re doing because we see a better way—we’re only a crumb, but we need the whole cake if we’re gonna pull this thing off. The most important thing is to keep occupying. Don’t shut nobody out and stay peaceful.”

Visiting hours for Truth are Fridays 12:00-3:00 – you must sign up for this visit between 9:30am and 2:00pm, and Sunday 8:00am – 11:00am – sign up times are from 7:15- 10:00am. Each visit is 30 minutes and Truth is allowed 2 visits per designated day. When you sign up to visit you must present a valid form of identification and his PRN number #AWK373

Write to Truth at: Eric Benard-PFN#AWK373, Glenn E. Dyer Detention Facility, 550 6th St., Oakland CA 94607

Truth’s next court date is January 31st at 2pm at Rene Davidson courthouse on 12th and Oak street. Department 11.

OAKLAND RISEUP FESTIVAL CALL OUT FOR SUPPLIES

The January 28 Move-In Day is approaching and we are still short of supplies. Please refer to our wish-list below for material donations in order to make our future community center a vibrant, comfortable and welcoming space. Our funds are limited, but we believe that as a community we can provide for most of our needs. Some essentials are marked with an asterisk. You can either bring donations to Oscar Grant Plaza next Sunday (1/22) from 11:30 am until sunset or wed (1/25) between 4:30pm and 8:00 pm. Or alternatively get in touch with us to arrange a pick-up by emailing move-in-logistics@occupyoakland.org or by calling 510-7408253.

Thank you,

Occupy Oakland Move-In Logistics

Kitchen

Massive amounts of food *
Utensils/Plates *
Dishwashing tubs
Non-toxic dish soap or distilled vinegar
Dish Cloths
Hand Sanitizer *
plastic gloves *

Building

Generator *
Folding chairs *
Folding tables *
Couches
Porta Potties *
Duct Tape
Light Bulbs
Wireless-G Router
Carpet/Rugs
Sleeping bags *
Sleeping pads and other cushioning *

pillows *
blankets *
floodlights *
ladders *
bookshelves *
books *
gardening supplies *
white boards *

Security

Flashlights *
Walkie Talkies *
Chains *
Pad Locks *
Bolt Cutters
Fire Extinguishers *
toilet paper
bike locks
bandanas *
face masks *
respirators *

Sanitation

Brooms *
Trash Bags *
Drain Snake (for clogged plumbing)
Vacuum cleaners
Trash Cans *
Dustpans *
Buckets *
Mops/Squeegees *
Towels *
Sponges *

Decoration

Large stretches of fabric *
Paint *
Brushes *
Rope *
Art Materials *
Artwork *
Rope *
? *

TAKING ACTION FOR OURSELVES, TAKING ACTION FOR THE COMMUNITY:

After a weekend of workshops and festival, let's block the auction of another unjustly foreclosed home!

GMAC (also known as Ally Financial), a bank that received a \$16.3 billion bailout, has served the Cisse family of West Oakland with a foreclosure notice. Siaka Cisse requested two loan modifications and was refused both times. First they justified the denial by saying his reported income was too high. After Siaka was wrongfully terminated from his job, GMAC refused to modify the loan because his income was too low. The Cisses have been making consistent payments on their home for ten years. GMAC has resolved to evict this family of six and put the house up for auction.

All Siaka wants is to delay the auction for 3 months. This would give the Cisses time to make arrangements.

The Cisses have every right to stay in their home and have been trying for six months to work with the bank. GMAC was bailed out when the economy got rough, but working people like Siaka Cisse received no stimulus check and continue to be preyed upon by big lenders.

Shutting down this auction in solidarity with the Cisse family means standing up against a system that keeps working class people struggling for survival.

Meet on the grass at 14th and Lakeside at **11:00 am on Monday, January 30th**. *Please bring whistles, noisemakers, your loud voices and anything else you can get past courthouse security to disrupt this auction.* United against the forces that exploit us, we have the power to win!

Contact the East Bay Solidarity Network for more info: eastbaysol@gmail.com

OCCUPY RESPONDS TO ILWU & EGT TENTATIVE AGREEMENT FOR LONGVIEW

Occupations will continue to mobilize until the agreement is finalized by ILWU membership (reprinted from occupyoakland.org)

Portland, OR – The West Coast Occupy Movement is acknowledging a temporary agreement has been reached between the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and grain company EGT. ILWU Local 21 in Longview, WA has been locked in an ongoing labor dispute with the Bunge-backed grain conglomerate. The company, majority-owned by international grain conglomerate Bunge, recently sat down at the table with the ILWU on the heels of an international mobilization by Occupy and many in the Labor Movement in solidarity.

“This temporary agreement is a step towards meeting the needs of the Longview community and respecting the jurisdiction of the Longshore union, but is not a permanent contract. Occupy will continue mobilizing until rank-and-file Longshore workers declare permanent victory,” said Paul Nipper, organizer with Occupy Longview.

Washington Governor Christine Gregoire has taken credit for bringing the parties to the table and ILWU International

President Robert McElrath has been negotiating with the company since Sunday. Anonymous sources indicate that President McElrath has negotiated a tentative agreement, which states that no work at the terminal in Longview will be performed until a labor agreement is reached. Any agreement on contracts between management (EGT) and workers (ILWU) must be voted on by the membership of the ILWU.

“All work on the Occupy Caravan to Longview must continue. It will be the rank-and-file of Local 21 who determine whether or not this is a victory. A vote on the contract will be our first indicator of rank-and-file’s position and we can’t stop mobilizing until that is decided,” says Jess Kincaid, organizer with Occupy Portland. “Good faith negotiating by EGT means that no ship will dock at the Port of Longview grain elevator until an agreement has been reached,” added Kincaid.

Organizers from the Occupy Movement claim this tentative agreement as a victory for the workers, for social movements, and for the 99%. *Occupy Oakland organizer Barucha Peller said, “Our organizing around this struggle was a key factor in this temporary victory for the working people of Longview.” The Occupy Movement engages in new forms of struggle in the interest of the working class in the US and around the world. We will continue to put pressure on EGT and their parent company Bunge Ltd until the rank-and-file workers’ have seen some justice. Beyond this labor struggle, we will still work to hold Bunge Ltd. accountable for their despicable labor and environmental record around the world. Bunge’s actions are not unique; this is symptomatic of larger problems with our economic system.”

EGT Development is owned primarily by Bunge Ltd, an international agribusiness holding company. Bunge has been accused of tax avoidance and labor law violations in Brazil and in Argentina. Bunge North America also has a history of union disputes and union-busting in the United States. According to Greanpeace and Rainforset Action Network, Bunge’s soybean production is a major contributor to rainforest destruction [source<<http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/habitats/last-of-amazon/#page=3>>]. They have also been accused of buying soy from plantations in Brazil which are blacklisted by the Brazilian government for the use of slave labor [source<<http://ran.org/rainforest-action-network-protests-bunge-shareholder-meeting>>].

Supporters of the Longview workers are still planning to mobilize if needed, but are asking the caravan to wait for official word on the contract negotiation outcome. If in fact the membership of ILWU Local 21 approve a contract, Occupy will mobilize in celebration of this victory for the community of Longview and workers everywhere.

Updates can be found at www.OccupyTheEGT.org

*This release has been approved by the Solidarity with Longview working groups of Occupy Oakland, Occupy Portland, Occupy Longview, and Occupy Seattle. *

OAKLAND'S DIRTY WAR: An Analysis of Repression at the Plaza

...[I]n Oakland more than anywhere else, friendly weather and sustained militancy have given rise to a different [law enforcement] approach, one similarly premised on chipping away at the movement through attrition and fatigue but doing so in a far more repressive manner. One key ingredient to this peculiar constellation of forces is the empty vessel perched atop the city government: Mayor Jean Quan. Quan was discredited long ago and from all sides, hated by the left for unleashing the near fatal attacks on Occupy Oakland in October, and by the right (represented by OPD and the City Council) for not taking a harder line. Now, having opted to vacillate rather than stand on the side of history, she will simply be hoping to serve out her term and avoid an embarrassing recall campaign.

This vacillation has been nowhere clearer than on the question of the epic Port Shutdowns on November 2nd and December 12th, the first of which catapulted Occupy Oakland to the forefront of the national movement, and the second of which demonstrated a capacity for coordinated militancy not seen in this country for decades at least. Since it was Quan who took the heat for the unrestrained actions of police in October, one could hardly blame the Mayor for hesitating to unleash OPD and other forces against those blocking the port. ..[F]or now at least, OPD’s hands are at least partially tied, and the full-on assaults of many an officer’s dream go unfulfilled for now.

Blocked from engaging in a brutal war of maneuver, OPD’s strategy has been a different one, and what remains of Occupy Oakland’s presence in Oscar Grant Plaza has seen small raids with a handful of arrests several times a week. While some interpret this half-heartedness by the forces of order as a sign of impotence, the frequency, the timing, and the serious charges incurred in the raids speak to a more sinister strategy.

“Shit’s Gonna Pop”

I arrived at Oscar Grant Plaza in the immediate aftermath of one such raid on Friday, December 30th, where rebels circulated through the plaza denouncing the most recent skirmish. Some still carried their belongings in the familiar plastic bags, souvenirs from a recent trip to Santa Rita County Jail. The rage is palpable and growing, with many pronouncing that “shit’s gonna pop” in somber tones, and another occupier angrily insisting that “they’ll see me in hell before they see me in jail.”

Just an hour earlier, a small OPD contingent had swept into the plaza and snatched a selected few who were gathered there. Those targeted included Brian Glasscock, an Occupy Oakland organizer well-known to Oakland Police as the sound operator for many Occupy events. It was for this reason, rather than any illegal activity, that Glasscock was identified by Lieutenant Hamilton, who had targeted him previously over sound system issues, and arrested for inciting a riot. “I think their strategy is to target those they know have been around doing things and throw them in jail hoping that something will stick,” Glasscock explained to me.

This strategy was perhaps clearest in the case of Tiffany Tran, a young occupier who faced felony charges under California’s Lynching Law. Just as police have recently begun to arrest Copwatchers who record their activities under felony wiretapping laws

originally intended to control the police themselves, so too is this so-called “lynching” a case of inverting a law’s original intention. Originally designed to prevent Black Americans from being seized from the hands of police by lynch mobs, this law has been deployed recently to criminalize the practice of “de-arresting” those in police custody...

Requiescat in Pace, Habeas Corpus

While the charges thrown at protesters have been consistently ridiculous and few have stood up in court, Glasscock insists that “if nothing sticks then they’ve at least fucked with that person’s week.” And in this case, the police strategy was to hold those arrested for almost an *entire* week: strategically arresting protesters on a Friday, and before a holiday weekend no less, meant that the habeas corpus guidelines requiring that arrestees be charged within 48 hours of arrest were flexible at best. Since this refers to 48 *business* hours, neither the weekend nor the Monday holiday were included, and anger mounted outside the courtroom late Tuesday afternoon as it became increasingly clear that the authorities would wait until the last possible minute to drop the charges.

Walter Riley, lawyer for those arrested and father of rapper Boots Riley, who has played a key role in the Occupy organizing around the port shutdowns, complained loudly that the actions of the police and the District Attorney constituted a transparent attack on habeas corpus, and that more direct pressure needs to be brought to bear to make it clear that we won’t accept such strategies. But given the national offensive against habeas corpus embodied in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), local authorities might rightly sense that no federal authority will leap to defend the occupiers. It was little surprise when, despite this extended display of punitive power, the charges against all those arrested were later dropped after some had spent nearly 5 days behind bars.

But there would be little time for celebration when those arrested were released on Wednesday, as OPD again swept into the plaza later that evening in a repeat performance of the prior week. Again, there were a handful of arrests. Again, these were highly targeted, with eyewitnesses recounting how police broke off to arrest occupiers who had crossed the street to avoid a conflict. The vocal and militant Tactical Action Committee seemed to be the primary target, with some of the previous arrestees overhearing guards talking about how they wanted to get one member in particular. And again, the charges would have been laughable were they not a part of a broader and overarching strategy of containment.

Targeted Terror

One occupier known as Ali had become a clear target for repression due to his visibility, and even those arrested on the 30th had overheard officers discussing how they hoped to get their hands on him. On Wednesday the 4th, OPD seemed determined to do just that, chasing Ali across the street to arrest him. When they did so, he explained to me, officer Phan reached into his back pocket before feigning surprise and insisting that he was “going away for a long time” because they had found him to be in possession of ecstasy. Some in the Anti-Repression Committee believe that it was only the presence of the Livestream camera, and the fact that Ali immediately began to shout about the attempt to plant drugs, that prevented the charges from being successfully fabricated. Ali was later charged with misdemeanor obstruction.

A member of the recently-formed Anti-Repression and Solidarity Committee (ARC) of Occupy Oakland explained to me that the movement has seen in recent weeks a broad arc of repression, beginning on December 28th with the clearing of a small camp established in West Oakland by the Tactical Action Committee, followed the next day by the raid and arrests at an occupied house on Mandela Parkway. The most recent raids were but an upping of the stakes, she explained, adding that “I think the idea is that if they can bog us down in as many legal battles as possible, we won’t be able to restart this movement... Why would they come and raid the plaza when it’s just an info table and a food tent? They’re afraid if they don’t get rid of it it will just get bigger.”

Laleh, also a member of the ARC, feels that beyond merely the organizational toll taken by the targeting of key committee members, the police strategy is one of terror. “The fact that they have been chasing particular people and ignoring others has had a psychological effect, instilling a terror in people that wasn’t there before.” If these were isolated cases they could be accidental, she argues, but the fact that groups have been repeatedly arrested, slapped with charges, and held for days only to see the charges dismissed “makes the strategy clear.” The District Attorney needs to step in and restrain the OPD, she insists.

This strategy also includes both fishing for parolees and attempting to provoke prisoners. “Everyone who is coming out is reporting targeting and segregation while in country jail, all kinds of physical abuse, taunting by COs, and even sleep deprivation,” Laleh explains, and all this in an effort to get a reaction that can lead to more charges (this seems to have been at play in the case of an occupier named Khali, who is being charged with assaulting an officer after his psychiatric medication was reportedly withheld for days).

Thankfully, though, not everyone is terrified, and an anonymous ARC member sees signs of the breakdown of the strategy of attrition both by occupiers and by the police themselves: at a “Fuck the Police March” called in response to the arrests, OPD officers clearly went beyond what the city had hoped, knocking a woman off her bike and beating her, firing rubber bullets, and allegedly breaking another marcher’s arm. More importantly still, the OPD’s strategy of low-level warfare “isn’t scaring people, it’s only making them angrier.”

When the Philadelphia Police Department wanted to destroy the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), they did not feel hindered by legal niceties: police arrested the RAM membership nearly every day on imaginary charges, knowing full well the toll taken on movements by even demonstrating the falseness of the ridiculous. Now, faced with the Occupy Movement, it would seem as though some local police agencies are once again taking a page from the PPD playbook on coercive attrition. Legality and its opposite thus march hand-in-hand, as a movement is harassed with impunity...

The Oscar Grant Plaza Gazette (oscargrantplazagazette.com) aims to be a voice & record of the historic Occupy Oakland movement (occupyoakland.org), 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! Send submissions to gazette@oscargrantplazagazette.com-- we’ll strive to publish all materials received. We reserve the right to decline to run materials which would render us legally liable.