

A Call for Mass Action Against the Suppression of the Occupy Movement

These past several months have witnessed something very different in the U.S. People from many different walks of life came together to occupy public space in nearly 1,000 cities in the U.S. They stood up to vicious police violence, they broke through the confines of “protest as usual,” and in the middle of all that, they built community. Even in the face of media attempts to ridicule, distort, and demonize these protests, their basic message began to get through. People throughout the U.S.—and even the world—took notice of and took heart from these brave and creative protesters.

The political terms of discourse began to shift; the iced-over thinking of people in the U.S. began to thaw. Standing up to the unjust brutality and arrests became a badge of honor. People began to listen to and read the stories of some of the victims of this economic crisis, and to share their own. And most of all, as the protests spread to city after city, the fact of people occupying public space forced open debate and raised big questions among millions as to what kind of society this is, and what it should be. Why does such poverty and need exist in the face of a relative handful of people amassing obscene amounts of wealth? Why do the political institutions of society seem only to serve that handful? Why do so many youth feel they face such a bleak future? Why does the insane destruction of the environment continue to accelerate? And what is needed to overcome all this?

Those who actually wield power in this country regarded these protests, and these questions, as dangerous, and reacted accordingly. Time and again those who wield power violated their own laws and ordered police to pepper spray, beat with clubs, and shoot tear gas canisters at the heads of people who were doing nothing more than non-violently expressing their dissent and seeking community. This reached a peak in the recent coordinated and systematic attacks of the past few weeks against all the major occupations. In fact, the mayor of Oakland admitted on BBC to being part of conference calls that coordinated national strategy against the occupiers. On top of all that, and in another blatant show of illegitimate force and power, they attempted to prevent journalists and photographers from covering these acts of repression—unless they were “embedded” with the police.

To put the matter bluntly, but truly: the state planned and unleashed naked and systematic violence and repression against people attempting to exercise rights that are supposed to be legally guaranteed. This response by those who wield power in this society is utterly shameful from a moral standpoint, and thoroughly illegitimate from a legal and political one.

Now this movement faces a true crossroads. Will it be dispersed, driven into the margins, or co-opted? Or will it come back stronger? This question now poses itself, extremely sharply.

One thing *is* clear already: if this illegitimate wave of repression is allowed to stand... if the powers-that-be succeed in suppressing or marginalizing this new movement... if people are once again “penned in”—both literally and symbolically—things will be much worse. **THIS SUPPRESSION MUST BE MASSIVELY OPPOSED, AND DEFEATED.**

On the other hand, this too is true: movements grow, and can only grow, by answering repression with even greater and more powerful mobilization.

The need to act is urgent.

As a first step in the necessary response, there must be a massive political mobilization on a day, or days, very soon to say **NO!** to this attempt to suppress thought and expression with brutality and violence. This mobilization should most of all be in New York, where this movement started... but it should at the same time be powerfully echoed all around the country and yes, around the world. **This is a call for massive demonstrations—soon—carried out in public spaces where they can have maximum impact and exposure and where the authorities cannot pen in, suppress, and otherwise attempt to marginalize these demonstrations.**

These demonstrations must be large enough to show clearly that people will not tolerate that which is intolerable... that people will not adjust to that which is so manifestly *unjust*. Such demonstrations, along with the efforts to reach out and build them, can draw many more people from passive sympathy into active support and can awaken and inspire even millions more who have not yet been reached. Such demonstrations can powerfully answer the attempt by “the 1%” to crush and/or derail this broad movement. Thousands and thousands in the streets, acting together, can seize new initiative and change the whole political equation. The urgent questions raised by Occupy—and other urgent questions that have yet to be raised in this movement—can once more reverberate, and more powerfully than before.

**The repression of the Occupy movement must not stand.
Act.**

[Please circulate the above statement, in social media or as a flyer. Add your name at the bottom, or send it out as a statement of your group.]

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