

Boston protesters denounce raid on Occupy Wall Street

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16 November 2011

Protesters at the Occupy Boston camp were outraged over the early morning raid Tuesday on Occupy Wall Street in lower Manhattan, during which protesters were cleared from their encampment and police carried out mass arrests. A sign outside the Boston tent city read: “At 2 AM on Nov. 15—Without Warning—NYPD Raided Occupy Wall Street.”

Protesters here are concerned over the wave of police violence unleashed against Occupy camps across the country in recent days. Although there have been no open threats as of yet from city authorities, they sense that similar methods could be used in an attempt to shut down Occupy Boston. On October 11, Boston police arrested 147 people, including legal observers, clearing out protesters from an expanded area of their encampment.

The WSWs spoke to Aimee Ortiz and Allison Sebastiani, students from Boston University who were at the Occupy Boston camp on Tuesday, about the New York raid. Aimee said, “They shall make no law abridging freedom of the press—that is the first thing that has been drilled into me as a journalism major. And they blocked out the media. They not only violated freedom of assembly and freedom of speech in New York, they violated freedom of the press.”

“They had fire trucks going inside; they weren’t letting the press inside. They confiscated the press pass ID of one correspondent, from NBC, I believe. One reporter tweeted that there was a possibility of being arrested just for being inside Occupy Wall Street. NBC was cleared from the sky because helicopters were shining lights on them and they weren’t able to get any action, any feed. They destroyed the First Amendment.”

“We’re involved in our own school’s version of Students Occupy Boston,” Allison said. “We had a one-night protest last week.”

Aimee described the response of university officials to their small protest: “They sent out about 10 cops for 20 students, plus a paddy wagon and an unmarked car. They had two detail cops there all night. They had one regular cop car and an SUV. It’s really preparations for a police state.”

They discussed how similar student protests have begun to spring up around the city, including at Harvard and Northeastern universities. Students are facing skyrocketing tuition costs and graduate saddled with massive student loan debts.

Allison commented on the huge cost of obtaining a degree at Boston University. “Right now our yearly tuition and room and board is about \$55,000,” she said. “It’s just unbelievable.”

Asked about the likelihood of Boston authorities moving against the Occupy Boston tent city, Aimee responded, “Let them try and shut us down. A physical space is nothing—you can’t evict an idea. We’ve already planted a seed.

“We’ve already changed the national discussion on income inequality, the fact that people are starving in the streets while corporations are reaping all this money. We’ve changed the discussion, we’ve started something. So let them try.”

Allison added, “We must be doing something, because they’re scared. And that’s good, that’s what

we want. And even though our camp doesn't physically exist in Wall Street, I woke up this morning with the sense that I need to do something; I need to be here.

"I'm not in class right now because I know there are things that need to be done. Something is happening, and if anything, this has made me stronger. And my beliefs in this movement are much stronger today after what happened last night."

Aimee agreed, saying, "They've never seen a revolution from the Internet age. We're the people, the kids that grew up with computers in our homes. We know the technology. They've never seen a revolution from us, and it's too late to stop us now. So they'd better be afraid at this point. Something's going to change. I can't tell you how, or what will happen, or any of that, but something's going to change."

Aimee and Allison were incensed over the violence that has been used against the Occupy protesters. "You should not be beating students," said Aimee. "We don't have guns, we don't have weapons. We are peaceful protesters and they were attacked."

"I read that last night at the first aid tent at Wall Street a medic came out with a stethoscope and said that someone had a heart condition. They went in, took the girl and pushed her to the ground and arrested her. And the medic said, 'She has a heart condition, give me a second.' And they just threw her to the ground. They didn't care."

"I don't understand how people are capable of such things, such malicious actions. I don't know what will happen. But if they can justify beating students, beating a woman, beating Veterans for Peace, like they did right here in Boston—if they think they can justify all of those malicious acts by saying, 'We were following orders.' Well, then, the Nazis were just following orders, too. I know my history. You can't just say you were following orders and get away with it."

Allison referred to the beating of Scott Olsen, the 24-year-old Iraq war veteran critically injured by police violence in Oakland, California: "What's going on

with that? I don't see anyone taking responsibility."

She added, "I feel very passionate about this. It's only a month, but I feel like it's been forever. The students involved, we all really care because it's our future. With this student debt, when we graduate, we're all in the same boat. We're all in this together and the solidarity between us is very strong."



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