

Police arrest 19 Occupy Portland protesters

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Police in riot gear raided an Occupy Portland encampment Saturday night, dismantling tents and making 19 arrests. Protesters, who had set up tents at Shemanski Park in downtown Portland, Oregon earlier Saturday, had been without a permanent encampment since November 13, when Democratic Mayor Sam Adams evicted them from two city parks and numerous arrests were made.

Protesters had vowed to stay at the Shemanski Park site through the winter. At about 8:30 p.m. Saturday, 50 police in riot gear moved against the protesters in South Park Blocks. Although normal park hours are 5 a.m. to 9 p.m., the Portland Parks Bureau ordered the park closed early, “due to the unsafe conditions and aggressive behavior by some demonstrators,” according to the Portland Police Bureau statement.

Police announced that anyone remaining would be arrested. (See YouTube video) At this point, some of the protesters left the camp, but others remained. According to witnesses, police decked out in RoboCop-type attire moved aggressively against the Occupy Portland camp. While Portland police claimed that protesters used one small child as a “human shield,” protesters contend it was police whose actions posed a danger to the children at the camp.

The *Oregonian* posted a photo showing the bloodied face of 15-year-old Walker Prettyman, who said police had hit him in the face with a baton. (See photos posted here) Police made 19 arrests, most facing charges of criminal trespass in the second degree and interfering with a police officer.

After the encampment was cleared, demonstrators marched to City Hall, trailed by police. One man reportedly climbed to the second story roof of City Hall and was arrested for criminal mischief and trespass. Three of the arrested protesters were booked into Multnomah County Jail, while the others were given citations to appear in court and released.

On Sunday morning, a group of about 20 protesters were back at South Park Blocks, and had set up two tents and a breakfast cart serving coffee. As of mid-morning Sunday, police had not taken further action against them. Occupy Portland planned to participate in a march Sunday morning to protest the National Defense Authorization Act, passed by the US Senate, which authorizes the military’s indefinite detention without trial of US citizens suspected of terrorism.

The arrests of Portland protesters and the clearing of their new camp follow a wave of violence in recent days against the Occupy protests nationwide as city administrations move to shut down the protests. An estimated 5,000 arrests have been made, many under the direction of Democratic Party mayors, as in Portland. Raids on encampments reportedly have been coordinated with the Obama administration’s Department of Homeland Security and the FBI.

In one of the worst instances of police violence, on November 18, a police officer at University of California, Davis systematically fired pepper spray into the faces of a dozen sitting protesters, who were subsequently arrested.

Last Thursday night, police in Florida arrested 29 Occupy Tampa protesters after members of the group refused to leave their encampment at Riverfront Park. Last Wednesday, Democratic Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa ordered police armed with rubber bullets to shut down Occupy LA, who made nearly 300 arrests. Also on Wednesday, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, another Democrat, oversaw a police raid against occupiers in that city, leading to 52 arrests.

New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, a Democrat, has notified Occupy NOLA protesters that they will no longer be allowed to camp overnight in Duncan Plaza, which they have occupied for the last two months. Some protesters had reportedly vacated the encampment by Saturday night, while others said they

planned to stay and resist any attempt to clear the park.

In Albany, New York, city authorities have sent a letter to Occupy Albany protesters ordering them to end all-night camping at Academy Park by December 22. The city, under the administration of Democratic Mayor Gerald Jennings, has cited “serious health and safety” code violations as the pretext for shutting down the camp. The city is demanding remedy of any health and safety violations by December 5. Bright red “cease and desist” orders have been attached to the outside of every tent at the Occupy Albany encampment.



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