

Detroit: “This system is rigged for a very few”

Shannon Jones
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A WSWS reporting team visited the encampment of Occupy Detroit in Grand Circus Park located downtown on Woodward Avenue near the Fox Theatre, which is nearing the completion of its first week.

On Tuesday about 50 participants and supporters of Occupy Detroit marched on the downtown branch of Bank of America to protest home foreclosures. They delivered a letter to the branch manager demanding a moratorium on home foreclosures and pointing out that the bank was the recipient of \$45 billion dollars in federal bailout money but continues to refuse to modify loans to help struggling families stay in their homes.

A larger protest in front of Bank of America offices is scheduled for Friday at noon.

Kyle Boyle, one of the organizers of Occupy Detroit, showed WSWS reporters around the encampment in Grand Circus Park. There are about 100 people camping out in tents and Kyle said the number is growing daily. The site appeared clean and well organized. It included a kitchen with a stove, a covered eating area and a medical station. “There is a constant flow of donations from the community,” said Kyle.

Kyle, who said he worked for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), spoke about what motivated him to become involved.

“This has been a long time coming. When I heard this was happening, I said, ‘I have to come.’

“There is a lot of love that has gone into this. There are a lot of problems and I am glad there are people from so many different beliefs. We are all against a lot of money that is controlling the system. We address a lot of difficult issues and reach out to the community.

“I did lobbying for nonprofits, but I got tired of it because I came to realize the politicians don’t care about you if you don’t have the money.”

Michael, a former graduate student said, “I was a Bank of America customer until I closed my account this week.

“I had been reading about the occupy Wall Street movement and I decided I wanted to support it.

“Within the last 30 years things have gotten more inordinately unequal due to policy changes. I can understand why people are getting angry and I am angry about it too. I am planning to join the encampment.

“The financial architecture has only grown the economy for the benefit of a very few. It is bad for more people than it is good for. This system is rigged for a very few.”

Lynette Johnson, a secretary, joined the march to Bank of America. She explained why she decided to participate. “They took our tax dollars to bail out the banks.”

“All I asked [was for] them to lower my mortgage to \$700 and they wouldn’t. So I lost my house.”

Her friend, who also works as a secretary, added, “It is basically about corporate greed.”

Juan Martinez, an art teacher explained, “I am here to support the occupation as a part of a world-wide movement of people who have had enough of this financial system. I stand in solidarity of people who have been screwed over by it.

“Also, I am inspired by the Arab spring. I recognize this as a part of that too. I have been waiting for this historic moment. This is a groundswell—a breaking of the silence by the majority who have felt hopeless in the face of corruption.

“I believe we are not going to get any change from the elected officials. If we want change it will have to be from the bottom up. In order to affect change we will have to challenge capitalism. We need to come up with an alternative.”



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