

Occupy Detroit: “People will possibly be killed if this keeps up”

Shannon Jones
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Nearing the completion of its second week, the Occupy Detroit encampment in Grand Circus Park on Woodward Avenue has expanded to over 150 people. The encampment includes a large kitchen and covered eating area as well as a 24-hour medical tent.

On October 21, Occupy Detroit mobilized some 300 people to march on Bank of America offices downtown to draw attention to the problem of home foreclosures, which are rampant in the Metro Detroit area.

The WSWS spoke to a number of people at the encampment about the significance of their protest. Chelsea Harabedian was a waitress and aspiring artist before joining the Occupy movement. She expressed outrage at the recent police violence directed against encampments in Oakland, California, and other cities. “I think it is unfair. All the people are doing is voicing their opinion. We are just using our rights and all they are trying to do is shut us up. People will possibly be killed if this keeps up. This is a peaceful movement. The only people being violent are the police.”

Chelsey Guevara is a volunteer in the medical tent with Occupy Detroit. She said, “I have been here since day one. I took off from school. I was at Wayne State for a year and a semester. I was in pre-pharmacy and I had to take a hiatus for financial reasons. I had been sitting at financial aid for two hours then they told me I had the wrong paperwork.

“There need to be people who are willing to step up. I think the government should help with a lot of things. I live in Canada. I came here to go to a better school, but I didn’t get the help I needed. I wanted the opportunity to go to school here.

“I wish everyone was treated fairly and given the opportunity to do what they want to do.

“I don’t want to get out of school and have all this debt and not have a job to pay back the loans. It makes

my stomach sick about how much I will owe. It is absolutely insane.”

She gave her views on the Obama administration. “I feel Obama wants everyone on his team. I feel he is very weak. I am not a Republican—I am very left. I am ready for a change.”

Justin Thyme operates a restaurant business in Highland, Michigan with his mother, who gave him his unusual name. He is currently working as food director for the Occupy Detroit encampment.

He told the WSWS, “I grew up in the Metro Detroit area. I try to help out people.

“It is the 99 percent against the one. There are people who feel like they are part of the one percent, but all they really do is work for them. We are all under the control of their money. That money is a major part. If you don’t have it, you can’t really get anything, you are basically out of luck. Money is basically freedom here in America.

“Why not have a give-take relationship?” Justin commented. “Everything you see here is donated. We have tents full of food to help support the cause, to help feed the homeless. We got donations of warm clothing, tents. We have 24-hour medical tent. We are continually evolving. We probably have 150 campers here give or take.

“We are trying to help each other. The human race is the whole community.”



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