

New York police fail to clear park after thousands gather to defend Occupy Wall Street

Our reporter
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The administration of New York City's billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg beat a tactical retreat Friday morning, backing down from earlier threats to clear the site of the anti-Wall Street demonstration on the pretext that its corporate owner needed to clean the area.

Over two thousand people, predominately men and women in their twenties and early thirties, assembled before dawn in the heart of New York City's financial district to defend the encampment of Occupy Wall Street at Liberty Plaza (renamed Zuccotti park by its corporate owners).

Authorities had scheduled the "cleaning" of the small, brick-paved park for 7:00 am, a deadline when protesters would have to leave or face arrest. They would not be allowed back in with their gear, if at all.

Under the glare of street lamps and media lighting, tension pervaded the crowded park and adjacent sidewalks as the crowd awaited the anticipated assault by riot police. Many stood silently while others raised the chants Of "We are the 99 percent".

By 7:30 am, as it became clear that police would not remove protesters from the park, hundreds began to march to Wall Street a few blocks away. At least fourteen people were arrested and one protester was hit and run over by a police motorcycle, though it could not be determined if this was accidental or not. Several others were injured after being attacked by cops.

The reversal of the plan to clear the park was

announced by Deputy Mayor Cas Holloway, who said in a statement: "Late last night, we received notice from the owners of Zuccotti Park—Brookfield Properties—that they are postponing their scheduled cleaning of the park, and for the time being withdrawing their request from earlier in the week for police assistance during their cleaning operation."

The World Socialist Web Site spoke to a number of people who had come to defend the occupation. Ryan, a young man from Long Island who works two jobs to make ends meet, told us. "I'm here to defend Occupy Wall Street, because I have to be here. This is an international movement against the capitalist system. Classism is a long-standing problem. It's as old as civilization itself, but it's gotten much worse in the last 10 years. I'm here because we need a society in which it is possible for every human being to realize their potential."

When asked about the role of liberal groups in supporting the occupation he said, "The Democrats are beholden to the same bankers as the Republicans. That's pretty obvious. "

Natasha, a young woman who lives in Brooklyn and works for a non-profit said: "I was arrested on the Brooklyn Bridge on October 1, and I've been coming back since then. Something is very wrong with this country and this is a tangible moment to try to rectify it. I think it's not surprising that that Democratic Party wants in on this. I don't believe that people here are buying it, though. I voted for Obama in 2008, but I think it's the role of the president to do what he has

done. It's hard to believe that he is helping us.”

Vanessa, from Melbourne, Florida, told us that she was a server in a restaurant and had come to the protest to support the Occupy Wall Street movement. “We absolutely need some change. I don't support consumerism. I'm looking for more justice and more equality. I think that capitalism in its entirety is not helping out the planet. It's more like self-destruction and evolution. We're not going to be co-opted by the establishment. This is something new here. The old way has failed.”

We asked her if she was opposed to political parties, and Vanessa said she was, but when we asked if this included socialist parties, she amended this: “I'm more interested in socialist policies, for sure. We need something radical.”



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