Occupy Pittsburgh: “The corporations just get bailed out, while the people suffer”

A reporter
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Several hundred members of Occupy Pittsburgh met Wednesday evening to plan a large demonstration and occupation in Pittsburgh for Saturday, October 15, as part of the Occupy Wall Street movement nationwide.

The meeting brought together a large group of people who are outraged at the impact of mass unemployment, home foreclosures, cuts in education and other social services.

“I’ve been following the New York protests since it started,” said Jake, a 25-year-old who is making only the minimum wage working in a car wash. “When I heard that it was being organized in Pittsburgh, I decided I needed to take part and wanted to join the march.

“My favorite of the grievances is that I really disagree that corporations have lobbied their way into being treated as individuals, but there are no consequences for them when they ruin the economy. They just get bailed out, while the people suffer.”

The Occupy Pittsburgh supporters are planning to march and rally at several locations throughout the day in downtown Pittsburgh and have stated that they plan to set up a camp in the late afternoon at a park owned by Bank of New York Mellon.

Police have announced that they will block off traffic and restrict parking for the marchers, but have not said they would permit the overnight camp. During the G20 protests in 2009, hundreds of protesters were arrested by police and massive force was used against people peacefully protesting.

At the meetings, organizers of Occupy Pittsburgh have followed the example of the other groups, having all decisions made by consensus. At the first meeting, Socialist Equality Party supporter Phyllis Steele warned that there was a danger that the movement could be diverted into support for the Democratic Party.

“There are people who would like to see this struggle turned into just another trap of supporting the Democratic Party and the reelection of Obama,” she said. “To be truly independent requires an understanding that we are fighting against the entire capitalist system, which has created these problems.” She went on to point to the international nature of these struggles and to urge participants to adopt a socialist program as the only means of fighting the system.

While she received strong support from the audience, her proposals were not adopted. A speaker following her, who proposed that the event had no international significance and had to be centered on Pittsburgh issues, was soundly defeated by those present.

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