

# Occupy Pittsburgh: “The rich own both the Democrats and Republicans”

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Occupy Pittsburgh protesters are in their second week of mobilization against the massive inequality and the damage being done by the elite who rule America. About 150 people have been camping in downtown Pittsburgh since October 15 as part of the anti-Wall Street movement throughout the country.

Members were outraged by the treatment of protesters in Atlanta, Chicago and Oakland and are hoping that the city and police will not use the same methods against protesters here. They point to the strict rules they have against drugs and alcohol, along with the work they have been doing to keep the park clean, so as not to give authorities a justification for shutting down the protest.

Shawn Olszewski, a disabled worker who has been participating in the Occupy Pittsburgh movement since it began on October 15, said, “The Democrats are mocking us, they have mocked the whole movement because they don’t want to be associated with us, which is fine.

“Within the political system there are not people, just money. Your income defines you above anything else. Those who are rich own both the Democrats and Republicans. That is what we are trying to change.

“We are told that we have to give these corporations all these tax breaks, but they are not creating any jobs. They are just keeping the money for themselves. I think we have to start taxing the corporations and the rich. They don’t pay anything and expect everything.”

Andrew Weido, a 19-year-old worker, points out that he has a lot to learn. “I am here because I want to do something positive,” he said, “to make a change that improves people’s lives.”

“The top 1 percent control this country. They have all the money and the power and they don’t care about the other 99 percent.

“I am 19 years old and I am still working a minimum wage job. It is impossible to have a home, buy food and pay bills. It is very hard to find a job that pays well.

“When you do get a job, they will say that if you work full-time, you will get health care. But whenever you get near 40 hours, they send you home so they don’t have to give you health care. Even those who do get it, they end up having to pay more and more for it from their check.

“I was on Gateway, a health plan for low-income people, but not anymore. I couldn’t even afford that. It didn’t have that many benefits. I believe everyone should have health care. People shouldn’t have to struggle just to stay healthy or see a doctor.”

Jim Bluethunder said, “I nearly got arrested Tuesday. My friend and I went to a branch of PNC bank and they shut the branch down rather than let us in. The police came and wanted us to move, but we weren’t doing anything wrong. We weren’t violent or being rude to people, just explaining what we are doing.

“People walk through this place and come see our tents and signs, we have to explain to them why we are here, let them know what this is all about.

“I am fighting for the homeless, for the veterans and for the Native Americans. The fact is, there are two wars going on, and people are dying. But it is not helping the people, just the rich who are making money off of the wars.

“Fifty-eight percent of the budget is going to the military. Could you imagine what benefits could be achieved if that money was being used for the common good? We could be building roads, homes and schools.

Things that would make life better, rather than destroying life.

“You see this bank?” Jim said, pointing to Bank of New York-Mellon. “They made \$8 billion in profits last year, yet they were given a \$698 million tax break by the government. That money should be used to help the people, not make the 1 percent rich.”



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