

Hundreds join Occupy Toledo rally

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Several hundred people gathered Monday at Levis Square in downtown Toledo, Ohio to take part in the Occupy Toledo protest. Local television news crews covered the event. Various leftist groups and trade unions were represented, but the greater portion of protesters were unaffiliated students, employed and unemployed youth, retirees and other working people.

The now-familiar “99% vs. 1%” signs were seen throughout the crowd, as well as placards reading “Anti-Capitalism” and “Bail Us Out, Not the Banks.”

Speakers at the protest related stories of having no Medicaid or Medicare while on disability. One man said his father had worked his whole life and retired without health care.

Because electrical devices were not allowed at the protest, people in the crowd close to the speakers were forced to repeat what they had heard to people behind them.

The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke with several of the protesters.

Steve Phillips, a middle-aged computer support specialist, said, “We have to begin by taking the corporations out of government and putting the people back in. The politicians are all crooked.”

When asked about his feelings regarding the bank bailouts and auto company bankruptcies, he asked, “How come we didn’t have a chance to vote on this?”

Phillips agreed that the Obama administration and the

trade unions are pitting worker against worker, saying, “We’re eating each other up.” He saw Reagan’s firing of the striking air traffic controllers in 1981 as a decisive turning point for the working class. “After PATCO occurred, everything fell apart,” he said.

Achilles and Nick, two young former students, also spoke with the WSWS. Asked what brought him to the occupation, Nick stated, “I like the fact that people are trying to have a say in their government.” Both said another reason for their interest was that “They are not focused on only one issue,” which they said had ruined movements in the past.

Nick added that current policies are “bankrupting the country and consolidating power in the hands of the wealthy.” He said he dropped out of college because the “corporate school” he was attending “focused on job training instead of education.” Achilles said he had stopped attending college “because I was accumulating too much debt.”

When asked how they felt about the future, both expressed enthusiasm because “even if this fails, it is only the first step in a revolutionary process.”

Attorneys Holly and Zachary, a young married couple recently graduated from law school, related a story all too common among educated young people. “I graduated in 2010,” said Zachary, “and I knew I’d have trouble finding a job. Fortunately, I found one making \$11,000 a year, but I have \$100,000 in loans.”

Zachary went on to explain that if he had studied corporate law, he would probably be “doing better,” but he had been interested in “practicing law in the interest of social justice.”

Holly is also working in law, but she has only a one-year contract. She said she and Zachary are “collectively holding our breath right now.”



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