

New York governor moves to forcibly remove Occupy Albany protesters

Philip Guelpa

21 November 2011

The confrontation between Occupy Albany protesters and the administration of Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo escalated Saturday night with the arrest of nearly 50 occupiers by state police. As police attacks on Occupy encampments around the country have increased in recent days, following the brutal clearing of Occupy Wall Street from Zuccotti Park by New York City police, members of Occupy Albany have pressed their right to remain in state-owned Lafayette Park past the arbitrary 11 p.m. curfew imposed by Cuomo.

The Albany protesters have been peacefully encamped in the adjacent, city-owned Academy Park for a month and the city administration, under mayor Jerry Jennings, also a Democrat, has made no move to evict them. For the first three weeks of their occupation, the protesters restricted their tents and other facilities to Academy Park, but held meetings and other temporary activities in Lafayette Park, leaving each night before the 11 p.m. deadline set by Cuomo. The governor has made clear that he would use state police to enforce the curfew on state property and has pressured the city to do the same in Academy Park.

Cuomo is reportedly furious at the ongoing occupation, which is located in downtown Albany, within sight of the state capitol building. One of the demands of many of the protesters is for the continuation of the state's "millionaires tax," the renewal of which Cuomo has repeatedly and adamantly opposed on the basis that it would drive the rich out of the state. This is despite polls showing that a significant majority of New York State residents support its continuation.

Over the past month, the occupiers and their supporters have engaged in a series of marches, rallies, and other actions to protest social and economic

inequality. These have attracted attention and support from the community and media coverage. However, the Cuomo administration has made it clear that it is unmoved and disdainful of the protests, and will continue with a savage austerity program of layoffs and cuts to education and social programs.

In the hope of increasing pressure on the state government, each night over the past week a number of Occupy Albany participants have remained in state-owned Lafayette Park to assert their right to peacefully protest against government policies. Nightly arrests have reached a couple of dozen. These arrests continued despite the fact that the county district attorney has said that he would not prosecute the charges of trespass and disorderly conduct against the protesters.

On Saturday night, however, the number of protesters defying the curfew doubled. As the state police moved in to make arrests, the protesters chanted, "Wall Street says jump, Cuomo says how high."



To contact the WSWP and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact