

Letter on Occupy Toronto

22 November 2011

The occupation of Toronto's St. James Park, now in its fifth week, remains one of the last tent settlements in the occupy movement. Like all occupy sites, this one has attracted a diverse collection of protesters and seems to be transcending the usual identity politics and expressing at its core a deep abhorrence of social inequality.

After an injunction was issued by Justice David Brown temporarily suspending an imminent police raid, right-wing media openly expressed its impatience, hoping to see the state execute full repressive force to smash the protest without the hindrance of a democratic or judicial process.

This same media has dismissed the movement as the ranting of an isolated fringe, disconnected from the broader population and unrelated to concrete conditions of economic and social decline.

The noise and stench emanating from the month-old campsite has become "intolerable" complains the *Toronto Sun*. However, any visitor to the sight can see that it is clean, peaceful and attracting broader layers into a discussion around social change. The tent community is also somewhat organized and self-reliant as special committees attempt to take care of issues around security, sanitation, and education. It is this self-reliance that seems to have most ruffled the feathers of the state and alarmed the ruling class.

The so-called liberal left media has expressed a desire to see the movement channeled into more traditional parliamentary avenues, preferably within the NDP or Liberal party. Catherine Porter of the *Toronto Star*, for example, would like to see the occupiers evicted "so that the conversation could continue"—in other words forgotten and ignored.

Sandra, a marshal at the camp and student of culinary

arts at George Brown College, expressed the mood of the occupiers when she says: "I'm actually expecting a surprise ambush before the courts make their ruling on Monday but whatever happens here these issues are not going away."

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