

Occupy movement continues in upstate New York

Steve French
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Syracuse Mayor Stephanie Miner reportedly made an appearance at the encampment at Perseverance Park in Syracuse, New York state's fifth largest city. The mayor brought hot coffee and offered to keep an open dialogue about logistical issues at the protest site. Miner's visit took place in the aftermath of the violent repression of the Occupy protest in Oakland, California last week, and was very likely an effort to defuse the widespread anger over mass arrests that have been taking place around the country.

The first snowfall of year coincided with the beginning of the third week of Occupy Syracuse. The colder than normal weather for the area has created obvious difficulties, but the consensus among the protesters is one of stoic determination to stay the entire winter. There are a dozen overnight inhabitants who are encouraging each other with the example of the forces at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania during the American Revolutionary War. With that in mind they intend to replace the many haphazard tents and tarps with a large arctic weather tent that will become the communal sleeping quarters of the resident protesters.

This weekend the campers held a teach-in where advice was given on public speaking and other matters. There is growing concern within the establishment that the protests are inspiring people to action against the increasing inequality and falling standard of living and lack of opportunity. As elsewhere, there are efforts to channel the movement behind the Democrats and their union supporters, in preparation for the Obama re-election campaign.

Meanwhile, at another upstate New York Occupy encampment, 32 Occupy Rochester protesters were arrested on October 29, and charged with violating the 11pm curfew at Washington Square Park. Rochester,

the state's fourth largest city, is about 85 miles west of Syracuse and 300 miles northwest of New York City.

Some protesters left the park the previous evening after police warnings. Many chose to remain, and were taken into custody personally by Rochester police chief James Sheppard. The situation was described as tense, though no violence was reported. Mayor Thomas Richards claimed the arrests were a public safety matter.

"As Mayor, it is my responsibility to ensure that demonstrators respect the right of all citizens to have access to public facilities and that the health and safety of all citizens is protected," said the Democratic Mayor. The city of Rochester is the first in New York state to expel Occupy protesters.



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