

New York City: Over 50 protesters arrested during attempt to establish new occupation site

Sandy English
19 December 2011

Police in New York City arrested over 50 protesters on Saturday as they attempted to occupy an empty lot near Lower Manhattan's Canal Street. The Episcopalian Trinity Church, which owns the lot abutting the site of the original occupation at Zuccotti Plaza, cautioned demonstrators that they would be subject to legal action if they trespassed on the property.

Trinity Church, an institution older than the United States, is one of the largest landowners in New York City. The church's rector, Rev. James Cooper, told the media, "The health, safety and security problems posed by an encampment here, compounded by winter weather, would dwarf those experienced at Zuccotti Park."

On Saturday, approximately 500 supporters gathered at noon in a public area adjacent to the lot known as Duarte Park. They chanted, "We are unstoppable. Another world is possible," and "Whose streets? Our streets!"

At about 3:45 p.m., protesters used wooden ladders to scale a chain-linked fence that separated the property from Duarte Park. Police immediately moved in and began making arrests.

Police jabbed protesters with nightsticks as the fence that separated the church's property from the park threatened to collapse under the weight of the crowd. After removing protesters from the lot, the police on scooters and in vans followed a group of roughly 200 demonstrators that attempted to march down 7th Avenue, where more arrests were made.

A few Episcopalian clergy who had opposed Trinity's

Church's decision to ban protesters from its property were also arrested.

Most of those who participated in the demonstrations Saturday were drawn from the ranks of those, mostly youth, that had occupied Zuccotti Plaza from September 17 to November 15. On November 15, the New York Police Department (NYPD) cleared out Zuccotti Plaza at the behest of the city's billionaire mayor, Michael Bloomberg.

On November 21, students protesting a tuition increase at a campus of the City University of New York (CUNY) were struck with nightsticks and dragged on the floor by campus police, who called for assistance from the NYPD.

The Occupy Wall Street protesters in New York City have faced escalating police violence and arrests since the first weeks of the demonstrations. On September 24, police officer Anthony Bologna was videotaped gratuitously pepper spraying young female protesters. On September 26, over 80 protesters were arrested during a march from Zuccotti Plaza to Union Square. The police arrested 700 demonstrators on the Brooklyn Bridge on October 1, under circumstances that had all the hallmarks of police entrapment.

The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to Isobel Wohl, 25, who is unemployed after studying painting and earning a BFA from New York University. She had not been involved with Occupy Wall Street (OWS) until the November 15 police raid that evicted occupiers from Zuccotti Plaza. "The raid showed me how they were trying to stop people from speaking out and take away our First Amendment rights," she said.

Isobel soon found herself among the thousands of victims of the brutal police crackdown. “Last Tuesday, I was going to go to the atrium at 60 Wall Street where Occupy was holding a meeting. I met up with them as they were marching to the red cube sculpture at Zuccotti. The police were trying to arrest some other people and they were trying to get me out of the way and struck me really hard and my head hit the side of the police truck. I got a concussion. The Occupy people were really nice to me and stayed with me until my mother picked me up and took me to the doctor.”?



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact