

Two dozen arrested in San Francisco, California Occupy march

Jack Hood**26 January 2012**

A couple thousand people participated in demonstrations through San Francisco, California on Friday, January 20th.

Protestors blockaded parts of California Street—the epicenter of the west coast's financial industry. Many banks, including Citibank, Wells Fargo, and Bank of America, were forced to close early or shut down entirely as protest participants locked arms around bank entrances and ATMs.

Police in riot gear made their presence known as early as 9:00 a.m. Several protesters were hit with batons throughout the day. At one point, in an incident captured on video, police on motorcycles proceeded to ram into a line of demonstrators. In total, police made a total of 24 arrests.

Friday's protest involved a greater percentage of professional activists in the general orbit of the Democratic Party than some of the previous demonstrations in northern California. It was headed by groups such as the local trade union organization the San Francisco Labor Council, whose aim is to direct popular discontent behind the Democrats and President Barack Obama's reelection campaign.

However, there were a number of more critically-minded workers and youth. John, a young unemployed worker from San Francisco, offered his position on the Democratic Party's campaign for the 2012 elections: "It's all a joke," he said. "He [Obama] works for global finance. ... All we can do is wait for dirty rotten capitalism to fall apart."

Many demonstrators present on Friday represented other occupation movements in the Bay Area, including Santa Rosa, San Jose, and Oakland.

One such protester, Josh, from Oakland, voiced his concern over Obama's response to the nearly 5,000

demonstrators who have been arrested for exercising their first amendment rights.

"You mean, the lack of response? His whole team is from Goldman Sachs. ... Geithner, Summers, all of them. So Obama isn't listening to the people getting kicked out of their homes, but to the people doing the kicking. ... Hope isn't coming from the White House, but from the streets."

Several local unions made token efforts to show their support by sending small groups of rank-and-file members to participate in Friday's march.

Cecile, an official spokesperson for one of the unions who participated on Friday, SEIU Local 1021, revealed the union's bait-and-switch technique of lending vocal support to workers while proceeding to support the Democratic Party, one of the two parties of big business.

"We're part of the 99%," Cecile proclaimed. "We're for working people."

These statements were ostensibly meant to signify the SEIU's legitimacy as an organization that defends the rights of working people, but the cynicism of the spokesperson's comments were outlined by her response to a question about the union's endorsement of Obama's 2012 campaign.

"I'm not qualified to answer that question," Cecile replied.

In reality, the only struggle being led by the union bureaucrats is the struggle to re-elect politicians from the Democratic Party, whose platform is the continuation and expansion of imperialist war and the escalation of the attack on the working class.



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