

# OCCUPY

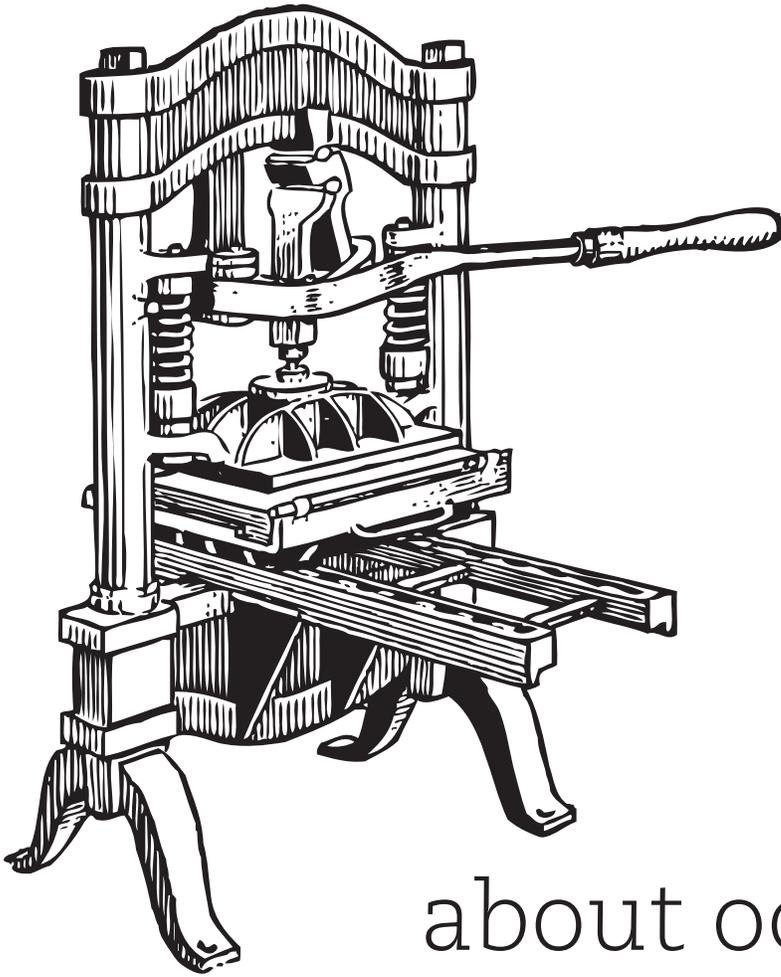
MAGAZINE



YOU CAN'T KILL AN IDEA



**WE  
ARE  
THE  
99  
PER  
CENT**



# about occupy magazine

Occupy Magazine started as a media team project at the occupation of Parade Square in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in Canada. Occupy Nova Scotia, as we call it, is a response of solidarity with Occupy Wall Street. It is an experiment in democratic living. And it is an opening up of discussions on the many complex problems we face.

After joining OWS for the first week of occupation, I came to Canada as a member of the OWS outreach working group to pass on the movement and help make it stronger. With only 2 weeks of planning a group of about 10 people organized an occupation of the main city square in front of city hall. It was attended by hundreds of local citizens on the opening day, October 15th and is presently ongoing. Support from the local community is pouring in, and grows larger day by day.

This magazine is a response to the media blackouts and insults. It is a shield of intellectual defense in the bitter information war. And it is a gate to future possibilities for creating a new world in the center of the old. Read it. Study it. Pass it on. And occupy!

James Green, Editor  
Occupy Magazine  
Nova Scotia

## subscription information *an economy based on sharing, not on greed*

We do not sell Occupy Magazine. We give it away for free to people at occupations so that they can know what's going on. If your movement would like to order a box of our most current issue, email us at [occupymagazine@gmail.com](mailto:occupymagazine@gmail.com). If you like what you get, we ask that you share the wealth, and pay to have a box of magazines sent to another occupation taking place somewhere else.

Cover Illustration by Emily Davidson  
Design by Jonathan Rotsztain



# the logic of occupy wall street for canada

By Justin Podur  
SocialistProject.ca  
Tuesday, October 18, 2011

The Occupy Wall Street Movement and the Occupy Together movements that are inspired by it actually have a simple premise: society shouldn't be run for the unrestricted benefit of the wealthiest. The immediate grievance is the 2008 banking crisis, in which the U.S. banks engaged in fraudulent and criminal activity and were subsequently rewarded for doing so with trillions in government funds, while their victims reaped evictions and foreclosures.

Canada did not have a crisis of the same severity, for a few reasons. Canada has a different banking system with a differently-regulated mortgage authority (although there are important similarities in the way the government takes risks and the private banks profit, and the Canadian system is far from invulnerable to crisis). The government is in the mortgage-backed securities business, but not in the totally unregulated way that the business ran in the United States. Social democratic politics are a little bit stronger in Canada than in the USA. Because the Conservatives were in a minority government at the time, the other parties were able to wring a stimulus out of the federal government that blunted the recession (the Bank of Canada also provided emergency funds and lowered interest rates to help the banks). But the overall problem, and direction of society, is the same, and the Occupy Together movement should find fertile ground in Canada.

## Who Are the 1 Per Cent?

The slogan of Occupy Wall Street is “We are the 99%.” So, who are the 1 per cent in Canada? A 2010 report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) by Armine Yalnizyan documents “The Rise of Canada’s Richest 1%.” There are 246,000 of them and their average income is \$403,000. They

hold 13.8 per cent of incomes, and pay some of the lowest taxes that the top 1 per cent have ever paid, historically.

To look within this 1 per cent (at a tiny fraction of it, 0.0002 per cent) economist Jim Stanford pulled some figures about Canadian billionaires from Canadian Business magazine for the Progressive Economics Forum. There are 61 Canadian billionaires, with a combined wealth of \$162-billion (5 times the size of the federal government’s budget deficit). This is 6 per cent of all personal net worth in Canada—they own twice as much wealth as the bottom 17 million Canadians. Their wealth increased by 8.4 per cent last year (while average hourly earnings in Canada grew by 2.5 per cent). On average, they added \$100-million per household, while the average household added \$524.

Through a few historical accidents, Canada has been spared the most spectacular aspects of the U.S. financial crisis, but it is hard to dispute that Canadian society is organized to benefit private corporations, and especially finance. The economics of this favouritism has been documented extremely well over the years by the CCPA. A 2010 report by the CCPA’s Toby Sanger, for example, shows how the financial sector has had a 23 per cent profit margin during the past decade, compared to 7 per cent for non-financial industries. Sanger quotes “a leading bank analyst” who estimates that Canada’s top banks will have \$40-billion in excess cash by the end of 2012, the sum of all federal and provincial deficits projected for 2012-13. Corporate income rates have been cut from an average of 42.6 per cent in 2000 to 28 per cent by 2011, with more tax cuts coming. The tax cuts in this sector, and the tax havens for the fraction of the 1 per cent, have helped bring about the revenue shortages that are

then called “deficit crises,” which governments then use as pretexts for austerity budgets.

## Extremes of Inequality

In a society based on layers of inequality, the 99 per cent is itself differentiated. Another 2010 CCPA report by Daniel Wilson and David McDonald reveals one of these inequalities. The median income for Canadians in 2006 was \$27,097; for aboriginal peoples, \$18,962, or 30 per cent lower. Scholar Grace-Edward Galabuzi has documented social exclusion based on race and gender. And a recent report by the Conference Board of Canada shows that income inequality in Canada is growing faster even than in the United States. All of these inequalities are within the 99 per cent, which highlights the need for a more equal society in general. The extremes of inequality are glaring, but these grinding inequalities are no picnic either.

One comparison, made frequently in the media, that seems to drive progressives crazy is the one between Occupy Wall Street and the Tea Party movement, which is based on the magical idea that society should be able to afford things (from roads to wars) without paying taxes. When Tea Party politics got to Canada they helped elect Toronto’s current mayor and helped give the Conservatives a boost to a majority government.[3] The Occupy Wall Street movement’s arrival in Canada could help discredit the austerity that the Conservative government will be putting forward in their next budget, and could help in resisting their plans to deepen inequalities and destroy what economic, social, and environmental fabric is left.

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# the fantastic success of Occupy Wall Street

By Immanuel Wallerstein

[iwallerstein.com](http://iwallerstein.com)

*Wednesday, October 19, 2011*

The Occupy Wall Street movement—for now it is a movement—is the most important political happening in the United States since the uprisings in 1968, whose direct descendant or continuation it is. Why it started in the United States when it did—and not three days, three months, three years earlier or later—we'll never know for sure. The conditions were there: acutely increasing economic pain not only for the truly poverty-stricken but for an ever-growing segment of the working poor (otherwise known as the “middle class”); incredible exaggeration (exploitation, greed) of the wealthiest 1% of the U.S. population (“Wall Street”); the example of angry upsurges around the world (the “Arab spring,” the Spanish indignados, the Chilean students, the Wisconsin trade unions, and a long list of others). It doesn't really matter what the spark was that ignited the fire. It started.

In Stage one—the first few days—the movement was a handful of audacious, mostly young, persons who were trying to demonstrate. The press ignored them totally. Then some stupid police captains thought that a bit of brutality would end the demonstrations. They were caught on film and the film went viral on YouTube.

That brought us to Stage two—publicity. The press could no longer ignore the demonstrators entirely. So the press tried condescension. What did these foolish, ignorant youth (and a few elderly women) know about the economy? Did they have any positive program? Were they “disciplined”? The demonstrations, we were told, would soon fizzle. What the press and the powers that be didn't count on (they never seem to learn) is that the theme of the protest resonated widely and quickly caught

on. In city after city, similar “occupations” began. Unemployed 50-year-olds started to join in. So did celebrities. So did trade-unions, including none less than the president of the AFL-CIO. The press outside the United States now began to follow the events. Asked what they wanted, the demonstrators replied “justice.” This began to seem like a meaningful answer to more and more people.

This brought us to Stage three—legitimacy. Academics of a certain repute began to suggest that the attack on “Wall Street” had some justification. All of a sudden, the main voice of centrist respectability, *The New York Times*, ran an editorial on October 8 in which they said that the protestors did indeed have “a clear message and specific policy prescriptions” and that the movement was “more than a youth uprising.” *The Times* went on: “Extreme inequality is the hallmark of a dysfunctional economy, dominated by a financial sector that is driven as much by speculation, gouging and government backing as by productive investment.” Strong language for the *Times*. And then the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee started circulating a petition asking party supporters to declare “I stand with the Occupy Wall Street protests.”

The movement had become respectable. And with respectability came danger—Stage four. A major protest movement that has caught on usually faces two major threats. One is the organization of a significant right-wing counterdemonstration in the streets. Eric Cantor, the hardline (and quite astute) Republican congressional leader, has already called for that in effect. These counterdemonstrations can be quite ferocious. The Occupy Wall Street movement needs to be prepared for this and think

through how it intends to handle or contain it.

But the second and bigger threat comes from the very success of the movement. As it attracts more support, it increases the diversity of views among the active protestors. The problem here is, as it always is, how to avoid the Scylla of being a tight cult that would lose because it is too narrowly based, and the Charybdis of no longer having a political coherence because it is too broad. There is no simple formula of how to manage avoiding going to either extreme. It is difficult.

As to the future, it could be that the movement goes from strength to strength. It might be able to do two things: force short-term restructuring of what the government will actually do to minimize the pain that people are obviously feeling acutely; and bring about long-term transformation of how large segments of the American population think about the realities of the structural crisis of capitalism and the major geopolitical transformations that are occurring because we are now living in a multipolar world.

Even if the Occupy Wall Street movement were to begin to peter out because of exhaustion or repression, it has already succeeded and will leave a lasting legacy, just as the uprisings of 1968 did. The United States will have changed, and in a positive direction. As the saying goes, “Rome wasn't built in a day.” A new and better world-system, a new and better United States, is a task that requires repeated effort by repeated generations. But another world is indeed possible (albeit not inevitable). And we can make a difference. Occupy Wall Street is making a difference, a big difference.

# YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT AND LET THEIR MONEY SPEAK FOR YOU

## dreaming in k'jipuktuk

By Miles Howe

Occupy Nova Scotia

Thursday, October 20, 2011

Warm greetings from Occupied Nova Scotia. We gratefully acknowledge the hospitality of the Mig'maw Indigenous people, upon whose territory we stand in K'jipuktuk, otherwise known as Halifax. The movement has been blessed with the solidarity of a Mig'maw elder, whose presence has been much appreciated throughout the course of our stay at Parade Square.

Here, in Nova Scotia, we have just witnessed the awarding of a \$25 billion contract to Irving Shipbuilding from the Canadian Federal government. The contract is for the construction of the next generation of Canadian warships. And while there will be celebration in the streets of Halifax tonight, and jobs for years to come, what is it, exactly, that we have done, and at what price?

What we have done is handed the Irving dynasty, the exact 1% against whom this entire movement is based, the future of a significant chunk of the Canadian treasury. For weeks the streets of this city have proudly touted the slogan of "Ship Start Here", as though war ships were just one more commodity to build. As though cannons shot rainbows and missiles were just for show. As though some open competition between shipyards ever spoke to true feelings of regionalism, and wasn't just one billionaire versus another, with the 99% dragged along for

the sadly-vacant emotional ride.

That money could have been used for 25 billion other things. Properly spent, \$25 billion could have assured far more than a few thousand here-today-gone-tomorrow warship-building jobs. Instead, this charts the course for a future where Canada joins up with all the NATO and American-led adventures that we can handle. We will look abroad, and take more of what we like, as in Afghanistan, as in Iraq, as in Libya. We will assure our own comfort with the blood of others.

It is a dismal celebration tonight, and it is fitting that it should downpour, for it is a murderer's party, and a plunderer's ball. And while we look abroad, with an appetite no longer satiated with the spoils of this already-colonized land, it is as though we have already forgotten the paradise that we have stolen, and from whom. As though we will somehow tame the Afghans, as we attempted to tame the Mig'maw. As though our new warships weren't just tools of subjugation, and would lead us anywhere but here. But it is my sense that the Occupiers in Parade Square, and the occupiers in squares and streets and parks the world over, have at least a vague notion of a paradise they might have once seen, if only just in passing. They gaze inwards rather than abroad for their answers, and what they

see is discomfiting.

The Mig'maw, upon whose land we now stand in K'jipuktuk, still exist. They, like the land, are reeling. But it is not pity that is now needed. It is urgent and steady action. Because whether or not one accepts the notion of an impending calamity, the undeniable truth is that on all fronts we are witnessing a continual descent downwards in the value chain. Things are smaller these days, including our spirits.

When this province was first colonized, white pines over 100 feet tall were harvested for ship masts. Now, it is very rare to find a tree over 100 feet tall in Nova Scotia. Now, we harvest the tops of scrub trees, and their branches, for biomass. Everything has been rapidly consolidated into the hands of the so-called 1%, and the province's 3 pulp mills seemingly dictate the provincial government's forestry mandate. They are given choice lands to clear-cut, and the province looks abroad as the mills spill filthy effluent into natural tidal lagoons, and then deny that the people of Pictou County are dying at their hands, because the evidence is anecdotal. Independent woodlot owners still exist, but they are an endangered animal indeed.

When this province was first colonized, fish stocks abounded. Legend speaks of simply dipping one's



bucket into the water and pulling it up filled with fish. Small, rural, communities were everywhere, and lives were lived by the sea. Now the so-called 1% own the bottom-trawlers, and the dredgers, and the surface long-liners. They are destructive to the ocean habitat, they are destructive in their by-catch, and they are not sustainable. They have bought their own seals of approval, which mean nothing, and trick us, when our last power lies in our purchasing habits. The young from these communities move to the tar sands, and the old stay behind, perhaps for a tourist dollar or two. Rural, independent fisher persons still exist, but they as wondrous and adored as a Nova Scotia orchid in bloom.

When this province was first colonized, there was magic in the air. There was herb-lore, and sweat lodges, and medicines, and the simple notion of everything having an energy was just the beginning. Then came bounties for scalps, and reserves. Later there were residential schools, where the language was lost, and parents got lost, and children forgot who they were. The bitter seed of hatred against self was planted. And the destruction of the magic was almost accomplished. But not quite.

It lives on. It lives on in the beat of the drum. It lives on in the sweat lodge. It lives on in the fisher's hand line, and the thunk of a well-placed axe in

the woodlot. To paraphrase a dear friend, it lives on in shipbuilding, but not in the militarization of shipbuilding.

And from what I have seen, it lives on in this movement. It has transformed a war monument into a speaker's corner, where fresh-out-of-school kids, and union leaders, and the homeless, and octogenarians, tell assembled crowds their dreams for a better world.

It has transformed a parade ground, where soldiers once gathered as they waited to sail for war, into a living community. There is shelter, and food, and warmth, for everyone. No one is refused. Messages of hope are scrawled in chalk across the grounds. And if it rains, they are simply written again. There are children, and dogs, and laughter. General assemblies are tempered by dance parties, bullhorns are teased by the strings of a violin. Human waste isn't even called waste anymore. It's called human by-product, and is carted away by bicycle.

It is not always the exact same dream being dreamt, and nor should it be. But it stems from an exhaustion at hopelessness, and a refusal of status quo. It is complicated, as it should be. But it is resolute, and it inspires. It doesn't seem to fit into an easily digested soundbite, but magic usually doesn't, so

attention to detail is required. It might take days, or weeks, or months, or an entire lifetime.

In my dream Boat Harbour is closed, and the coal plants are closed, and for every house a solar panel or two. In my dream the politicians make minimum wage, and use public transit, or bicycles, to get around, and they always wear identifiable clothing on the job, and are always approachable. Local farmers get paid a living wage. In my dream there are fields of Nova Scotia hemp, and all the lawns are torn up and replaced with community gardens, and whoever wants a hen within city limits can have one. In my dream the Citadel is affordable, public, housing.

And I know I am missing so much, for the hour is late. And I know it will take your dreams too. It will take us all; Black, White, Yellow, and Red, to make this happen. But we've done apathy. We know what its like. Tasteless, chemical, unfulfilled, and bland. It only leads here. Where a 1% makes decisions for us, and we smile painfully at our luck at not being on the receiving of Canadian warship cannons, and consider ourselves more lucky still if we get thrown a job of welding one together. It's been done. And while the hour is late, dreams continue still. Shed apathy. Realize a dream. Bring a friend.

# revolution in the air



By Ted Glick

ZNet

Tuesday, October 18, 2011

*“Those Who Take the Meat from the Table  
Teach contentment.*

*Those for whom the taxes are destined  
Demand sacrifice.*

*Those who eat their fill speak to the hungry  
Of wonderful times to come.*

*Those who lead the country into the abyss  
Call ruling too difficult*

*For ordinary men and women.”*

—Bertolt Brecht

I first heard about the “people’s microphone” technique during the November, 1999 demonstrations against the World Trade Organization in Seattle. I remember reading about how, when 400 people were demonstrating outside the jail where global justice activists were being held, the method of communication was by people repeating the words of the person speaking, without sound amplification, back through the crowd, in an organized way.

At #OccupyWallStreet I have experienced this process each of the three days that I have been there. I experienced it Friday morning between 5:30 am and 7 am as I stood with several thousand others prepared to defend the people’s occupation with our bodies against a planned eviction masquerading as a “park cleanup.” I was struck that morning by how radically democratic the people’s mic process can be when, one after the other, individuals around the very big circle called out, “mic check.” When it was repeated by enough others close by (sometimes there was competition), the person would “get the floor.”

There were some tremendously moving short speeches Friday morning as we waited to learn our fate. A young African American man who stood up close to the middle of the circle spoke about how he hadn’t been sure he would be willing to stand with us, but he was now sure that doing so was the right thing to do, and “I love you all.” A young

white woman, gesturing expansively with her arms, expressed the same sentiments in her own way. So refreshing, so inspiring!

It was similar Saturday evening with the tens of thousands of us peacefully taking over Times Square. At a certain point, following chant after chant, the people’s mic process started up close to where I was at 43rd and Broadway, and from a location in the middle of the crowd young person after young person spoke about how glad they were to be there, about themselves and the issues—police brutality, extreme poverty in the black community, a lousy health care system, others—that they were most concerned with.

Then there are all of the homemade signs, many on cardboard from formerly brown boxes. I carried a sign of my own yesterday during the five hours that I was on the streets in Manhattan. Mine said, “No Tar Sands or No Livable Planet.” Many people took a picture of it, commented that they were glad to see it, asked me what it meant or told me about their own involvement in the movement to stop the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline.

But, in addition to my own, my two favorite signs were one which said, “New Paradigm Under Construction, Please Pardon the Mess,” and revisions of the “The End is Near,” like The Beginning is Near and The Beginning is Here.

I think, I hope, I pray that these sentiments are prophetic. It is realistic to think that there’s a good chance they will be, whatever the ups and downs of the worldwide “occupy together” movement in the coming weeks and months.

One reason is the fact that this is a young people’s movement, and there are tens of thousands of them in the streets in the US and hundreds of thousands worldwide. We haven’t seen something like this in the United States in a very long time, possibly since the 1960’s. There have certainly been masses of young people active in movements since that time,

but I can’t think of any, with the possible exception of the global justice movement between 1999-2001, that have been so organically led primarily by people younger than 25-30. This is huge.

Another is the social/political/economic/ecological backdrop to these protests. The system of corporate capitalism which dominates the planet is a system in deep crisis, which threatens the future for all life forms on Mother Earth, and this understanding is deep and widespread in the world. It is a fact that either “we are the leaders we have been waiting for,” or those who dominate government and economic life will lead us deeper into the abyss. This is a powerful motivator to keep us all focused and hanging in there.

But perhaps the most important reason for hope is the new culture, the new way of interacting, the apparent deep commitment to a fully democratic process, a “new paradigm under construction,” that is so clearly on display in Zuccotti/Liberty Park, right in the heart of the destructive, dying system. It’s not like it’s perfect; democracy sometimes is a “mess,” but it is impossible to be there with an open mind and not feel affected.

Despite the difficulties and struggles people are having--the lack of jobs, the student loans that are owed, a profit-driven health care system, mortgage foreclosures and limited housing options, the accelerating climate crisis and all the rest--in this new movement, people are finding each other, supporting each other and loving one another. They are showing via how they carry on their occupations that, indeed, in unity there is strength. They are, right now, as Naomi Klein has said, “the most important thing in the world.” They are, truly, our future hope.

*Ted Glick has been an activist, organizer and writer since 1968. Past writings and more info can be found at [www.tedglick.com](http://www.tedglick.com).*

# reflections on OWS, the profits system, and wisconsin

By Paul Street

ZNet

Wednesday, October 19, 2011

*We are not aimless; we simply speak a different language—a language of mutual respect, participation, self-management, and action. We make our demands in this language that screams we are here for the long-run, that our goal is not merely reform, that our vision is deep and radical, that we will not be bought off or co-opted, and that we are prepared to struggle in order to win not only those gains we can pronounce not but also those we can't even fully articulate yet....*

—Yotam Marom  
OWS activist  
October 13, 2011

*One commonly hears that carping critics complain about what is wrong, but do not present solutions. There is an accurate translation for that charge: "they present solutions and I don't like them."*

—Noam Chomsky  
2006

*Freedome is the man that will turn the world upside downe; therefore no wonder he hath enemies... And assure yourselves, if you pitch not right now upon the right point of freedome in action, you will wrap up your children in greater slavery than ever you were in....*

—Gerrard Winstanley  
Watchword to the City of London  
1649

Recently a friend of mine related a complaint she heard from a campus-town liberal-progressive academic Democrat against the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement that has spread like wildfire across the United States in the last two weeks. The liberal OWS critic compares the new movement unfavorably with the mass protests that broke out

in Madison, Wisconsin last February and March. She says that the Madison actions were principled, "adult," highly organized and clearly focused on a specific winnable and concrete agenda—defeating right-wing Wisconsin governor Scott Walker's effort to strip public sector unions of their collective bargaining rights. The Wisconsin activists "knew what they were about."

By contrast, the critic argues, OWS is "unfocused," aimless, uncoordinated, and, well, "childish." The critic thinks that the young occupiers in her home town (Iowa City) and across the country are looking for "an excuse to party," "camp out," and generally make a freaky spectacle of themselves. "They don't know what they're about, what they want."

She has not attended a single Occupy Iowa City event or meeting.

Well, sorry, but I have witnessed and participated in a number of occupation movement sites, actions, and meetings in New York City, Chicago, and Iowa City. I see the new protest movement in a very different and more positive light and frankly as much, much better than the Madison protests, in which I also participated.

## Hard Work

The charge that they are bunch of partying slackers is off base. There's fun and entertainment in the people-occupied zones, of course. There should be: they are essential ingredients of any popular movement culture worth a damn, and they always have been! Still, the occupiers I have met in all of the above locations are putting in a remarkable, even heroic amount of hard work on the many difficult tasks involved in building, sustaining, and expanding their movement: maintaining safe and sanitary occupation sites, interacting with civic authorities to stay in public compliance and avoid eviction,



developing community outreach and media strategies, providing for homeless and hungry people who have come to their site for assistance, soliciting and processing outside support, maintaining a treasury and bank account, planning and holding workshops, marches, and other events; printing flyers, leaflets, and other educational and promotional materials; monitoring developments across the country and the world, and much, much more. Since the occupation movement is dedicated to a detailed and respectful, democratic and participatory decision-making process, they put a significant amount of hard work into their nightly General Assembly sessions, where group actions and principles are discussed and chosen in a careful and egalitarian way that is inspiring to behold. It's a lot of work. And while the movement is in fact quite youthful, there are more than just a few mature adults, middle-aged and even seniors showing up to behold and participate in the new movement.

## Nothing Vague

The charge of no clear focus is also incorrect. It is true that the occupation movement has taken its time—and shows some reluctance—to articulate specific and detailed policy demands. But this is the smart way to go. As the veteran U.S. radical activist and writer Michael Albert recently counseled OWSers from Ireland: "it is the arena of activism that schools [the deepest] insights...When the chattering media hounds demand demands...ignore them. Amass support. Find your collective pulse. Only then generate demands in accord with that collective pulse."

And the new movement is hardly aimless. There's nothing remotely mysterious about the target of its anger. It is clearly and unambiguously upset over and opposed to the many sided deadly and authoritarian control that the nation's rich, corporate, and



# THIS IS A MOMENT THIS IS A MOVEMENT MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING

elite financial Few—“the unelected dictatorship of money” (Edward S. Herman and David Peterson)—exercised over American and global economic, political, cultural, and personal life. There’s nothing all that vague or difficult to understand about the focus of their ire as articulated in their Declaration of the Occupation of New York City: “We write so that all people who feel wronged by the corporate forces of the world can know that we are your allies....We come to you at a time when corporations, which place profit over people, self-interest over justice, and oppression over equality, run our governments.” The Declaration’s list of grievances against corporations includes the following:

“They have taken our houses through an illegal foreclosure process....”

“They have taken bailouts from taxpayers with impunity, and continue to give Executives exorbitant bonuses.”

“They have continuously sought to strip employees of the right to negotiate for better pay and safer working conditions.”

“They have held students hostage with tens of thousands of dollars of debt on education, which is itself a human right.”

“They have consistently outsourced labor and used that outsourcing as leverage to cut workers’ health care and pay.”

“They have sold our privacy as a commodity.”

“They continue to block alternate forms of energy to keep us dependent on oil.” “They purposefully keep people misinformed and fearful through control of the media.”

“They determine economic policy, despite the catastrophic failures their policies have produced and continue to produce.”

“They have donated large sums of money to politicians, who are responsible for regulating them.”

A young New York City activist named Yotam

Marom recently responded eloquently on AlterNet to the charge of unfocused directionless-ness. “It’s not that we don’t have demands,” Marom writes; “it’s that we speak them in a different language. We speak them with our struggle. Our movement is made up of people fighting for jobs, for schools, for debt relief, equitable housing, and healthcare. We are resisting ecological destruction, imperialism, racism, patriarchy, and capitalism. We are doing it all in a way that is participatory, democratic, fierce, and unwavering. There is nothing vague about that.” Further:

“We want a political and economic system that we all actually control together, one that is equitable and humane, one that allows for people to self-manage but act in solidarity, one that is participatory and democratic to its core. We want a world where people have the right to their own identities, communities, and cultures, and the freedom from oppression and constraint. We want a world with institutions that take care of our youth, our elderly, and our families in ways that are nurturing, liberating, and consensual. We want a world in which community is not a hamper on individual freedom, but rather an expression of its fullest potential...If that’s not a clear enough statement of demands for you, CNN, I don’t know what to tell you.”

“...We are not aimless; we simply speak a different language—a language of mutual respect, participation, self-management, and action. We make our demands in this language that screams we are here for the long-run, that our goal is not merely reform, that our vision is deep and radical, that we will not be bought off or co-opted, and that we are prepared to struggle in order to win not only those gains we can pronounce not but also those we can’t even fully articulate yet....”

Albert is right to note that “we all know broadly where it will aim”—for a future of good jobs, fair

distribution, increased social justice and security, greater democracy, reduced imperial expense and a peace dividend, enhanced housing, infrastructure, and education. “The details will emerge from the participants, as consciousness and solidarity climb,” Albert notes.

Ultimately, many OWSers want a world turned upside down. With good reason: the current top-down world controlled by “the one percent” and its profits system is slipping into terminal environmental catastrophe accompanied by endless war, horrifying authoritarianism, and shocking mass inequality and misery. The rich are destroying the Earth and annexing the future, holding the rest of us—the 99 percent—hostage to a hopelessly stunted, soulless, narcissistic and totalitarian vision of life and human nature. It is crucifying humanity on a cross of greed and power.

## “The Enemy is a System”

As many occupiers know, there’s no shortage of good progressive and radical policy ideas to roll-back and indeed (of ultimate interest to me) to collapse the rule of the corporate state and the top 1 percent and replace it with a much more genuinely democratic and participatory form of political and socioeconomic existence. There’s nothing mysterious about the numerous and interrelated proposals to check the plutocratic rule of the rich and its coordinators and ultimately to replace that rule with genuinely popular, self-determining governance. As Noam Chomsky once observed, “One commonly hears that carping critics complain about what is wrong, but do not present solutions. There is an accurate translation for that charge: ‘they present solutions and I don’t like them.’”

What’s been lacking on the left has been the power to put our many policy ideas into practice. And the biggest thing required at present to grow

# TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG TOGETHER WE SEEK JUSTICE PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT



that capacity is the development of an independent social movement with the energy, structure, and determination to challenge the standard top-down corporate-managed game of politics and force progressive policy change and more—societal restructuring—from the bottom up. The fluid, eclectic, diverse, and remarkably democratic new occupation movement is doing more than anything in recent historical memory to light the spark of such mass movement politics.

It has been able to do this largely because it has had the brains and courage to—in the words of the black radical commentator Glen Ford—“call out the enemy’s name and address: finance capital, Wall Street.” At the risk of sounding too negative, let’s acknowledge that getting the right and real enemy is a critical prerequisite for building a movement that matters. As Ford recently argued, the new movement could collapse tomorrow and it would have already done us the great service of identifying the real danger to freedom democracy at home and abroad: the hyper-parasitic financial super-elite, the people with real wealth and power, NOT the usual scapegoats (Muslim extremists, Latino immigrants, urban criminals, welfare mothers, union thugs, abortion doctors, gay marriage proponents, and radical professors, to name a few) that the upper 1 percent has long used to keep Americans diverted, divided, and confused.

But the new peoples’ movement challenges more than finance capital and Wall Street. The intimately related but bigger enemy is capitalism. A sign held by one young female protestor at a recent OWS march in New York City displays a single word written three times on a cardboard poster: “System, System, System.” I was instantly reminded of a remarkable passage from the Winter Solider testimony of a young American Iraq War and occupation veteran Mike Prysner, who said the following in December of 2009, 11 months into the “hope and change” presidency of the Empire’s New Clothes Barack Obama:

on to the street in Iraq only to come home and see families thrown on to the street in this county in this tragic, tragic and unnecessary foreclosure

crisis. I mean to wake up and realize that our real enemies are not in some distant land. They’re not people whose names we don’t know and whose culture we don’t understand. The enemy is people we know very well and people we can identify. The enemy is a system that wages war when it’s profitable. The enemy is the CEOs who lay us off from our jobs when it’s profitable. It’s the insurance companies who deny us health care when it’s profitable. It’s the banks who take away our homes when it’s profitable. Our enemy is not 5000 miles away. They are right here at home. If we organize with our sisters and brothers we can stop this war. We can stop this government. And we can create a better world.”

The enemy is a system that concentrates ever more wealth and power in the hands of an upper 1 percent that currently owns more wealth than the bottom 90 percent of Americans. That top hundredth owns more than a third of the United States’ wealth and a larger share of its elected officials—Democrats as well as Republicans—while the bottom 40 percent owns nothing (well, 0.3 percent of the nation’s private wealth) and a record-setting 46 million Americans now struggle to live below the federal government’s notoriously inadequate poverty level.

## The Kids Struck a Chord

The new movement’s isn’t about to collapse tomorrow, since it identifies and resists a class and an ethos of greed that is deeply unpopular with the preponderant majority of Americans. A vast swath of survey shows that the American public is well to the left of both of the nation’s reigning business parties. As Kevin Young recently noted on ZNet, “The public is fiercely distrustful of corporate power and thinks that workers should have far more income, workplace protections, and political influence than they do. Strong majorities believe that the government has a responsibility to ensure that everyone has access to food, education, and health care. On tax and spending issues, polls have repeatedly confirmed that majorities favor large cuts to the military budget, higher taxes on the wealthy,

and government stimulus spending to create jobs; this trend holds true for polls from the last two months. Yet public disgust with the unrepresentative nature of US politics and what Edward Herman and David Peterson call ‘the unelected dictatorship of money’ is sky-high. One 2010 poll from the Program on International Policy Attitudes found that an astounding 81 percent of the US public thinks that their country ‘is pretty much run by a few big interests.’”

Among the 50 percent of Americans who consider themselves familiar with the OWS protests, 79 percent think the gap between rich and poor is too large in the U.S.; 68 percent think the rich are under-taxed; 73 percent favor raising taxes on millionaires, and 86 percent think Wall Street and its lobbyists enjoy excessive influence in Washington. No wonder that just three weeks into OWS, a TIME poll found that 54 percent of Americans had a “very favorable” (25 percent) or “somewhat favorable” (29 percent) view of the movement. OWS is considerably more popular among Americans than the fake-populist so-called Tea Party, a top-down creation of right wing business and Republican elites that dominant corporate media sold as a genuine independent and anti-establishment citizens’ movement.

## Beyond Wisconsin and the Democrats

The OWS NYC Declaration’s statement of concern over corporate control of politicians per se is very important, I think. The Wisconsin struggle and its offshoots in Ohio and Indiana were inspiring and impressive. They helped inspire the current new radically democratic populist wave. They contained seeds of something far more radical and far-reaching (my favorite protest sign in Madison read “Governor Walker You Have Awakened a Sleeping Giant: The Working Class”). But let’s be honest about their geographic and ideological limits. When I told one New York activist dressed up as a greedy billionaire that I’d seen similarly clad street thespians protesting the anti-union policies of Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker in Madison last March, he was quick to make a perceptive and critical distinction



# PEACE IS POSSIBLE THERE IS ABUNDANCE THE 99% CAN SHARE 100%

between OWS and the wonderfully welcome Wisconsin rebellion earlier this year. “The Wisconsin thing was shut down out of subordination to the Democratic Party and the union bosses,” he said. “They got angry, understandably, because a crazy right wing Republican governor was going after their power. And so they put a lot of people in the streets and in the Capitol building and it was really cool. But then it was like ‘thanks a lot for all that direct action and people power, now you all need to go home and help us recall Walker and those nasty Republican senators and get some Democrats back in office. Enough with all that scary direct action. Get out of here. Run along now. That was fun, but it’s time to get serious and focus on elections.’ And you know what? They all pretty much went home. Never mind that the Democrats, including Obama, are also going after public sector wages and unions, and also take money from the big banks and corporations. This thing here is different. It’s about the whole system, which is run by and for the rich whether they’ve got Republicans or Democrats out front. We aren’t going home.”

Even Wisconsin was a top-down affair and all-too-captive to the Democrats at the end of the day.

Most of the occupiers I have met know that Democrats from Obama down to MoveOn.org (currently working to channel the movement’s anti-Wall Street energies into anger at the Republicans) are captive to the moneyed class. They get it that Democrats are the other wing of the corporate-controlled one-and-a-half party system in the United States, where “politics is the shadow cast on society by big business” (John Dewey). Unlike the 2008 Obama campaign and the 2009-2010 “Tea Party,” and to a much greater degree than the Wisconsin rebellion, OWS is a really grassroots and independent, anti-establishment movement. It is much more powerfully inoculated against liberal and electoralist co-optation than the Madison uprising. Its growing base of participants is not going to be easily pushed off their laser-like focus on corporate and financial power by the standard elite game of partisan distraction and divide-and-rule. Their movement has learned its lessons from

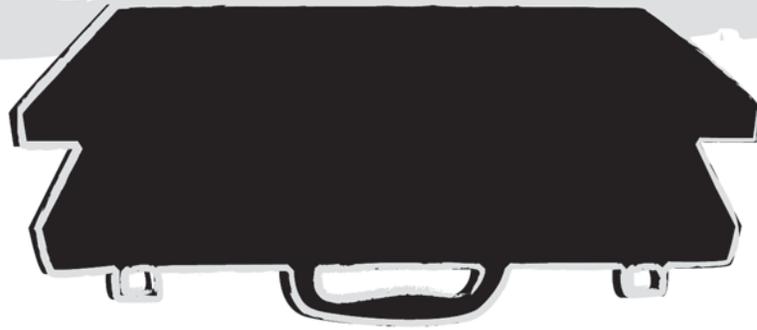
the fake-progressive Obama HOPE and CHANGE ascendancy, followed by the in-power “betrayals” of NOPE and CONTINUITY. It knows that American “democracy” is no less crippled by the dark cloud of big money and corporate rule when Democrats hold nominal power than when Republicans do. It grasps that real progressive and democratic change can only come from an epic bottom-up peoples’ fight with concentrated wealth and power—a fight that goes to the economic root of social, environmental, and political decay. It knows in its bones that (to quote Howard Zinn) “it’s not about who’s ‘sitting in the White House’ (or the governors’ mansion or the congressional or state-legislative or city council office) at the end of the day: it’s about ‘who’s sitting in,’ marching, demonstrating, occupying, and (last but not least) organizing on a day-to-day basis beneath and beyond the masters’ ‘personalized quadrennial [electoral] extravaganzas’ (Noam Chomsky’s term). It knows also that real and lasting change of a desirable nature involves radical-democratic, bottom-up restructuring of natural and socioeconomic existence—of humanity’s relationship to itself and nature. More than simply imagined, the restructuring required is test-run and modeled in the remarkable OWS decision-making process, replicated each night in hundreds of nightly General Assembly meetings in people-occupied spaces across the country.

To some degree, then, OWS is less continuous with Madison than it is with the remarkable workplace occupation that took place at the Republic Door and Window plant on the North Side of Chicago in December of 2008. Also chanting “They Got Bailed Out, We Got Sold Out,” that exceptional rank-and-file action targeted taproot capitalist institutions—an absconding firm and its finance-capitalist backer/banker. It all-too-briefly raised fundamental questions about class, ownership, finance, and power beneath and beyond the partisan divisions of the masters’ one-and-a-half party system. The fact that corporate Democrats rather than corporate Republicans held elective office in Chicago (or that a fake-progressive corporate Democrat “from Chicago” had just been elected to the

White House) did not deter them even slightly in their direct action struggle, which also (like OWS and Madison) won rapid widespread approval around the country.

The “kids” of Zucotti Park in New York City, College Green Park in Iowa City and countless other occupied zones across the U.S. know what they are about. They have struck a radically democratic populist chord that resonates with tens of millions across the restrictive red-blue map of U.S. political geography. They are walking to some extent in the footsteps of the great British radical Gerrard Winstanley and his band of 17th century Diggers by insisting that we plow deeper into the economic and institutional roots of modern inequality and oppression to imagine and act on the possibility of a better world turned upside down, beyond the rule of the wealthy Few and their filthy profits regime. But whereas Winstanley struck the soils of revolutionary London at the birth of a bourgeois order that had only begun to conquer and reorganize the world, to miraculously harness the species’ productive potential on a previously unimaginable scale, the occupiers who have planted themselves in the belly of the global economic beast in New York City’s financial district are challenging a rotten, purely parasitic late-capitalist system that has nothing left to offer but death and destruction—a descent into an at once Huxlean and Orwellian Hell in which life for the majority becomes ever more (to quote the 17th century British philosopher Thomas Hobbes) “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”

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**LOST A JOB**

**— FOUND AN —**

**OCCUPATION**

**OCCUPY NOVA SCOTIA**

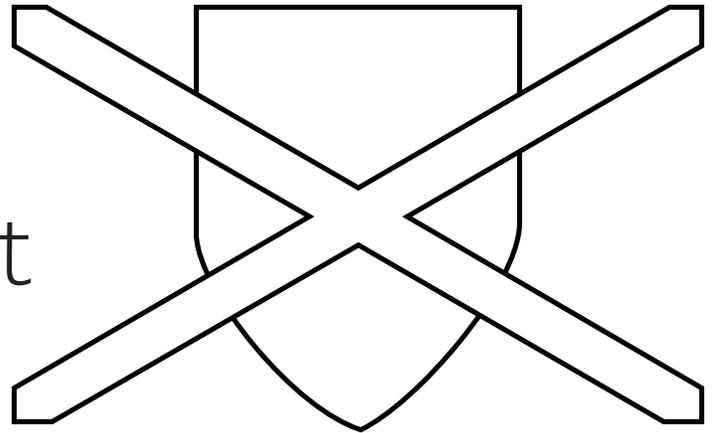


# next steps for the Occupy Movement

By Shamus Cooke

Source: ZNet

Tuesday, October 18, 2011



As the Occupy Movement gains strength nationally and internationally, questions of “what next” are popping up. Although there are no easy answers or ready- to-order recipes for moving forward, there are general ideas that can help unite the Occupy Movements with the broader community of the 99% — which is the most urgent need at the moment. Why the urgency? Writer Chris Hedges explains:

“The state and corporate forces are determined to crush this... They are terrified this will spread. They have their long phalanxes of police on motorcycles, their rows of white paddy wagons, their foot soldiers hunting for you on the streets with pepper spray and orange plastic nets...”

The only reason that surviving occupied spots have been spared is because of the broader sympathy of the 99% combined with the direct participation of large sections of working people at marches and demonstrations. The corporate elite fear a strong, united movement like vampires fear sunlight.

Therefore, city governments are slow-playing the Occupy Movement where it is especially strong — New York and Portland, Oregon, etc. — and are attacking quickly in cities where momentum hasn't caught fire —, Denver, Boston, etc. The massive demonstrations in New York and Portland have protected the occupied spaces thus far, as the mayor, police, and media attempt to chip away at public opinion by exploiting disunity in the movement or focusing on individuals promoting violence, drug use, etc.

To combat this dynamic, the Occupy Movement people needs to unite around common messages that they can effectively broadcast to those 99% not yet on the streets; or to maintain the sympathy of those who've already attended large marches and demonstrations. And although sections of the Occupy Movement scoff at demands, they are crucially necessary. Demands unite people in action, and distinguish them from their opponents; demands give an aim and purpose to a movement and act as a communications and recruiting tool to the wider public. There is nothing to win if no

demands are articulated.

One reason that the wealthy are strong is because they are united around demands that raise profits for the corporations they own: slashing wages and benefits, destroying unions, lowering corporate tax rates, destroying social programs, privatization, ending Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, etc.

To consolidate the ranks of the Occupy Movement we need similar demands that can inspire the 99%. These are the type of demands that will spur people into action — demands that will get working class people off their couches and into the streets! The immediate task of the movement is to broadcast demands that will agitate the majority of the 99% into action.

On a national level these demands are obvious: Tax the Rich to create a federal public jobs program, fully fund Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security and other social programs, fully fund public education, single payer health care, end the wars. These are demands that can unite the Occupy Movement and working people nationally while preventing Democrats and Republicans from taking it over. Poll after poll has recorded that an overwhelming majority of the U.S. population strongly supports these demands, and many unions, including the national AFL-CIO have gone on record supporting them.

On a city and state level these demands can be translated to local issues; cities and states are facing budget deficits that are resulting in cuts to education, social services and resulting in more unemployment. Local Occupy Movements can demand that the local top 1% pay more to make up for these, while also demanding that cities and states create jobs with this money.

Corporations are united in their purpose of profit chasing and social service slashing; so too must we be united in saving social services and taxing corporate profits, on a local and national level.

The Occupy Movement has more than room for an umbrella of demands from diverse sections of working class people, but now we must focus on what unites the vast majority, since the corporations have focused on dividing us for decades. The

more diverse demands of the working class can find a safe place for expression and growth only within a mass, united movement.

There can be no doubt that the Occupy Movement will either continue to grow into a massive social movement or shrink until the corporate-elite are able to snuff it out. In order for the movement to grow, it must truly attract the broader 99%, not merely the most progressive 10%. Focusing on broad but specific demands that all working people will fight for will attract organized labor, the elderly, students, minorities, i.e., the whole working class.

A working class mass movement has not existed in the United States since the 1930s and 40s when it resulted in spectacular progressive change in America, even if it was cut short before European-style social programs were achieved. Nevertheless, the achievements of the mass movements of past generations are under attack — Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and a living wage, etc. Only a real working class movement can save these programs and expand them.

If the Occupy Movement fails, the far right will be emboldened. They are trembling at the potential power of the movement and have lost all momentum themselves. If we lose the initiative, they will immediately seize it to press their agenda further and faster. Only by expanding the movement can we extinguish the power of the corporate elite. We have history on our side; let's not squander it.

The Occupy Movement represents a turning point in history. But in order to achieve its potential, it must reach out to the 99% and draw the majority into its ranks. Then it will have the power to change the agenda of this country, redraw the political map, and create a government that will operate in the interests of the vast majority, not the 1%. Once this change begins to unfold, there are no limits to what it could accomplish.

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**TOO BIG  
TO IGNORE**

**99%**

**STRONG**

block by block  
city by city

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