OMNI OCCUPY WALL STREET MOVEMENT
NEWSLETTER #1, October 13, 2011, Compiled by Dick Bennett
for a Culture of Peace

Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters:

http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

See related OMNI Newsletters on US Capitalism and US Corporations.

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WHAT’S HAPPENING IN FAYETTEVILLE (partial history)

SATURDAY OCTOBER 15, RALLY AT FAYETTEVILLE SQUARE AND WALK TO BANK OF AMERICA RALLY.

Friday 28 at Free Geek, tactics planning.

Tues. Nov. 1, Assembly at OMNI.

Sat. Nov. 5,
LETTERS AGAINST CORPORATE PERSONHOOD (Supreme Court’s Citizens United ruling) DELIVERED TO LEGISLATORS BY ABEL TOMLINSON AND OTHER OCCUPY DEMONSTRATORS and Supporters (Ed Rogers, Serafine Perna, Olivia Hines, Coralie Koonce, Jo Bennett, Jenny, et al.) on Saturday Nov. 5 at the Sheriff’s office where AR legislators were meeting. Here is Abel’s follow-up 11-10-11..
Dear Dick,
Many of us that wrote and delivered corporate personhood letters to lawmakers will be editing our letters to submit to the local newspapers in a coordinated letter writing campaign. If you can please join this effort and ask some of your friends to do so as well. If many letters on the same subject are published at the same time, it will be more powerful.
Thanks, Abel

Arkansas Democrat Gazette (250 word limit)
http://www.arkansasonline.com/contact/voicesform/

Northwest Arkansas Times (500 word limit)
http://www.nwaonline.com/submit/letter/

The Fayetteville Free Weekly (300 word limit)
sporter@nwaonline.com

The University of Arkansas Traveler (300 word limit)
http://www.uatrav.com/about/contact/

Occupy Solidarity on November 17th

War Resisters League wrl@warresisters.org via uark.edu to jbennet
wrl@warresisters.org

November 17th National Day of Action
“Resist Empire, Reclaim Our World, Recreate Solidarity”

In an effort to highlight the economic and human devastation that U.S. militarism has caused across the globe for centuries, the WRL national office along with South Asia Solidarity Initiative and a multiracial group of NYC-based activists has created an artistic action for the November 17th National Day of Action organized by labor, community, and Occupy/Dis-Occupy groups throughout the country.

On November 17th, we asking participants to undertake a creative action at their local Occupy, using snapshots of U.S. military actions over the last 60+ years to create a living timeline of the costs of U.S. occupation and war and their connection to what we call "our dollars" and "our streets." Because we know that the U.S. state and the U.S. economy both rely heavily on local and global military and police efforts to enforce their dominance and to lay claim to those resources that we're trying to protect and reclaim for the people through movements like Occupy.

You can download the toolkit here to do this antimilitarist action in your town!
You can also check out the video of our last action at Occupy Wall Street to get ideas for how you want engage the members of your community.

While the Occupy movement has so far been doing an amazing job of focusing on the failures of capitalism and corporate control of resources, October 7th, 2011 marked 10 years since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and the start of the "Global War on Terror," which has been
AGAINST INEQUALITY
Why the Occupy Movement is Good for Our Health
NWOLLMAN@bentley.edu via uark.edu to jbennet
http://www.commondreams.org/view/2011/11/08-2  Published on Tuesday, November 8, 2011 by
CommonDreams.org “Why the Occupy Movement is Good for Our Health” by Julie Matthaei and Neil
Wollman  Recently, the Congressional Budget Office released a report on income inequality which
found that the incomes of the top 1% nearly tripled between 1979 and 2007, whereas those of the
middle class increased by less than forty percent. In his 2007 study, Jared Bernstein  found that the
after-tax income of the top 1% was 21 times higher than that of middle income families in 2005,
compared to “only” 8 times higher in 1979. Indeed, inequality has been on the increase. The
burgeoning Occupy Wall Street movement, and its slogan, “We are the 99%,” is drawing critical
attention to the grossly unequal distribution of income and wealth in the U.S. Critics include the
injustice of the high incomes (and lack of incarceration) of Wall Street executives, given that their
illegal actions caused the unemployment and homelessness of millions; the corrupting influence on the
democratic process of the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few; and the basic indecency of the
top 1% having much more than they could ever spend, while millions of Americans lack housing,
health care, even food. But there any many other serious societal problems associated with inequality
which are not so obvious, and which have received little attention from the Occupy movement or the
media. According to researchers Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, more equal societies
outperformed less equal ones in fifteen key ways: PHYSICAL HEALTH: People in more equal
societies live longer, a smaller proportion of children die in infancy, and self-rated health is better.
MENTAL HEALTH: People in more equal societies are far less likely to experience mental illness.
DRUG ABUSE: People in more equal societies are less likely to use illegal drugs.
EDUCATION: Children do better at school in more equal societies.
IMPRISONMENT: Unequal societies are harsher (in that) they imprison a higher proportion of people.
OBESITY: Obesity is less common in more equal societies.
SOCIAL MOBILITY: There is more social mobility in more equal societies.
TRUST AND COMMUNITY LIFE: Communities are more cohesive and people trust each other more in
more equal societies.
VIOLENCE: Homicide rates are lower and children experience less violence in more equal societies.
TEENAGE BIRTHS: Teenage motherhood is less common in more unequal societies.
CHILD WELL-BEING: UNICEF measures of child well-being are better in more equal societies.
In sum, income inequality is bad for our health, and for our society. This finding greatly strengthens
the case for policies aimed at making our income distribution more equal. The Occupy Movement’s call
for greater income equality also receives support from another finding of Wilkinson and Pickett. They
expanded to include Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. Given that so many U.S.
corporations profit from U.S. militarism at home and abroad and that about half of our tax
dollars pay for U.S.-led wars and occupations, the issue of U.S. militarism must be made a
crucial part of the growing Occupy movement around the country.
If you are interested in doing this action at the Occupy/Dis-occupy movement in your town,
download the toolkit with everything that you need!
If you are planning on doing this action at your local Occupy or if you want to stand in
solidarity with these actions that remind the public that U.S. militarism is propping up this
system of greed, please RSVP on Facebook.
For more information, contact us at wrl@warresisters.org or 212-228-0450.
found that reductions in the level of inequality improve social well-being more than do increases in GDP. This finding runs counter to a basic tenet of our economic policy – that GDP is the best measure of well-being. It suggests that pro-growth policies which lead to increased inequality may in fact make people worse off, even if they increase GDP. Conversely, increasing taxes on the rich who would not only increase fairness, but also could increase well-being, even if they were to reduce GDP by discouraging capital investment. It is time that we the people, and our representatives in Washington, realize how unhealthy inequality is for us and for our society. We should all applaud the Occupy Movement for bringing this problem to public attention, and we should join them in demanding that public officials act decisively to reverse this unhealthy trend. While the top 1% can use their economic advantage and associated power to further enhance their wealth, we encourage them instead to join the 99% in pushing for more equality—as Warren Buffet has—and, perhaps, also improve their health and well-being in the process. We should all seek the redistribution of income —to "spread the wealth around" as put by then candidate Barack Obama to Joe the plumber — with more benefits then either likely considered at the time.

Julie Matthaei is a professor of economics at Wellesley College, and a co-founder and board member of the U.S. Solidarity Economy Network; jmatthae@wellesley.edu

Neil Wollman is Senior Fellow, Bentley Alliance for Ethics and Social Responsibility; Bentley University. He is concerned with issues of corporate responsibility; NWollman@bentley.edu

The Nov. 21 no. of The Nation contains excellent commentaries on OWS. Foremost is a zinger of an essay by the great Bill Moyers: "How Wall Street Occupied America." Then Richard Kim gives a circumstantial report on OWS NYC: "The Audacity of Occupy Wall Street." Also: A LTE "When America Didn't Need to 'Occupy,'" reports on FDR putting people to work (gov't. has fine record of empoying people). Related to WPA is a note by Richard Lingeman on the dramatization of Sinclair Lewis' 1935 novel It Can't Happen Here on US becoming fascist. And Alexander Cockburn compares protests in Greece with OWS, and describes the failure of US capitalism and its violent responses to public protests. Last but not least: The Nation's updates SLIDE SHOW: OCCUPY AMERICA. All of these writers understand the root goal of Occupy--to reverse the egregious economic inequality that a few people corrupt system have forced upon our nation.

Holding Wall Street Accountable

From: "Natalie Foster, Rebuild The Dream," Nov 13, 2011

Dear Louise,

It's been a busy and exciting two weeks. We've seen extraordinary actions in every corner of the country aimed at holding Wall Street accountable for the damage they've done to our economy.

People across the country have pledged to close more than 80,000 accounts at the big Wall Street banks in coordination with last week's nationwide "Make Wall Street Pay" day of action—which included more than 250 local rallies, marches, and actions.

Thousands of people have already started planning even more great actions and this week American Dream Movement volunteers hosted hundreds of local "How the 1% Crashed the Economy" teach-ins.
Now we've got to keep the pressure on Wall Street going. If you want to stay involved, organize with others, and do more to hold Wall Street accountable, here are several powerful new campaigns you can plug into:

Move Our Money: http://www.moveourmoneyusa.org/ Join the new nationwide campaign from our friends at The New Bottom Line. You can report back how much money you’ve moved from the big banks and then join a local campaign to get city government, churches, schools, and other institutions in your area to move their money out of the big Wall Street banks.

Invest in the Dream http://www.jewishjustice.org/community-banking: Progressive Jewish Alliance and Jewish Funds for Justice has launched "Community Banking: Invest in the Dream," a project that offers good alternative investments to the stock market. Your alternate investment will help build a better future for all of us.

Banxodus: http://banxodus.org/ The Progressive Change Campaign Committee (PCCC) has created Banxodus, a crowd-sourced bank research site that gives you the tools to find a better bank.

And, of course, don't forget to find or start an event near you on November 17th—a mass day of action where we demand jobs and justice from our government.

We hope you can help continue the fight to bring America back into the hands of the 99%.

Thank you for being a part of, and believing in, this movement.

—Natalie, Van, Billy, Jim, Ian, Somer, and the rest of the Rebuild the Dream team

Over Half of All U.S. Tax Subsidies Go to Four Industries. Guess Which Ones?

Joe Romm, News Report, NationofChange, 11-13-11: “Citizens for Tax Justice has analyzed corporate tax rates from 2008 to 2010. The report examines over half of the Fortune 500 companies Perhaps it’s no surprise that the richest industries get the biggest subsidies, starting with finance and Big Energy. That’s how the 1% operate. Notably, 56 percent of the total tax subsidies went to just four industries: financial, utilities, tele-communications, and oil, gas & pipelines.” READ | DISCUSS | SHARE http://www.nationofchange.org/over-half-all-us-tax-subsidies-go-four-industries-guess-which-ones-1321200366#comments

ORIGINS OF 2011 WORLDWIDE PROTESTS AGAINST ESTABLISHED POWER BY TOMDISPATCH AND JUAN COLE

November 10, 2011

Tomgram: Juan Cole, Protesting a Pasha-the-Tiger World

Here’s the simple truth of it: American priorities couldn’t be clearer at the moment. You would have to be blind not to notice. The numbers, almost any numbers you care to look at, tell the story. In fact, you can hardly turn on the TV news or read a newspaper these days without being whacked over the head by a new set of staggering figures, each shocking in more or less the same way.

You want a crystal ball to see the future? No need. Just check out, for example, the recent Pew Research
Center study showing that, in 2009, households headed by adults 65 or older had 47 times the wealth of households headed by someone younger than 35. The actual numbers feel more startling yet: $170,494 to $3,662. In 1984, the ratio was 10 to 1. Consider that as your modern American history lesson for the day. We're talking about the widest "wealth gap" on record.

Those figures tell a tale about the likely lives of upcoming generations: not as good. But let's not be too cheery about the elderly either. After all, the most recent figures from the Census Bureau show poverty rising among seniors to 15.9%, or roughly one in six of elderly, many driven into debt and poverty by "out-of-pocket medical expenses." About one in seven Americans now fall below the official poverty line, the most, writes Business Week, "since the Bureau began gathering that statistic" 52 years ago. In the meantime, median family income declined by 2.3% in 2010, a year in which the economy expanded by 3%. (Into whose pockets, I wonder, could that money be going?)

If you want to think about American priorities another way, consider this figure: the price tag for a year at elite Princeton University ($37,000) is less than for a year in a New Jersey state prison ($43,000). The U.S., in fact, has more people incarcerated than any country on the planet, but places only sixth in college degrees. Its national spending on higher education rose by 21% from 1987 to 2007, but 127% in the same period for correctional spending. Oh, and full-time college students are now borrowing 63% more for their educations than they did a decade ago and graduating, on average, more than $25,000 in debt into a job-poor universe. Which brings up an obvious question: Which society is more likely to prosper, one that puts its money into incarceration or one that puts its money into education?

Right now, as the numbers pour in, the question isn’t: Why are all those kids out there in parks and squares and plazas raising a fuss? It’s: Why isn’t everyone protesting -- or 99% of us anyway? TomDispatch regular Juan Cole, whose Informed Comment website is a crucial companion for anyone who wants to understand the Middle East, explains just why, in 2011, we find ourselves in an age of activism globally. If the young are protesting nearly planet-wide, there’s a reason: the world was screwed up in remarkably similar ways in almost any country you care to consider. Tom

Protest Planet
How a Neoliberal Shell Game Created an Age of Activism
By Juan Cole

From Tunis to Tel Aviv, Madrid to Oakland, a new generation of youth activists is challenging the neoliberal state that has dominated the world ever since the Cold War ended. The massive popular protests that shook the globe this year have much in common, though most of the reporting on them in the mainstream media has obscured the similarities.

Whether in Egypt or the United States, young rebels are reacting to a single stunning worldwide development: the extreme concentration of wealth in a few hands thanks to neoliberal policies of deregulation and union busting. They have taken to the streets, parks, plazas, and squares to protest against the resulting corruption, the way politicians can be bought and sold, and the impunity of the white-collar criminals who have run riot in societies everywhere. They are objecting to high rates of unemployment, reduced social services, blighted futures, and above all the substitution of the market for all other values as the matrix of human ethics and life.

Click here to read more of this dispatch. http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175466/tomgram%3A_juan_cole%2C_protesting_a_pasha-the-tiger_world/#more
The 99 Percent Vote to Protect Labor Rights, Voting Rights, Reproductive Rights and Immigrant Rights

JOHN NICHOS, Nov. 9, 2011, The Nation, November 28, 2011

“This was an election about the 99 percent, said Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown on the day his home state overwhelmingly rejected the anti-labor agenda of Republican Governor John Kasich. “The 99 percent is pushing back.” Brown is right. But what was especially significant about the November 8 referendum vote in Ohio and a number of other elections around the country that day was the extent to which they sent specific signals about the willingness of the 99 percent to push back against both Wall Street and the big-money politics that has so skewed the national discourse. At the same time, they rejected attacks on abortion rights, immigrant rights and voter rights.

See david crosby & graham nash on keith olbermann


NEW BOOKS


Day 39: Live Coverage of October 2011 Protests in Freedom Plaza

Special Coverage: This month of October 2011 marks the eleventh year of our country’s longest war in Afghanistan and the onset of the 2012 US federal budget, which provides unlimited funds for war and corporate greed, while withholding funds for basic human needs. On October 6th, a protest assembled at Freedom Plaza in Washington, D.C. with the goal of “nonviolently resisting the corporate machine by occupying Freedom Plaza to demand that America's resources be invested in human needs and environmental protection instead of war and exploitation.” READ | DISCUSS | http://www.nationofchange.org/day-28-live-stream-october-2011-protests-freedom-plaza-1317962615#comments
Day 56: Live Coverage of the Wall Street Occupation
Special Coverage: As we enter Day 56 of the Wall Street Occupation the movement we see how the movement has spread not only across the country but all over the globe. Thousands of activists have descended on Wall Street these past weeks as part of the #OccupyWallStreet protest organized by several action groups. What follows is a live video stream and live Twitter feed of this event. READ | DISCUSS | SHARE http://www.nationofchange.org/live-stream-wall-street-occupation-1316970901#comments

Occupy Wall Street’s Success: Even Republicans Are Talking About Income Inequality As ThinkProgress’ Zaid Jilani cataloged earlier this month, the Occupy Wall

Street demonstrations have helped shift media coverage away from conservative concerns about the federal debt and deficit to the more progressive (and important) issues of unemployment and unequal income distribution. Now, the 99 Percent Movement’s influence on the wider political landscape is becoming clear. According to a new poll from The Hill, the majority of likely voters now say “income inequality has become a big problem for the country,” and “majorities across practically all income levels, and all political, philosophical and racial lines agreed that the middle class is being reduced.” Nearly seven-in-ten respondents said the current tax system — which a recent Congressional Budget Office report said is partially responsible for income inequality — is “unfair.” Read more By Alex Seitz-Wald | Think Progress
Posted on Monday, October 31, 2011  Those who do not make human beings the center of their concern soon lose the capacity to make any ethical choices, for they willingly sacrifice others in the name of the politically expedient and practical. Dwight Macdonald wrote in “The Root Is Man,”