OMNI OCCUPY WALL STREET MOVEMENT
NEWSLETTER #12, JUNE 8, 2012, Compiled by Dick Bennett

Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters:

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


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MUSIC SUPPORTS OCCUPY
Occupy This Album is a 4-disc album of songs by Patti Smith, David Crosby, Ani DiFranco, Thievery Corporation, Yo La Tengo, Yoko Ono, and others in support of Occupy Wall Street.
www.occupyformusic.org

This Changes Everything: Occupy Wall Street and the 99% Movement
Edited by Sarah van Gelder and the staff of YES! Magazine 96pp.
The Occupy Wall Street movement names the core issue of our time: the overwhelming power of Wall Street and large corporations—something the political establishment and most media have long ignored.

But the movement goes far beyond this critique. This Changes Everything shows how the movement is shifting the way people view themselves and the world, the kind of society they believe is possible, and their own involvement in creating a society that works for the 99% rather than just the 1%.

Be one of the first people to receive a copy of This Changes Everything: Occupy Wall Street and the 99% Movement, edited by Sarah van Gelder and the staff of YES! Magazine. Books ► This Changes Everything

From YES! Magazine (Summer 2012)
Fran Korten “Use the People's Veto” to End Citizens United,
Amy Dean, “Occupiers Move In.” Opposition to unjust evictions.

Occupy Protesters Help Los Angeles Woman and Disabled Daughter Save Their Home From Bank of America
Pat Garofalo, News Report, NationofChange, May 27, 2012: Desperate, Rodriguez contacted several
community groups including Occupy Fights Foreclosures — the battle to save the Rodriguez home began. Suzanne O’Keeffe, with Occupy Fights Foreclosures, says the bank didn’t treat the Rodriguez family right. She charged they not only didn’t fill out the proper paperwork to foreclose, they waited too long. READ | DISCUSS | SHARE  http://www.nationofchange.org/occupy-protesters-help-los-angeles-woman-and-disabled-daughter-save-their-home-bank-america-13380406

WALL STREET NEEDS REGULATION
05.25.12
e-mailprintcommentreprint tool name close [x] tool goes here The Miami Herald | EDITORIAL
“Still reckless after all these years”
The Miami Herald Editorial
Self-regulation on Wall Street isn’t working
HeraldEd@MiamiHerald.com
Last week brought some encouraging news about the nation’s banking industry: The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation said bank earnings in the first quarter rose to the highest level in nearly five years and the number of troubled banks fell for the fourth consecutive quarter.
But hold the applause.
While two out of three banks reported improved earnings, bank loans to garden-variety consumers fell in most categories.
The number of FDIC “problem” banks fell from 813 to 772 compared to the previous quarter, but a spokesman for the American Bankers’ Association said growth in lending will continue at a “gradual” pace — i.e., slowly — until the housing market improves.
And then there’s that $2 billion loss by JPMorgan Chase (Or was it $3 billion? Or more?). Has Wall Street already forgotten the lessons of 2008 — or were they never learned in the first place?
All in all, it’s a mixed picture that raises doubts about the direction of the economy. Banks are doing better, but consumers in need of credit and homeowners “under water” with their properties have been left in the lurch.
This means stronger action is needed to ensure that banks and the financial markets don’t pull the economy into another tailspin. The JPMorgan fiasco is the most serious. Consider that it happened to the biggest New York bank to avoid the Wall Street collapse of 2008. If it can happen there . . .
The bank’s self-assured chief executive, Jamie Dimon, has led the charge against stiff regulation under the Dodd-Frank reforms, but now his own institution has been exposed as vulnerable. Mr. Dimon acknowledged the losing trades were “stupid,” and “sloppy,” but he first claimed they did not violate proposed rules barring banks from doing risky trading for their own account.
Later, however, a bank spokesman said they may have crossed the line after all. The problem is that without transparency, no one really knows. And without effective regulation, more episodes like this are bound to occur.
If only Mr. Dimon’s investors and depositors were hurt, that would matter less.
But because of the bank’s iconic standing in the minds of investors, such mistakes affect the entire economy. They raise questions about the stability of financial institutions and equity markets. Other bankers, especially smaller ones, fear a recurrence of 2008 and make it harder to extend credit.
Consumer confidence plunges.
Foreign investors are equally bewildered, wondering if anyone’s in charge of the U.S. economy.
Mr. Dimon has owned up to the mistakes, but he appears to have learned little from this incident.
Instead of trying to turn Dodd-Frank into a toothless instrument, he should acknowledge that Wall Street needs a strong sheriff, and that rules restricting hyper-risky trades need to be enforced.
Meanwhile, regulators have been slow to roll out the new rules under Dodd-Frank. In large part, this is the result of lobbying by Mr. Dimon and his Wall Street cohorts. If strong rules against “derivatives”
had been in place, including transparency, regulators and the market might not have been caught unawares. The resulting shock — and the huge loss — might have been avoided. Self-regulation on Wall Street isn’t working. The Obama administration should push its regulators to move faster to rein in the big banks. As long as banks that are “too big to fail” are allowed to operate outside an effective regulatory system, the economy will remain vulnerable to another recession.

Read more here: http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/05/29/2817621/still-reckless-after-all-these.html#storylink=cpy

“Ahead of May Day, David Harvey Details Urban Uprisings From Occupy Wall Street to the Paris Commune”

Amy Goodman, Democracy NOW!, Truthout, April 30, 2012: "On Tuesday, May 1st, known as May Day or International Workers' Day, Occupy Wall Street protesters hope to mobilize tens of thousands of people across the country under the slogan, 'General Strike. No Work. No Shopping. Occupy Everywhere.' Events are planned in 125 cities. We speak with leading social theorist David Harvey, distinguished professor of anthropology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, about how Occupy Wall Street compares to other large-scale grassroots movements throughout modern history."

Watch the Video and Read the Transcript http://truth-out.org/video/item/8829-ahead-of-may-day-david-harvey-details-urban-uprisings-from-occupy-wall-street-to-the-paris-commune

The Relation of Occupy to Lasting International Organization

ZNet has obviously been doing a lot of mailing about the organizational project called International Organization for a Participatory Society, or IOPS. Most recently we sent an Interview with Noam Chomsky about it. It is brief, topically unusual for Noam, and quite inspiring. Before that we sent a Question and Answer from the IOPS site about concerns people have over whether to join or not. It is extensive, raising 30 concerns that could keep a person from relating to IOPS, and addressing each, including acknowledging that some people should not join, but other people should. Before that - well, you get the idea. We have sent a lot of IOPS related messages. Probably even more than when we try to fundraise, which our survival depends on. How come we have done that? Well, it is because we believe that even beyond our survival, our potential depends on IOPS, or, if not IOPS, then on something better. Perhaps an analogy will clarify. Do you play poker? The most popular version of poker now, around the world, is called "no limit hold em." During the course of games, players can bet however much they like, up to their full holdings. When they want to do just that, they go "all in." They bet everything. If they lose the bet, that's it, they suffer a serious loss - and, in the game, they are done. If they win the bet, they double up their holdings and continue on, vastly better off than before. Z is all in for IOPS. Of course, the analogy isn't perfect. We aren't done if IOPS fails. Maybe something else will succeed. However we believe new organization is needed. And this new organization needs to be multi focus. It needs to be visionary. It needs to be local but also to cross borders. It needs to be emotionally and structurally anti sectarian - yet also coherent. It needs to seek self management and to plant the seeds of a desirable future in the present. It needs to win gains that benefit people now. It
needs to win a new world that liberates people later. It needs to work well with others. It needs to work well, itself.
Z is all in for IOPS because looking at current prospects, and even speculating about the near and middle future, Z finds this effort, which has attracted nearly 2000 members from 80 countries in just a couple of months, and which has clear visionary and structural commitments in accord with the desires noted above, a very promising hope for attaining worthy new international organization. So Z is asking those who relate to ZNet and ZMag and to the work of the many people who are already in IOPS, not that you should drop everything and blindly join - of course - but that you should visit the IOPS Site and, when you can set aside some time for it, read about its mission, vision, structure, history, and hopes - check out what is already percolating in its projects, blogs, the commenting, notice the chapters and branches, and then finally decide, based on it all, whether IOPS is for you.
Z is all in for IOPS because we believe while it will be a hard road for its members to travel, establishing IOPS successfully - mainly, honestly, against long simmering skepticism - will have great benefits for all left media and activism, and even for all populations.
So, below is another piece we are sending. This time the substance is addressed to all those who have been in or who greatly support the "Occupy movement" in its many forms and with its many names, around the world. We suspect that that includes virtually every person who uses ZNet and certainly every person who gets these mailings - so this is addressed to you, too!

IOPS Consultative Committee
Ezequiel Adamovsky - Argentina
M Adams - US
Michael Albert - US
Stanley Aronowitz - US
Elaine Bernard - US/Canada
Patrick Bond - S. Africa
Jason Chrysostomou - UK
Noam Chomsky - US
And many more

By Michael Albert of ZNet
Thursday, June 07, 2012
Occupy this and that - by which I mean the Occupy Movement writ large - is still, even after some depletion in some places - quite enormous. It includes countless local manifestations, sometimes around housing, other times around banks, sometimes focusing on media, other times on nukes, and so on. It also includes massive manifestations, as in Greece and Spain, among others, as well as large city gatherings, and then also smaller local town gatherings, reading groups, dinner parties, etc.

So how many people are actively involved in Occupy (including variants that have their own different names around the world)? Of course, no one knows. Okay, then, how many people are very supportive, beyond those who are explicitly involved? We have even less information about that - except for a few places, like Spain, where the polls indicate support is upwards of 60 - 70% of the whole population, and Greece where it appears to be similar. However, for the sake of exploring some ideas, let's be very conservative and round it all off. Let's hypothesize that one million people, worldwide, are either active in Occupy or at least very seriously support it. I suspect vastly more are very supportive - even if we leave out Spain and Greece for being so far advanced compared to other places - and considerably more are involved to some significant degree. But let's compromise dramatically and use that very round number: one million, worldwide.Now let's suppose those one million people are all in one
gargantuan assembly meeting. Remember, it is a thought experiment - so just imagine it. Now also imagine that a host who can be heard by everyone attending announces that all those who think that issues of race, ethnicity, nationality, and religious violation of people's rights and dignity should NOT be a priority focus of a movement trying to create a better world, and thus that such cultural matters should be considered by a movement for a better world to be less central than, say, economic or gender or governmental matters, please raise your hands. And then, with the hands waving, the host proclaims, thank you for attending but this gathering has been called for folks with multi priority views you apparently do not share, so, it will not offend us, if you opt to leave. How many would go? I think, not too many. Traipsing out the door would be only those who were ideologically committed to a narrow prioritization of economics or of gender - but not of race - and even then, probably not many of those. But let's exaggerate. Let's say 50,000, worldwide - out of the one million - would raise their hands and would leave on account of not wanting to be in a pursuit with people who think issues of race and culture are on a par with the other matters. Okay, a brief moment is set aside to regroup, and then the host asks all those who think issues of sexuality and gender, and thus of family life and child rearing and relations among men and women, aged and young, and gay and straight, should be considered less central than one or more other matters by a movement for a better world, to please raise their hands. And while the hands are waving about, the host says, thank you for attending, but our assembly is for folks with views different from yours - so, it will not offend us if you opt to leave. How many would go? Maybe somewhat more than in the last case, I really don't know, but worldwide let's say 150,000 more who are active in or at least deeply support the Occupy movements, would leave because they think economics, or culture, or polity is more central than kinship and that the latter is of only relatively secondary import, if that. So now 800,000 of the one million original Occupy advocates remain.Suppose the host next asks all those who think economics and class or governance and citizen power should NOT be a priority to raise their hands. Okay, you may leave, the host tells those with hands waving and a small number go - let's exaggerate and say another 50,000 to keep things rounded off neatly. These folks say they want a better world, but they think economics and governance are of secondary import and shouldn't be prioritized along with race and gender which they have already indicated their concern for. And next the host does the same for ecology and for international relations, and another 50,000 go, again exaggerating, saying that those issues are subordinate and they don't want to remain with folks who give those matters unwarranted priority. So now 700,000 people remain because they mutually agree that race and culture, kinship and gender, economy and class, polity and citizenship, ecology, and international relations should ALL be central concerns, with none subordinated to any other in any worthy effort to create a better world. That is, in the shared view of those remaining, a better world should not and would not preserve racism, ethnocentrism, bigotry, religious persecution, sexism, homophobia, class rule, political authoritarianism, ecological insanity, imperialism, colonialism, etc. The remaining folks feel that a whole movement should therefore address all these realms with comparable priority, even if some folks and projects would of course perfectly reasonably emphasize one focus, and other folks and projects would emphasize another focus, each given their particular personal circumstances, resources, and interests. Okay, so far, so good. 700,000 are still in the room/assembly. We might quibble about the million base figure we started with, but in that case just raise the 700,000, or lower it, proportionately, in your own preferred accounting. Or we might quibble about the percentages leaving due to each refinement of shared views of those remaining, but again, just raise or lower the 700,000 in your own preferred accounting. The obvious question that arises at this point is, are you still in the hypothetical room? If you are, read on. If not, well okay, that's fine. We who read on, won't be offended. Different strokes for different folks as the old slogan goes - but the rest of this essay is probably not for you since it does presuppose the shared views of the 700,000.Okay, now comes a bigger issue of evaluation. The host says, how many of you who remain feel that to address these agreed priority matters so as to eliminate the ills they entail we don't have to transform basic institutions, we just have to institute appropriate new polices
and have no need, for example, to get rid of capitalist ways of conducting economy, patriarchal structures in our ways of living locally, racist and ethnocentric and otherwise destructive features at the institutional base of our ways of celebrating identities, or the core institutions of legislation, adjudication, etc.? We just have to impose on our societies some additional norms, laws, requirements, etc., in the form of additional policies - and things will be excellent? Please raise your hands if you have that view. Alright, we will not be offended if you leave because you do not want to be in a group that instead feels basic institutions must be replaced. How many of the 700,000 still in the session would leave? On the one hand we should note that the host could ask how many would say they are revolutionaries - because that is what it means to say you believe policies are not enough and that basic institutions must be replaced to remove the underlying causes of the offending social relations. That would yield one result. Or the host could instead raise the issue the way our host did above and ask how many of you think new policies and modest adaptations of existing structures is all we need? That, I suspect, would get a different result. The second way, if a person decides that there is nothing fundamentally wrong with our institutions that a once over of some new rules and modifications acting on top of them - plus punishing and removing bad guys who violate the new norms - wouldn't deal with, then the person leaves.I actually think the number of our 700,000 who would say reforms are enough to get rid of our problems is pretty low. I think the number who, whether they would use the term or not, are revolutionary in thinking new institutions are needed if we are to have just societies, is rather high. But, nonetheless, let's err on the side of underestimating those who stay. Let's say another 200,000 leave because they feel there is no need to replace underlying institutions to have a new and worthy world; we can get what we want with just reforms. Okay, we are down to 500,000. We reach one more divide. And it is perhaps the most stressing one so far. Our host says, of the 500,000 still here because we think the many areas mentioned earlier are each comparably central to address, and we think the only way to remove the oppressions that scour dignity and humanity and life from people all over the world is to replace underlying institutions that yield those results with new institutions that have contrary implications, how many think it is possible that we, with others who come to think like us, can actually succeed? Put the opposite way, our host says, how many of you think either that there is no better alternative set of social relations we can aspire to, to replace those we now suffer from; or think that even if there is such an alternative, the enemies who would obstruct attaining it are too strong to overcome; or think we ourselves are so far down a path of mutual destruction and dissolution that we simply have no hope of avoiding sectarianism and authoritarianism in our own endeavors so that anything we attempt will fall far short of digging out of the pit we are in and reaching desirable better institutions? Hands go up, doors open, and the vision deniers leave. Why stay for a futile pursuit, they reason. How many slumped through the doors, depressed that fundamental change is impossible, but honorably and consistently following their beliefs?It is a guess, like everything above, but I think this is far and away the biggest divider, so let's say four fifths leave due to denying the possibility of success. We now have 100,000 who, by the logic of their remaining in the room, should be eager to find ways to work cooperatively and continually with others like themselves, both people in the room and people who are outside and also share the agreed views, as well as to demonstrate to even more other people among those who have left the room or were never assembled in the first place - due to not relating to Occupy - that they should come in, sit down, take up a comfortable position, and stay for the duration. So here is my punchline. Are you in that 100,000? If you are, I claim you should forget about our hypothetical room, it has served its purpose, and you should take a look at the International Organization for a Participatory Society (IOPS) site. IOPS claims to be a path to having an organization with the features these 100,000 people desire - and to establish anti sectarian operations that will be successfully plant seeds of the future everywhere in the present while also winning gains on a road forward. IOPS even claims to have an agreed vision that includes the minimal but essential features to meet the 100,000's desires for new institutions that would have liberating results compared to the institutions we now suffer. Given your views, as hypothetically unearthed by your remaining in the
room of 100,000, IOPS may prove congenial for you as a way to pursue the path your attendance in the room implies. There may still be reason for you not to join up - of course - but it is hard to see any reason not to at least take some time to assess IOPS. More, if you have reservations - which probably most who consider IOPS will, at least initially, there is no reason not to hash them out, looking first at the IOPS Q/A about concerns, and then perhaps talking through the issues you feel with others. All of us in the hypothetical room should hope, even if we think it is bucking long odds, that IOPS is an undertaking for us. But what about the effects on Occupy? What would be the impact on your work in Occupy of your deciding IOPS was a good fit for your inclinations and aspirations, or for your work in other projects and movements that you already relate to? Most likely your other involvements would continue as in the past. Perhaps your involvement in IOPS would cause you to have ideas that you would wish to share with people in your non IOPS activities, just as your non IOPS involvements might generate ideas you would want to share in IOPS. Beyond that spontaneous cross fertilization, your explicit IOPS involvement would of course depend on your evolving relation to its emerging programs, projects, etc.

But what if a considerable number of people in Occupy were to join IOPS? Suppose out of the 100,000 who stayed in our hypothetical assembly meeting, in the coming months 10,000 or 20,000 were to join IOPS. It is optimistic, but if it happened, what difference would it make for Occupy and for IOPS? Well, it would quickly turn IOPS into a very large international revolutionary organization that is a federation of national branches and local chapters, rooted deeply in Occupy, engaged in countless forms of activism in Occupy and outside it as well, developing its own IOPS program, and providing a model of the implementation of the values and institutions of the future in the present. In this optimistic but quite possible scenario, a subset of Occupy activists and supporters would have spun off a lasting organizational manifestation of the Occupy upsurge that would cause the insights of Occupy to persist and would inform and be informed by the insights of other endeavors all around the world - even as those involved would of course also strongly agitate for more, wider, and deeper Occupy activism. With so many Occupy advocates in IOPS there would be a minority current running within Occupy carrying shared views from IOPS into Occupy's ethos and operations. There would likewise be a massive influx into IOPS from Occupy, no doubt defining its future in manifold ways. If the logic above - not the specific guesses about numbers, but the general impression of those who would remain were the hypothetical assembly to gather and the process to unfold - is wrong, my apologies for wasting your time. But if the logic is right, and if you, like me, would be among the folks who would be hunkered down in the room at the end of the thought experiment - then the ball is in our court.