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A LOVE SUPREME

“Deep Democratic Awakening”

WE THE PEOPLE of the global Occupy movement embody and enact a deep democratic awakening with genuine joy and fierce determination. Our movement—leaderless and leaderful—is a soulful expression of a moral outrage at the ugly corporate greed that pushes our society and world to the brink of catastrophe. We are aware that our actions have inaugurated a radical enlightenment in a moment of undeniable distrust and disgust with oligarchic economies, corrupt politicians, arbitrary rule of law and corporate media weapons of mass distraction. And we intend to sustain our momentum by nurturing our bonds of trust, fortifying our bodies, hearts and minds and sticking together through hell or high water in order to create a better world through a deep democratic revolution.

We refuse to be mere echoes of the vicious lies that support an illegitimate status quo. Our deep democratic awakening takes the form of we everyday people raising our individual and collective voices to tell the painful truths about unjust systems and unfair structures that yield unnecessary social misery. The past thirty years of a top-down, one-sided class war on precious poor and working people—with the greatest transfer of wealth from bottom to top in human history—have taught us that we either fight together in the name of truth and justice or we lose our livelihoods and sacred honor. In this sense, the movement is already victorious: our organizing and mobilizing have shifted public discourses toward truth and justice—towards a focus on corporate greed, wealth inequality, escalating poverty, obscene levels of unemployment, the role of big money in politics, and abusive military and police power. But we have work ahead of us yet.

The full-scale bankruptcy of the neoliberal order—of deregulated markets, unaccountable oligarchs, bribed politicians—is now an established fact of life and history. Its age is coming to an end. Our deep democratic enlightenment must break us out of our narrow intellectual frameworks and our parochial cultural habitus. Like the inventors of jazz, we

must be open-minded, flexible, fluid, inclusive, transparent, courageous, self-critical, compassionate and visionary. We must recast old notions of empire, class, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and nature into new ways of thinking and being. Our movement is a precious, sublime, messy and funky form of incubation. Again like jazz, we must embody and enact a loving embrace of the art of our collaborative creations. We must embody a universal embrace of all those in the human family, and sentient beings, and consolidate an unstopable fortitude in the face of systems of oppression and structures of domination. We will suffer, shudder and struggle together with smiles on our faces and a love supreme in our souls. Just as justice is what love looks like in public and tenderness is what love feels like in private, deep democratic revolution is what justice looks like in practice.

Revolution may scare some people because of its connotation of violence. And this is understandable in light of many past revolutions, such as the American revolutions against monarchy in 1776 or against slavery in 1861. But the revolution in our time—against oligarchy and plutocracy—need not be an ugly and violent one. The rich legacies of Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, and recent revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, have taught us that we can deal with our social catastrophes with social compassion and that we can transform unjust societies with courageous visions and nonviolent strategies. If we equip ourselves with truthful systemic analyses of power in our minds, moral commitments of steel in our backs and a genuine joy in serving others in our hearts, then our dream of a nascent justice spread across the globe may be no mere illusion.

We are prisoners of a blood-stained, tear-soaked hope. This means we are free to imagine and create a more deeply democratic world than we have yet witnessed in history.

BY CORNEL WEST



GENERAL STRIKE IN OAKLAND: On November 2, days after Mayor Quan’s police brutalized non-violent occupiers with tear gas, thousands marched on the Port of Oakland to bring shipping in Northern California to a standstill. PHOTO: AP/Kent Porter, Santa Rosa Press Democrat

Breaking Through

When New York City’s mayor ordered an assault this week on Liberty Square, the story played like a script only the 1% could write: Michael Bloomberg, a Wall Street media baron worth \$18 billion, who spent \$50 million of his own money and rewrote the law to win a third term in office, sent in a thousand cops to trash a library, close a kitchen, shut down an occupation and arrest hundreds in the name of “unsanitary” conditions in the park.

But the tactics behind the scenes are more complicated.

Preceding the NYPD’s raid on Occupy Wall Street, 18 mayors held a conference call to “discuss” the national movement. In the days that followed, police attacks on Seattle, Portland, Denver, Atlanta, Salt Lake and other cities went into effect. Careful public relations strategies were crafted to spin the legality of the assaults against peaceful democratic assemblies. Federal agencies, including the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security, served as consultants.

Nine weeks into the occupation, we know this: every time the forces of order have confused themselves with the rule of law, the movement has expanded. Numbers have multiplied. Four young women pepper sprayed without cause brought thousands more into the streets. After 700 arrests on the Brooklyn Bridge, organized labor and students led 30,000 people into the streets. As New York occupier Noah Fischer put it: “Every week is a turning point.”

It’s helpful to remember the last big turning point—the night of

October 26 when hundreds left Liberty Square, outraged by the tear gas and rubber bullets that Oakland police had fired on peaceful occupiers the night before. Marching to the sound of staccato drumbeats and bagpipes toward City Hall, the chant resounded — “New York is Oakland and Oakland is New York!”

At first the march looked like many of those that came before; surrounded by flashing lights, with police escorts violently pushing people from the streets back up on the sidewalks, the crowd circled City Hall Park. Then, while circling it a second time, something unexpected happened: the group dispersed, bodies dashed through traffic toward Foley Square and, moments later, rejoined to form a 500-person mass surging uncontained up a side street.

People streamed through police lines that hurriedly assembled to block them at Broadway and overtook the avenue. They used the people’s mic to announce NYPD movements and to coordinate directions of the march. For the next two hours, occupation euphoria swept lower Manhattan: it was on the asphalt in the lanes between stalled sedans and taxis where marchers walked, danced and cheered. On the sidewalks outside of bars and restaurants, diners looked up into a sea of exhilarated faces.

The evaporation of fear wasn’t all that changed that night. People who had been barricaded and brutalized realized their power to control the streets. It was the recognition that the

Continued on back

Another American Way

When I went looking for Occupy Johnson City, Tennessee, the spiky profile of pickets and placards struck my eye first, and then the people underneath them, but it did not look like a global uprising per se, just an orderly crowd in a parking lot. But a crowd, there’s a sight, in a town where people mostly drive-thru or drive on. I saw some American flags and a sign that said “God Hates Banks” and figured this had to be it. From across the street I heard one person say a few words at a time, repeated by the crowd in the unmistakable “from this day forward...” cadence of a wedding or a swearing-in, and again I wasn’t sure I was in the right place. As it turned out, the call and response was the people’s microphone, famously re-invented in New York to subvert the ban on amplifiers. Here in Tennessee it sounds like people taking vows. Repeat as one: men in UMW jackets, farmers in their town clothes, college kids, retired schoolteachers, young couples pushing strollers, the wilderness guide in a kilt, the homeless man with the sign in Latin. Really the temptation was to ask any given person, what is the story? Because there is one.

This is Appalachia, home of the forested Cumberland and Wildwood Flower and NASCAR and 18% unemployment and bless your heart. Home of mountaintop removal, wherein coal companies find it profitable to tear the earth’s own flesh from its bones and leave the stunned, uprooted living to contemplate drinking poison, in the literal sense. Birthplace of the Blair Mountain rebellion, where underpaid labor ran up against big capital in an insurrection unlike any other this country has known. That was in 1921, and by many accounts the approval rating of big capital here has not improved. Just this month, a dispassionate Wall Street analysis ranked us the fifth-poorest region in the land. The people’s microphone in this context sounds like a tent revival. It took twice as long to say anything, but induced full participation, which is also very southern, come to think of it.

At length we agreed to march ourselves down State of Franklin Street, and as we stretched across block after block of stopped traffic, people in their pickups and dinged-up station wagons and gas-conscious sedans honked and cheered to see our “tax greed” signs, and did not advise us to get a job or a haircut. The orthodox objections have grown ridiculous. Every system on earth has its limits. We have never been here before, not right here exactly, you and me together in the golden and gritty places all at once, on deadline, no fooling around this time, no longer walking politely around the dire colossus, the so-called American Way of consecrated corporate profits and crushed public compassion. There is another American way. This is the right place, we found it. On State of Franklin we yelled until our throats hurt that we were the 99% because that’s just it. We are.

BY BARBARA KINGSOLVER

**JOIN
THE 99%
CREATE
DEMOCRACY
CHECK YOUR LOCAL
OCCUPATION**

OCCUPIEDMEDIA.US



PHOTO: Rick Bruner

**THEY TELL YOU
WE ARE DREAMERS.**

**The true dreamers are those
who think things can go on
indefinitely the way they are.**

**We are not dreamers. We are
awakening from a dream which
is turning into a nightmare. We
are not destroying anything.**

**We are only witnessing how
the system is destroying itself.**

**To be engaged in fighting for
freedom, you have first to
free yourself from the chains**

**of ruling ideology. When you
criticize capitalism, don’t allow
yourself to be blackmailed that
you are against democracy.**

THE CHANGE IS POSSIBLE.

Slavoj Žižek
Liberty Square, NYC
October 2011

POVERTY & RICHES

Fifty million Americans live in poverty, as do a quarter of this nation's children. The new poor are the former middle class. Despite reams of indicting evidence, the media arm of the 1% attempts to spin statistics in a way that diverts responsibility from Wall Street elites and onto the negative habits of poor people.

After the recession hit in late 2007, the number of people living in poverty climbed to 46 million, up from 37 million in 2006. The sharp rise in poverty had nothing to do with drug and alcohol use among people in need; it was a result of unchecked and unregulated greed.

Former labor secretary Robert Reich succinctly explained this blame-the-poor rationale: lower-income people, he said, are regarded as "somehow different, either because they're assumed to be Latin Americans or African Americans, or they are just assumed to be somewhat different." But Reich also noted that no one in this economy is invincible.

"If you are just a typical American, your chance of falling into poverty sometime during your 30 or 40 years of working life is almost one in three, and the poverty rate keeps on going up," he explained.

In their defense of the 1%, critics have maligned the Wall Street occupiers as promoting a "socialist" agenda, suggesting that they want government to seize the assets of the rich and distribute them among the poor. Not so, for me. I have nothing against the rich; I just hate unfairness. Besides, wasn't it socialism when we bailed out the banks? The financially insecure are not "mobs," nor are they calling for special entitlements for the poor. As William Stack, one of the occupiers, recently explained:

"It is not a crime to demand that our money be spent on meeting people's needs, not for massive corporate bailouts. The real criminals are in the boardrooms and executive offices on Wall Street, not the people marching for jobs, health care and a moratorium on foreclosures."

Hundreds of Wall Street occupiers have been arrested for protesting, but not one banker has been sent to jail for their crimes.

Money may determine who has the power, but not the truth. The truth is on the side of the occupiers. My grandmother, Big Mama, always used to remind me that the truth does not move. And neither should the occupiers.

BY TAVIS SMILEY

THE PRIVATIZATION OF CONTROL

PRISONS

There are more than 125,000 inmates in privately owned American prisons. The birth of the "prison-industrial complex" can be traced to the early 1980s, when tougher sentencing, prison overcrowding and the "War on Drugs" led lawmakers to embrace privatization. In 1984, the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) was contracted to manage a facility in Tennessee—the first time any level of government handed complete operation of a prison to a private firm.

CCA and its largest competitor, GEO Group, together made more than \$2.9 billion in 2010. They collect a daily rate per inmate and routinely lobby Congress for stiffer sentencing laws. While the number of people in state-operated prisons has risen 16 percent since 2000, the number in private facilities has more than doubled.

Investors like Merrill Lynch, American Express and Allstate reap a lucrative return buying prison bonds that finance these private facilities. Though touted as cost-saving, there's evidence that they're more expensive than public prisons. Private prisons often refuse inmates with expensive medical conditions. Their smaller staffs and scant training also enable more violence.

MILITARY

Despite exorbitant costs and recurring scandals, the U.S. military could not meet its deployment needs without private contractors. At the height of the Iraq war it was estimated that 100,000 contractors worked alongside 150,000 GIs. "We literally could not go to war today without [these contractors]," Col. Kevin Farrell, chief of the military history program at West Point, recently said.

While the average base military salary ranges from \$16,000 to \$40,000, a private contractor doing the same job for Xe Services (the mercenary outfit formerly known as Blackwater), Raytheon or KBR, Inc. earns \$150,000 to \$200,000. Essentially shadow armies run by veterans, they are typically exempt from local statutes and international laws of war, such as the Geneva Conventions. They enjoy immunity from punishment for prisoner-abuse and torture.

In 2007, Blackwater personnel opened fire on unarmed Iraqi civilians, killing 17. Though an FBI investigation found that the majority of the killings were "unjustified and violated deadly-force rules," none of the contractors involved were charged with a crime.

BY JENNIFER SACKS



DEFENDING DEMOCRACY: Military personnel and veterans have appeared in uniform at occupations across the country, often in response to heavy-handed policing.

The War Comes Home

A black National Guardsman showed up in uniform at Oakland police headquarters after a U.S. Marine and Iraq war veteran in the crackdown on Occupy Oakland. He allowed people to take his photo, and quite a few made it a point to personally thank him and shake his hand.

This is remarkable because it is against military regulations for active-duty troops to attend demonstrations in uniform—although standing in a park surrounded by tents in the middle of a cold rainy afternoon perhaps didn't count. Active-duty personnel who attended Afghanistan and Iraq war protests made it a point not to appear in uniform because of these rules.

"I support this movement one-hundred percent," the Guardsman told me.

He was bothered by what he described as government's "imbalanced" approach to fiscal issues, namely massive tax cuts for the 1% and a slash in social service funding for the 99%. Shelters for homeless teenagers faced cuts, and he feared what kind of trouble these kids would

get into with nowhere to go and no one to turn to. He said he had committed to six years of part-time duty in order to go to school part-time, and noted the irony of being forced to pay into the military health care system while Congress votes nearly every year to raise its own salaries.

Separate from this, a viral YouTube video shows uniformed U.S. Marine Sgt. Shamur Thomas shouting at dozens of cops with flex cuffs on their belts at the massive Times Square demonstration in mid-October.

"This is not a war zone," Thomas yells in the video. "It doesn't make you tough to hurt these unarmed people. These are U.S. citizens."

The Marine's intervention likely prevented the arrest of dozens of peaceful protestors.

The more that America's military men and women identify—and stand boldly—with the 99%, the more power this movement gains. A thoughtful soldier, a soldier with a conscience, is the 1%'s worst nightmare.

BY PHAM BINH



PHOTO: Vanessa Behlmanni 99% Photo Booth at Liberty Square

WE ARE THE DEMANDS
VOTE EVERY DAY
LAW IS NOT THE SAME AS ORDER
DEMOCRATIC ASSEMBLY
IS OUR BASIC RIGHT
AMERICA WILL BE BEAUTIFUL
WHEN WE CAN BE OURSELVES TOGETHER
IT'S UP TO YOU & ALL OF US
OCCUPATION IS PARTICIPATION

REPORTING BY: JON CHISUM • JOHN DENNEHY • BRAD EDMONDSON • RUTH FOWLER • CHARLIE LOCKWOOD • JOANIE MASTERS • KEESHA RENNA • KEVIN SCHIESSER • JENNA SPITZ • DAVID SWANSON • JOANN WYPIJEWSKI

THE UNITED STATES OF OCCUPATION



FOR SOME STRANGE REASON: No matter how many people get arrested, fear is not on the agenda. PHOTO: Adrian Kiriloch

from their general assembly, the legal working group prepared a preemptive lawsuit which would ask for injunction relief against any future attempt to evict the occupiers from Dewey Square. In light of recent crackdowns, they filed

on November 15, and the next day won an injunction against any upcoming eviction attempt.

In Albany, Governor Andrew Cuomo has repeatedly asked Mayor Jerry Jennings to clear the encampment

near the State Capitol, but Jennings and the city police department have refused. Each night at 11 p.m., in a kind of civil disobedience ritual, occupiers walk from the city-controlled Academy Park to the state-controlled Lafayette Park to violate

the newly imposed curfew and get arrested. The Albany district attorney has dismissed each case. Tennesseans scored a victory when a U.S. district judge issued a temporary restraining order against a curfew the police were trying

Why We Fight

If you're marching at Occupy sites in lower Manhattan or Joliet, Illinois or Outremont, Quebec or Rapid City, South Dakota or any of a hundred other places across the continent, you surely came with your own reasons. But if you're reading this and still asking what Wall Street ever did to you, try this:

You were robbed. In the biggest heist in the history of robberies.

It doesn't matter that you're young or old, Republican or Democrat—if you're an American and own a home, collect a pension, pay taxes or have a savings account, you've almost certainly spent the last three years getting fleeced.

The national news media has passed off the crash of 2008 and the bailouts that followed as a logical response to a fluky historical accident—a "thousand-year flood" economic mishap that just happens every now and then.

And if you watched chin-stroking TV docudramas like "Too Big to Fail," what you learned is that at crunch-time our banking and regulatory leaders buckled down and made tough decisions that rescued us all from the abyss.

That is all lies. It is not what happened. What did happen was a mass heist, carried out in four steps:

The theft started when banks created a vast Himalayan mountain range of debt, lending trillions of dollars to unscrupulous lenders like Countrywide and New Century with the aim of

creating huge volumes of home loans. As recently as 20 years ago, banks didn't make risky loans because they worried about collecting on them. But in this case, banks never intended to hold on to the loans; the loans were designed to be sold off as soon as the ink was dry.

Next, banks bought back all of those junk-rated home loans from the Countrywides of the world so they could be pooled and chopped up and resold to suckers in Europe, the Middle East, China and here at home as AAA-rated investments. This is not unlike buying a truckload of oregano, dividing the shipment into ten-thousand Ziploc bags, then touring rock concerts around the world and selling it off as high-grade weed.

Because the banks themselves knew how dicey the loans were, the smartest of them then went out on the market and placed massive bets against those loans.

Finally, when the deadly home loans blew up, creating a global tsunami of losses in centuries-old companies worth billions vanished in seconds (and even their chief bookies, AIG, collapsed), the banks turned to dishwashers, janitors, firemen, teachers—if they turned to us, the taxpayers—to pay off their bets.

Many of the banks' best customers for these fraudulent oregano-loans were institutional investors like state pension funds; when the mortgages collapsed, retirement funds for state workers and

unions all across America plummeted. Which is why retired schoolteachers from Los Angeles to Minneapolis might have woken up in September of 2008 to find their life savings had lost 40% in value.

Wall Street bankers nailed everyone they could find with those deadly mortgages. Every time they struck a deal with a Chinese wealth fund or a Mississippi carpenters' union to unload their exploding product, they scurried back and forth with delight, high-fiving each other in those skyscraper offices you might now be looking up at from your perch in Liberty Square.

But Wall Street doesn't shoulder the blame alone. Instead of forcing our criminal financiers to pay victims back, our government—through two equally corrupted presidential administrations, one Democrat, one Republican—doubled down on the theft by forcing the same retired schoolteachers to reach into their pockets a second time, spending tax money to pay off the bets the bankers made against those investments they had sold them.

This level of highly orchestrated, institutional crime is unrivaled in American history. Following the Savings and Loan Crisis in the 1980s our government referred more than 1,100 cases for prosecution; today, after a massive industry-wide mortgage scam, not one Wall Street executive has seen the inside of a prison.

After the crash, the banks were given access to billions in bailouts and zero-percent loans from the federal reserve with the implicit understanding that after we rescued them, they would kick-start the economy and put people back to work. But the banks' very first move was to restore their own exorbitant salaries.

In 2009, barely a year after taxpayers rescued them from imploding, bailout babies like Goldman Sachs (\$16.2 billion in 2009 compensation) and Morgan Stanley (\$10.7 billion) were doing out record compensation pools—a trend that has continued to this day, as Wall Street's annual revenues soared past \$417 billion last year, with compensation at \$135 billion, both all-time highs.

Three years into this "recovery," few jobs have been created and a quarter of a million families are still losing their homes every three months. The bailouts did not help us. Instead, they helped the people who put us out of our homes and on to the streets.

There are a thousand reasons to occupy Wall Street—unending war, a failing health care system, the need for jobs and a living wage, gross wealth inequality. But if you need just one reason to join this movement, it is this:

You were robbed, and your government helped finish the job.

BY MATT TAIIBI

to enforce on the **Occupy Nashville** encampment at Legislative Plaza.

In the middle of the night on October 25, some 500 riot police surrounded **Occupy Oakland's** Oscar Grant Park, tore down the encampment and arrested at least 105 people. That afternoon, more than a thousand people marched back to the camp and though the police once more met them with force—tear gas, rubber bullets and flash grenades—the occupiers took back the park and immediately called for a city-wide general strike. On the same night, across the bay in **San Francisco**, police backed down on their threat to evict the occupation.

Around the world people poured into the streets in solidarity with Occupy Oakland. One week later on November 2, instructors held teach-ins, dozens of businesses closed voluntarily and demonstrators took to the streets for the general strike, periodically clashing with police and eventually shutting down the Port of Oakland.

In southern California, **Occupy San Diego** has been subject to multiple violent raids. An early morning raid on October 29 led to dozens of arrests, but the occupation regrouped and retook the plaza. They faced a fourth wave of arrests on November 16.

Occupy DC is keeping the heat on at Capitol Hill, with actions at "super-committee" hearings, an occupation of General Atomics (a defense contractor that specializes in drone aircraft) and the periodic shut-down of the Chamber of Commerce. "Thus far the police have been a model that Oakland and New York and other police could learn from," said occupier David Swanson. "I've watched a police officer refuse the U.S. Chamber

of Commerce's request to arrest us as we blocked the Chamber's doors."

On November 6, thousands from university, non-profit and community groups nationwide joined Occupy DC to protest the Keystone XL pipeline project. Forming an unbroken chain around the White House, demonstrators called on President Obama to reject TransCanada's contentious plan to send polluting tar sand crude oil from Alberta to the Gulf of Mexico. The project has been postponed.

At **Occupy Austin**, as elsewhere across the country, protesters have relocated private funds through bank actions. The occupation's Bank Action Committee has overseen transfers from Bank of America, Wells Fargo and Chase to local credit unions. Texan credit unions reported 47,000 people had joined and \$326 million was moved in October—four times the usual growth rate. Nationwide, the Credit Union National Association reports 650,000 people have joined credit unions and have added \$4.5 billion in new savings accounts in the past month.

As of this writing, there have been demonstrations in nearly 1,000 cities worldwide. There have also been multiple coordinated and violent evictions. But still, we press on. From Anchorage to Orlando, encampments are being created by people who likely never imagined they would sleep in a park in winter. Even Antarctica has been "occupied," thanks to researchers at McMurdo Station who braved the cold to show solidarity with the movement. And though police continue to arrest occupiers across the nation, they are quickly learning that while you can arrest bodies, you can't arrest an idea.

BY CHRIS "99%"

THE COLLEGE DEBT TRAP

The cost of attending a public university in the U.S. has more than doubled in the past two decades, and tuition at public institutions has risen an average of 5 percent a year since 2006. So it's no surprise that student-loan debt has surpassed credit-card debt: American graduates owe \$24,000 on average and more than \$800 billion collectively. Two-thirds of college students now graduate with debt; one in five defaults. Unlike business, mortgage, credit card and gambling debts, which can be negotiated in bankruptcy court, student-loan debt is exempt from consumer protections and is essentially inescapable.

Three weeks ago, President Obama announced a speeded-up plan, to take effect in 2012 rather than 2014, that will reduce the maximum required payment on student loans from 15 percent of discretionary income to 10 percent, with remaining debt to be forgiven after 20, not 25, years. For grads who can't find a job immediately after college and have no other financial support, defaulting on student loans—and spiraling into more mountains of debt, sometimes vastly exceeding initial tuition costs—poses a very real threat.

BY ANNA LEKAS MILLER

BASIC FAMILY PLANNING: A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT

In August, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced that starting in one year, all birth control must be covered without a co-payment. But there's a catch: it applies only to women who have health insurance.

Nineteen million uninsured and unemployed women, disproportionately Black and Latina, rely on disappearing and underfunded public health clinics. Planned Parenthood, for example, has already been defunded in New Jersey, Texas and Wisconsin, and several other states' public health clinics are being closed due to lobbyists so-called "Targeted Regulation of Abortion Provider" (TRAP) laws. On November 8, Mississippi voters rejected a public ballot measure that would have legally recognized a fertilized egg as a person, effectively banning all abortions, the "morning after" pill and some contraception methods such as IUDs.

Inevitably, some women will be able to evade these restrictions, using their money and privilege to find birth control or abortions outside of their states. But for those who cannot access either affordable birth control or the almost \$500 cost of a first-trimester abortion, basic family planning is a privilege that must be bought rather than a right that is assumed.

Targeting and defunding public health clinics, privileging those who can still afford health insurance, and legally restricting abortion and contraception divides women into two classes: those who can afford to control their reproductive futures, and those who cannot.

BY ANNA LEKAS MILLER



THE TAXES CORPORATIONS DON'T PAY

While most Americans relinquish 40 percent of their income to taxes, the most powerful corporations in the world pay next to nothing once credits and deductions are factored in. In fact, twelve of the largest Fortune 500 companies—including Wells Fargo, Exxon Mobil, General Electric and Verizon—paid an effective tax rate of negative 1.4 percent on \$175 billion in profits during the years 2008 to 2010.

In that period, 300 of the nation's most profitable companies paid an 18 percent average tax rate, 78 paid zero, and 30 had a tax rate of less than zero despite pocketing \$160 billion in pretax profits, according to Citizens for Tax Justice. *The New York Times* reported this year that GE paid no taxes on the \$5.1 billion it earned domestically in 2010; instead it repaid a \$3.2 billion tax benefit.

How's this for contrast: the number of IRS hours devoted to auditing corporations worth more than \$250 million has declined by 33 percent since 2005, while hours auditing businesses worth less than \$10 million increased by 30 percent. Meanwhile, Rachel Porcaro, a single mom of two making \$10 an hour cutting hair in Seattle, was audited by the IRS for making too little money. Her \$18,992 income was so low the government presumed she was stashing cash somewhere.



EDITORIAL

WE ARE FREE PEOPLE

Democracy is not simply speaking truth to power, to ask, politely or not, "For reforms great and small. Sometimes you have to do it yourself."

The 1% is just beginning to understand that the reason Occupy Wall Street makes no demands is because we aren't talking to them. The 99% are speaking and listening to each other. 4,167 people have been arrested since the occupations began; millions more are reimagining the world we want to live in.

Police forces have been deployed by Republican and Democratic politicians alike to break a movement that was first ignored and then mocked in what passes for the news. It's not just America. This is a living democratic movement that is global in scale and growing in real time. That this beautiful thing is met with state violence says everything we need to know about the perpetrators. It also means we're on to something. Their attacks are based on an understanding of power that's dying, if not already dead.

Mubarak is Berlusconi is Bloomberg is Qian is Walker is pepper spray is broken policies bound to the past and we make no demands of them because free people constitute governments, not the other way around.

We don't know how this is going to end, but the beginning is near.

25 JAN / EGYPT & THE ARAB SPRING

Using door-to-door canvassing and social networking, the people of Cairo organize a mass protest on Police Day demanding an end to harassment, repression and torture. What follows is an 18-day uprising against President Hosni Mubarak's dictatorship. Hundreds of thousands of Egyptians stream into Tahrir Square after the regime blocks internet traffic and sends thugs to attack protesters, swinging world opinion against Mubarak. On Feb. 11, the regime falls, inspiring an Arab Spring of pro-democracy activism from Yemen to Bahrain to Syria.



17 DEC / TUNISIA



17 FEB / WISCONSIN & OHIO

More than 20,000 Wisconsin's protest Gov. Scott Walker's austerity budget and his attack on collective bargaining. Carrying signs and Egyptian flags, protesters draw a parallel between their struggles. In the weeks-long rebellion, hundreds of thousands occupy the state capital Madison; hundreds of students are arrested. In Columbus, Ohio, nearly 4,000 protest against similar attacks on the public sector and workers' rights.

15 MAY / SPAIN

Protests against austerity and unemployment erupt in 58 Spanish cities, beginning the 15-M Movement. More than 1,000 *indignados* occupy the central square, Puerta del Sol, in the weeks that follow, hundreds of thousands gather in public spaces, holding mass assemblies and peaceful sit-ins to demand greater say in the political process. Embracing participatory democracy, they reject traditional parties and the rule of finance capital that imploded the country's economy.

25 MAY / GREECE

Tens of thousands gather in Athens after plans are announced to dramatically cut public spending and raise taxes in exchange for a €110 billion bailout. Sustained strikes and demonstrations, many of them organized on Facebook, rage across the country; the *agarakismenoi*, or indignants, are met with tear gas and police violence.

17 SEPT / OCCUPY WALL ST.

Occupy Wall Street begins as 2,000 people respond to the Canadian magazine *Adjuvants'* call for an end to corporate influence in the political process. After police block them from Wall Street, then One Chase Manhattan Plaza, a few dozen occupiers regroup at Zuccotti Park several blocks north of the New York Stock Exchange. They rename it Liberty Square as an homage to the Egyptian uprising that began in Tahrir Square in January.



29 SEPT / DECLARATION

Through a consensus-based process, the New York General Assembly approves the *Declaration of the Occupation*, a founding document that speaks to the "feeling of mass injustice" that brought people together. Calling out illegal foreclosures, exorbitant student debt and the outsourcing of labor, the document of grievances is delivered "at a time when corporations, which place profit over people, self-interest over justice, and oppression over equality, run our governments." In San Francisco, protesters attempt to occupy Citibank, Chase and Charles Schwab; the Transport Workers Union urges members to join the movement.

5 OCT / LABOR MOVES

On a day of solidarity billed as "Occupy Together," a crowd of 30,000—including members of the transit, communication, teacher and health care unions—joins a student walkout at Foley Square in lower Manhattan. Occupations spread to dozens of U.S. cities as protesters camp in Los Angeles near City Hall, in Chicago outside the Federal Reserve Bank, and demonstrate from Memphis to Minneapolis, Baltimore to Austin.



14-15 OCT / THE SWEEP

Following Mayor Bloomberg's announcement that the NYPD would enforce a "cleaning" of Liberty Square starting at 7 a.m., occupiers rally by the thousands in the dawn hours to protect the park. At 6:15, Bloomberg backs down. Occupiers celebrate with a rousing victory lap through the Financial District. The next day millions rally in an international day of solidarity in more than 900 cities, including Hong Kong, Athens and Rome, Nairobi and Johannesburg. In the U.S., Occupy Wall Street spreads from coast to coast.

25 OCT / POLICE VIOLENCE

Police raid Occupy Atlanta and arrest 53. In Oakland, police fire tear gas, rubber bullets and flash-bang grenades at peaceful occupiers, fracturing the skull of a two-tour Iraq War veteran. Thousands rally at the renamed Oscar Grant Plaza to protest police brutality, and retake their encampment. Occupations in Denver, Los Angeles, Atlanta and San Francisco all successfully resist eviction by local police.



15 NOV / THE 1% ATTACKS

Hours after the Portland and Oakland encampments are again raided, NYPD, including officers from the Counter-Terrorism Bureau, stage a federally coordinated raid on Liberty Square at 1 a.m. Sporting riot gear and brandishing pepper spray and a "sound cannon," about 1,000 cops descend on the park and toss books, laptops and tents into dumpsters, forcibly clearing the encampment. Bridges and subways are shut down as Lower Manhattan is deemed a "frozen zone." More than 200 are arrested. Oakland Mayor Jean Quan admits later that day that she was at a conference call strategizing with mayors of 18 cities, while an official from the DOJ indicated that each action was coordinated with help from the DHS and the FBI along with other federal agencies.

