

OCCUPIED

WE ARE THE 99%
Protest at L.A. City Hall

Los Angeles Times

WE ARE THE 99%
This is Direct Democracy

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Photo: Jared Iorio

I Didn't Get It... But We Will

By Ruth Fowler

In September, I wrote the following words:

"I was really put off by their website, bad videos of kids who had no idea why they were there, online comments like 'the streets of America will burn,' and stupid stuff like 'let's go march on this street and look at the cars we'll never be able to afford, which THE RICH own' – probably written by kids on vacation from their 40k a year schools. I do not want to join a protest which is a bunch of trustafarians in a park with a well meaning, but vague, claim to be 'the 99%' and an inability to clearly state what their aims are."

I've marched against War, against government cuts to public spending, for the DREAM Act and more. I worked on the Obama campaign. I was unemployed for two long years as a direct consequence of the economic crash in 2008, despite my privileged education at Cambridge University, despite doing everything 'right.' But when a group of protes-

tors started holding up signs in Zucotti Park three weeks ago, I didn't pay much attention. When they grew in numbers, I scoffed at them. When Michael Moore showed up, and the Unions pitched in my curiosity grew. When NYPD responded with brutality, I was shocked, but thought, 'Well, maybe it'll all calm down now. They can't really expect anything to change.' Suddenly I realized I sounded like those who believe whatever they're told. I had seen those in Zucotti Park as naive—as dreamers, but I was wrong, just as the mainstream media is wrong.

I joined the movement a few days later. The media and politicians are wrong to ignore us, to mock us, to denigrate us. You may have heard them claim that we have no clear aim, no demands, no focus, no direction, and no cohesive platform. We are doomed to failure, they tell us. We're simply a bunch of unemployed hippies, camping out, having a party, not really sure what we're protesting about, indulgent gripes accompanied by bongo drums.

They are wrong. Our alternate 'tent' city, our occupied space, which runs

differently from the way our country and global economy operate. The point of our presence is to make clear that the people will no longer accept a warped version of democracy. We want something more, something different, something better, and we are rapidly creating it.

"The Media And Politicians Are Wrong To Ignore Us, To Mock Us, To Denigrate Us."

Our General Assemblies, lengthy as they may be, allow all our committees to check in, to discuss all decision-making with the people. These General Assemblies are live-streamed to the public and recorded, to allow complete transparency and accessibility. No one goes hungry in our city: food is provided by donation from supporters in the community, from small businesses, from local farmers. Medical and health supplies, *continued on pg. 4*

Occupy Movement: A Primer

By Daniel Immerwahr

Postdoctoral Research Scholar, Committee on Global Thought, Columbia University

What is the issue?

Obviously, this is a large movement with many constituencies. But it seems clear that core concerns include growing income inequality, an increasingly unstable financial sector, and a political system that has allowed both trends to continue. This is not just a protest against capitalism, although for some it is that. It is a protest against recent changes in our political and economic system, changes that have dramatically tilted the playing field.

What could they want?

A frequent criticism of Occupy is that it is incoherent. Media coverage has focused on the drum circles, the pageantry, and the more colorful protesters, often ignoring the substantive claims of movement. And

when the messages of Occupy are given attention, the healthy diversity of positions can sometimes be mistaken for incoherence. Remember, no political coalition is ever entirely singing off the same sheet (imagine trying to extract a core demand from the Republican party, with its odd amalgamation of evangelical Christianity, libertarian economic policy, and defense of corporate privilege). That said, there are a few demands that capture the main thrust of the movement, in my opinion.

1. Re-regulation of the financial sector. A major cause of the financial crisis was that banks were allowed to make investments that they had previously been forbidden from making, and existing regulations were not enforced.

2. Removing money from politics. One reason that politicians have declined to regulate our economy is that large corporations finance electoral campaigns, and their ability to do so has grown considerably with the Citizens United decision. One

desirable outcome of the Occupy movement would be a constitutional amendment clarifying that corporate speech is not protected under the First Amendment or one forcing the public financing of federal elections.

3. A fairer tax burden. The amount of wealth and income controlled by the super-rich has been growing considerably in the last forty years. The proportion of their income that the super-rich have been obliged to pay in taxes has also been steadily declining. The combined effect of these is that our country has grown more unequal and less able to pay for anything.

4. A social safety net. Our government has done a good job directing public funds toward protecting the banks from the effects of the economic crisis. It has done less of a good job using those funds to protect workers, homeowners, and students. If we are going to continue to have a volatile economy, we need to protect those who are hurt by it. *continued on pg. 3*

Teach-in Offers Occupiers Strategy Tips

By Jonathan Roskos

At a teach-in outside City Hall on November 5th

UC Berkeley professor George Lakoff, author of "Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate," an expert on political communication, spoke via livestream, arguing that democratic politics is a public endeavor requiring an empathetic ethos, urging protestors to occupy the polls and make their message positive. Directly afterward Carol Wells, founding director of the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, spoke in person on the power of art and images in protest and politics.

The talks were part of a two-day Teach-In on November 5th and 6th at Occupy Los Angeles on corporatocracy, civil disobedience, the causes of the current economic climate, and sustainable living. Other panel speakers included former US Labor Secretary Robert Reich, Executive Editor of truthdig.org, Robert Scheer, and a key organizer from Occupy Wall Street, David DeGraw. The teach-in was an effort to unify, educate, mobilize and inspire the Occupy LA protestors and movement supporters.

Lakoff proposed a slogan for the Occupiers: "We love America. We're here to fix it."

He saluted the courage of protestors willing to be non-violent and warned of two lies that will weaken the movement: "You can't make a difference. You can't trust anyone." According to what he calls American Democracy, "citizens share an equal responsibility to work together to secure a safe and prosperous future for their families and nation. This is the central work of our democracy and it is a public enterprise."

Lakoff's speech proffered that the view of personal responsibility as the only duty, while omitting social responsibility, is the most current and urgent threat to American Democracy. Those who fear that expanding the public sector will result in the government controlling us and running our lives should consider that the non-public, private sector still controls us, except those in control are accountable only to the profit ethos.

Currently, in the words of Lakoff, "Private government for profit runs our lives – the health care we receive, the food we eat, the cars we can drive and the gas to fuel them, the news we get, loans for our homes, and on and on. *continued on pg. 2*

What Has Your Occupation Done Lately?

Occupy LA by the numbers:

- October 1, 2011, over 3000 people came out to begin the Occupation of Los Angeles City Hall.
- October 12, 2011, in a historic vote that set a precedent for other cities across the nation, the L.A. City Council unanimously passed a resolution in support of Occupy Los Angeles.
- October 15, 2011, an estimated 12,000 participants marched in the Global Day of Action at Occupy L.A.
- Currently, over 600 current Occupiers live at City Hall in downtown Los Angeles.
- Over the past 58 days, more than 60 actions completed including teach-ins, marches, rallies, bike outreach, Metro outreach and more.

Legislation that Occupy LA has Directly Affected

- City's Bond Programs (10-1763)
- City Resolution in Support of Occupy LA / Responsible Banking Measure (09-0234-S1)
- Responsible Banking Ordinance (09-0234)
- Corporate Activities in Electoral Processes (11-0002-S123)

Move Your Money (Bank Transfer) Day by the Numbers

- 40,000. Number of consumers who joined credit unions on Nov. 5
- \$80 million. Amount of new savings recorded in credit unions
- 4 out of 5. Number of larger credit unions that signed up new members on Nov. 5.
- 60 percent. Amount of credit unions that made new loans on Nov. 5th for new members.

Source: Credit Union National Association
Based on self-reporting by 1,100 credit unions

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First They Ignore Us...

By Sylvia Batey Alcalá

“Bang on the bongos, smoke weed!” CNN’s Alison Kosik posted via her twitter in reaction to Occupy Wall Street. Ms. Kosik’s demeanor is typical of the media’s attitude in its coverage of Occupy Wall Street, Occupy Los Angeles, and the burgeoning movement across the nation. CNN’s blatant disregard that hippie jokes haven’t been funny since 1970 is trumped only by their lack of accountability in their reporting.

The worst culprit is Erin Burnett, host of CNN’s OutFront. On October 3, Burnett “...went to Wall Street to see those protests...I saw dancing, bongo drums, even a clown.” She goes on to claim, “taxpayers actually made money on the Wall Street bailout.” But according to the US Treasury, taxpayers are still \$95 billion in the red on the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP). The condescending tone and pro-Wall Street errors in Ms. Burnett’s reporting might lead one to question her objectivity. On Sept 30, Britain’s Daily Mail covered the OutFront launch party, and reported that in addition to being engaged to CitiGroup executive David Rubulotta, Ms. Burnett is a former financial analyst for Goldman Sachs, and met her fiancé when she became Vice President of CitiGroup/CitiMedia.



Photo: Jared Lorio

Among those in attendance was JP MorganChase CEO (and bailout beneficiary) Jamie Dimon. One can assume Ms. Burnett omitting bongos from the evening’s program, as they seem to be a point of contention with CNN’s reporters.

Lazy journalism aside, the fact is, Ms. Burnett and her ilk live in an insular world. It is easy to sneer at the “whines” of the disenfranchised when one is being feted at a gala attended by the CEO of JP MorganChase. Joblessness? Those in attendance at Ms. Burnett’s party must have seen a fleet of “gainfully” employed caterers to serve that lobster bisque. Meanwhile there

are a record number of Americans living in poverty, the unemployment rate is above nine percent, and Jamie Dimon still has yet to RSVP to any of my parties. But no hard feelings; Mr. Dimon is a busy man. After all, illegally foreclosing on active-duty military personnel is time-consuming (WSJ). Heck, it’s difficult to run any multinational corporation. What with the debit-fee dustup, it’s amazing that Bank of America executives still found it in themselves to give Sallie Krawcheck a six million dollar severance package for two years’ work (Bloomberg). And as the Huffington Post reports, in 2004 (the last year data was compiled), corporate tax

havens allowed US multinationals to pay \$16 billion in taxes on \$700 billion in foreign active earnings. Registering to a Cayman Islands P.O. Box is exhausting, but the 2.3% tax rate and deductible tropical vacation just about make up for it.

What about the \$100 billion the corporations are evading? The American taxpayer is expected to step in. When the taxpayer demands fairness, demands that executives be held accountable, the corporate media scoffs at the supposed potheads and their bongo drums.

This is not to say that their response mirrors Occupy’s traction. Congressman Peter King (R-NY) recently said

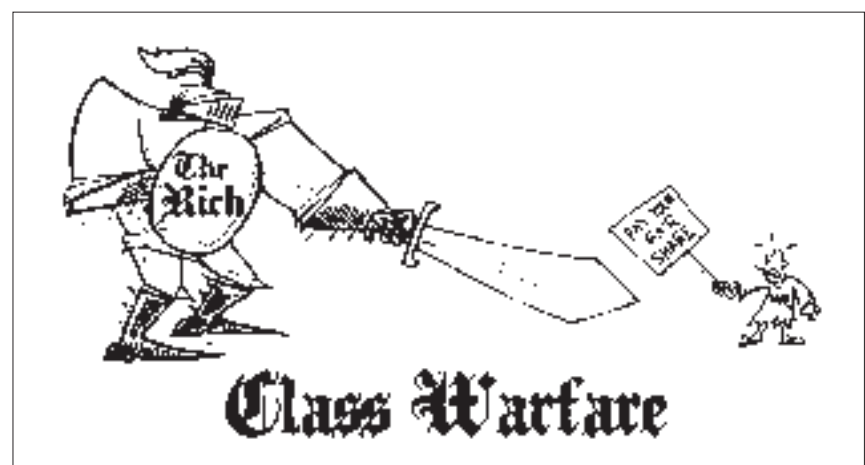
the following on Laura Ingraham’s radio show: “It’s really important for us not to give any legitimacy to these people in the streets. I remember what happened in the 1960’s when the left-wing took to the streets, and somehow the media glorified them and it ended up shaping policy. We can’t allow that to happen.” This statement is in stark contrast to the dismissive tone of the corporate media, and brings to mind the words of Gandhi: “First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.” Indeed, the corporate

“First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.”

— Mahatma Gandhi

media’s tone is shifting from dismissive to defensive. They are crying class warfare, claiming that to seek justice is to oppose capitalism, and to oppose capitalism is un-American. They would idealize America as a capitalocracy before a democracy at the expense of her citizens. But as the laughter and hollow shrieks fade, they are training their lenses in earnest, to focus on the eyes of a revolution staring back, unblinking. This movement is the turning leaf of the American Autumn. Yes this movement has bongos and with every hit of the drum its heart beats and the movement grows.

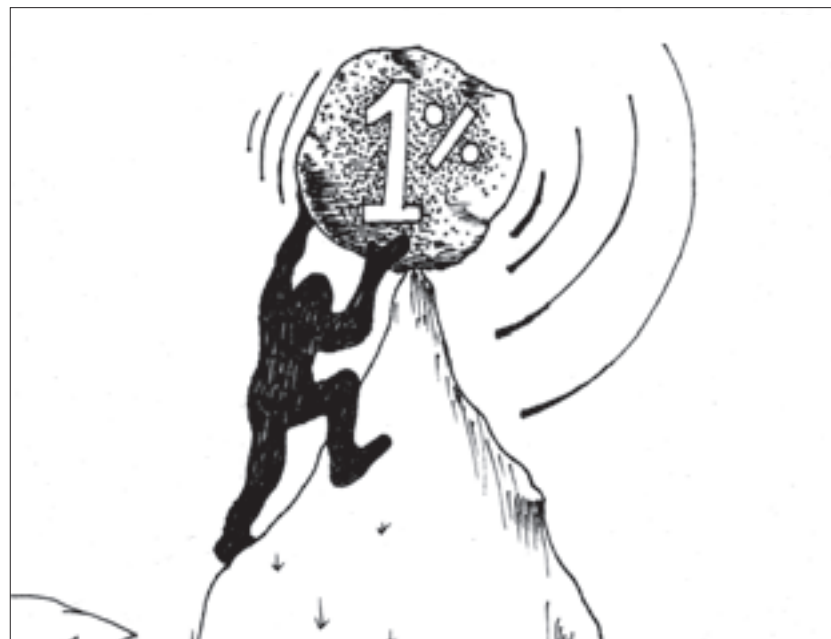
Comics



Class Warfare by Lalo Alcaraz



The 1% by Anthony Ciarno



Triumph by Lorenzo Ibarra Sagonia

Teach-in Offers Occupiers Strategy Tips

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Public government is for the benefit of all of us. Private (especially corporate) government is for the private profit of top management and stockholders. If you are concerned about your life being controlled for the benefit of others, look to the private sphere.”

As the light faded and the mittens came out, Carol Wells gave a speech on the importance of art in protest movements and the political power of images. She postulated a firm link between art and protest. “You can’t imagine the Vietnam protests without the music,” she said. “Art is not parallel to politics,” Wells stated, “art is politics.”

Wells’ view of the Occupy LA protest was enthusiastic. “We’re making culture. We’re making history,” she affirmed. She told the crowd that the framing of history is an artistic and political endeavor: “The story of the hunters will always glorify the hunters...[Occupy LA] is telling the story of the lions.”

Wells placed November 5th’s Move Your Money and Bank Transfer campaigns into historical context. She reflected on the boycott of Wells Fargo bank for doing business with Chile during the Pinochet regime. She cited a poster promoting Withdrawal Day, April 17, 1979 (a culture jam depicting the Wells Fargo stagecoach running down Chilean civilians). She also cited the apartheid disinvestment campaign and subsequent boycotts of banks doing business with apartheid in South Africa during the 1980s. Wells Fargo did not trade with South Africa during apartheid.

Carol Wells encouraged Occupiers to use art, especially images, as a non-threatening avenue to capture the attention of the rest of the 99%, who are not attending protests.

For more see: <http://georgelakoff.com> and <http://Politicalgraphics.org>



Two Arrests for the Resistance

By Ryan Rice

Across this nation, we have seen peaceful protesters being beaten, pepper-sprayed, tear-gassed, and shot with rubber bullets. As of November 20th, there have been a total of 4,619 arrests across the country. These nonviolent arrestees include seniors, students, activists, journalists and legal observers. Since Occupy Wall Street began, I have been arrested in both Oakland and in Los Angeles. I hope my arrests may illuminate the overt attempts by the oligarchs to inhibit freedom, incarcerate the dissenters, and further the continued destruction of this great experiment known as America.

I was in Oakland for their November 2nd General Strike, and was part of the 103 arrests in the nighttime raid on Occupy Oakland. I spent 16 hours in a cold, dirty holding cell in Oakland. The police took every opportunity to intimidate us, letting us languish in the jails with tight zip-tied cuffs for hours as many of us suffered bruises and wounds from the attacks at Occupy Oakland.

I hope you have all seen the video of Ranger veteran Kayvan Sabeghi being beaten mercilessly by shock troops for standing up against injustice. I witnessed first-hand as his internal injuries grew worse and he

screamed from the floor of the jail hallway for medical assistance. I observed the smirks on the guards’ faces, as they did nothing until hour fifteen.

Once out of jail, cited and released for “Remaining at the scene: riot, etc”, I made a beeline for the occupation. Along the way, we passed a local black-and-white that rolled down their windows in a surprisingly friendly manner.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

“You guys headed back? Be good!” they exclaimed with hot coffees in hand, ready for their beat. My revolutionary brother raised his shirt and displayed the perpendicular 18” bruise along the middle of his back. The officers expressed a kind of dumb-founded shock. These were not the black-clad thugs from the previous night.

“Who did that to you? That couldn’t have been us; we’re not trained that way. You can paralyze someone with a hit like that,” said the driver.

My comrade was attacked when he was peacefully meditating between the state gangsters and the youth barricading them from the violence to come. Seated in the lotus position, the first blow directed at him was parried by a Real Life Superhero’s shield. After his protector was beaten unconscious, they turned back to the “danger-to-society” pacifist and cracked him across the back.

I spent another 14 hours in a cold, dirty holding cell in Los Angeles with forty-six other freedom fighters. We ranged in age from 19 to 93. This was the first mass arrest for Los Angeles.

We had several actions throughout the day that were un-permitted, which set the course for the LAPD to grudgingly show their truer colors. The beat cops in their blues disappeared and the riot cops in tactical gear and missing badge numbers took their place.

Members of the occupation wanted to toe the line of what this whole thing was about: money in politics, so we marched to the plaza at Bank of America and set up a flash occupation on the grounds owned by Brookfield Properties – the same corporation that owns Zuccotti Park. Angelenos fully felt the reality of what the Occupy Movement is fighting as they witnessed hundreds of police

Donations Needed

- From Resource Committee
- Drinking Water (1-5 gal)
- Food (Catered to 200 N. Spring St. lawn (NorS) Downtown Los Angeles
- Tents (2-3 people)
- Sign-making Supplies
- Sleeping Bags
- 6’ Folding Tables
- Sleeping Pads
- Toiletries/Hygiene products
- Storage Containers
- Kids toys & Clothes
- Pillows, Tarps
- Reusable Water Bottles

assemble in riot gear around a tiny patch of symbolic grass. Deemed a ‘private persons arrest’, the police moved in on 47 people at 4:30 pm that afternoon.

Where are the detectives that should be arresting and booking the white collar criminals that are destroying our planet? Where are the black-clad SWAT teams that should be zip-tying the war-profiteers for making billions as millions of people die for their purchased policies?

As we were processed, an officer told us we were “being treated with kid gloves”. I did not thank her for that, as unfortunately some of my fellow arrestees did. Why should I thank an officer for doing her job and upholding the presumption of innocence and satisfactory levels of human decency?

I do not know what the future holds. Two months ago, I could have never predicted that I would have had a shotgun in my face, but I must continue to resist. I am compelled more than ever, as every day brings new reports of police violence and oppression, to get on the frontlines and lock arms with Truth on my left and Justice on my right. We must have the nerve to imagine an alternative. Stand up. Now is the time.

Power to the People!

Occupy Takes Root on Campuses

By Pam Noles

Students at UCLA joined the Occupy movement

with tents, arrests, another group of tents, and a teach-in during several frantic days in mid-November.

Fourteen students were arrested in a pre-dawn raid Nov. 18 after UCLA's first attempt to set up an Occupation on Bruin Plaza, which was then cleared by campus police. In response, students set up another Occupation on Wilson Plaza, which, as of deadline, still stood. The students also held a teach-in about their issues, and 40 faculty members signed an open letter to Chancellor Gene Block supporting their free speech rights.

The UCLA and other campus actions signal the growth of the Occupation movement throughout the nation's college campuses, as students adopt the language of the movement, understanding that they too are members of the 99% — entering frightening economic times, often hobbled by heavy student loans.

The plaza occupation came about a week after students and UAW organizers opposing education funding cuts and tuition hikes shut down the intersection of Wilshire and Westwood boulevards for just under three hours. The march was organized in conjunction with the ReFund California: Make Banks Pay campaign, "trying to shift the discussion from cuts in order to pay for education, to putting the blame back on corporations and banks," according to Nathaniel Matthiesen, statewide coordinator for the ReFund California Coalition. In that protest, held November 9th, following a campus rally, eleven people were arrested for blocking the streets. Occupy Los Angeles sent two representatives in support of the rally,

which launched a statewide week of action on college campuses gearing up for meetings of the UC Board of Regents in San Francisco and the California State Board of Trustees in Long Beach on Nov. 16th. While the UC regents ultimately cancelled their meeting out of fear of protests, the Cal State trustees did meet, and activists were faced with violent reaction from law enforcement. Two Occupy LA members were hit with pepper spray at the Long Beach campus.

The student activists are demanding that officials make a pledge to tax financial transactions and large corporations in lieu of continuing the punishing cycle of education cuts and fee hikes.

The students and UAW organizers began their action with a boisterous rally at Bruin Plaza, followed by a cheering, chanting march down Westwood Boulevard, stopping at a Bank of America, where they taped the "Make Banks Pay" pledge to its glass doors. Then they continued to Wilshire Boulevard, handing out flyers and posters, and were greeted with supportive horn honks from the road.

Not all student Occupy efforts were as peaceful as UCLA's action. The same day police in Westwood were calmly placing students and union organizers in zip-tie handcuffs, campus police at UC Berkeley were violently ejecting students who tried to set up a campus Occupy site. UC police in riot gear clashed with activists, using batons on a former state poet laureate, among others. Several students were arrested. Campus police at UC Davis, however, topped Berkeley in abuse, pepper-spraying a group of students sitting peacefully on the ground. After videos went on viral on the Web, public outrage forced the suspension of two officers and then the chief of campus police at Davis. There are now calls for the removal of the campus chancellor, who defended police action for two days.



Just One More Day of Action in Los Angeles

By Yvonne de la Vega

To this occupier, "A Day of Action"

on Thursday, Nov. 17 was one of the most exhilarating days of Occupy Los Angeles (OLA) since its inception.

Earlier in the month, Occupy Wall Street's (OWS) G.A. (NYGA) announced on its website that its organizers would be coordinating actions for Nov. 17 in tandem with labor allies. A dramatic series of events occurred in the following days. First, several of the occupations announced that their organizers would also join in "a day of peaceful direct action to reject the economy that divides us."

Next, came a devastating raid on Zuccotti Park two days before the Day of Action was to take place, executed by the NYPD Nov. 15 in an effort to put a damper on the alliance-building actions that were planned.

It only added steam to our two marches on Nov. 17, which sadly resulted in 68 total arrests by the LAPD. Twenty-one came in the early morning march on Grand Avenue, and 47 arrests were made in the second march on South Hope and the Bank of America Plaza.

second are the Affinity Groups which center on specific issues of interest to groups of individuals. These all report back to the General Assembly, which meets daily.

Also, the economics of an occupation run much differently than what you'll see in the established society. Much is donated by groups or individuals, who, unable to occupy themselves, want to show support for the work the group is doing on behalf of the larger community. There is no money exchange, no buying and selling. Each one contributes to their ability and skill set and receives from the community what sustenance they need to maintain their part in the occupation. No one is left out or set aside, a revolutionary concept in and of itself.

That in a nutshell is the new form of government that is being created in this space and the occupiers are proving by their very presence that it works.

Of course, there are conflicts and varying sets of priorities, yet by committing to non-violence and following the process of consensus building, the occupation has become a safe space where differences can be worked out and solutions found.

What we see here is a new model of government developing, one where all voices are given equal weight. There is no money involved in deciding representation, so no one group can monopolize the conversation and set the agenda for the rest. This is the system, through the organic process of direct democracy, we see emerging from the occupation movement and the direction they are pushing our society towards.

Will society accept this new model? Perhaps it will, more readily than the established order might want to admit. Across the country, throughout the Occupation movement, we are seeing this same system of consensus springing up as the natural order in the decision making process.

Though none of us know what the future holds, sweeping changes are apparent on the horizon and the occupation movement is leading the way.

Defiant as we were, I personally felt fearful to come face to face with our policemen in riot gear, puffed-up chests and flexed biceps. My comadré Emily was the first to be arrested. It pained me to see her cry, knowing her heart and her passion for the movement. I was holding the front line banner, chanting slogans and moving forward as the LAPD began their advance and marched directly toward us. In the standoff, I must admit I dropped my hold on the banner and found safety on the sidewalk, after having stepped off of the "forbidden" street center. Yes, I admit it, I was scared.

After a while the marchers were separated from one another, but eventually regrouped and stood together in the plaza, arms locked. Drums announced our stand and then our waiting. Then some OLA members came forward with tents and began to climb up onto the grassy terraces of the Plaza. I followed the climbers, asking my compadre Mark to give me a leg up. When I got up, I joined my fellow Occupiers in helping to erect tents on the quadrant of the lawn closest to the plaza.

After what felt like a slow-motion battle of tent building that amounted to perhaps a total of 5 minutes, the officers finally noticed our

activity. The LAPD surrounded us while negotiations began between OLA members Mario Brito, Mario Jefferson, LAPD Cmdr. Andrew Smith and Police Chief Charlie Beck. These moments were the defining ones. Voices rang in uplifting chants of solidarity and determination. The LAPD were even serenaded at one point while we sang "Lean On Me." They laughed and we laughed with them. Then spokespersons for Brookfield Properties, which also manages Zuccotti Park, requested that private persons' arrests be made.

At the end of the day, everything that occurred on the Day of Action could not have unfolded any better than it did. We made our statement and the LAPD made theirs. On Friday, Nov. 18, morale amongst both camps was high. And as they do every day since the very first day of Occupation, the cops came by, strolling along the walk above City Hall Park as usual. And like they also do every day, they nodded back when they were nodded to. Personally, I suspect the cops in Los Angeles of being sympathetic towards the movement. Could they too recognize themselves in the big picture as among us, as part of the 99%? As this great movement continues, we will see.



Photo: Jared Iorio

Occupation and the Consensus Based Society

By Mark Lipman

It is far too simplistic to say that the occupation protesters have no specific demands.

In fact, it is the overabundance of demands that stagnates consensus on a specific one within the hundreds of groups springing up across the country and around the world.

The debate ranges from re-enacting Glass-Steagall and ending corporate personhood, to stopping police brutality in our minority neighborhoods and forgiving student debt, but it all goes much further than any of that. One thing that all the occupiers can agree on is that all the problems we are facing stem from the economic disparity and injustice that is inherent in the system.

Is it fair that the 99 should suffer for the benefit and uplifting of one, especially when the wealth of the one is derived from the impoverishment of all the others? A deep injustice has spread like a plague across this planet.

In a nation where the richest 1% owns 42% of the wealth and the bottom 40% own nothing, it is no wonder that people from all walks of life are rallying to the call to take over their financial and government centers. People are fed up with being pushed aside and told to tighten their belts, while the golfing class keeps getting fatter at their expense. In a situation like this, there is no one solution to the problem. It is the entire system that needs to change, where our preconceptions of how we structure and realign the wealth

must be challenged. It is only after the many grievances that have been brought to the table are answered that the protestors will find satisfaction.

What many occupiers are discovering is that by participating in direct democracy their voices are beginning to be heard. Both the local and national discourse is shifting to the issues that they care about. There is no way to overstate the importance of this fact. They see that because of their actions they are having a measurable impact, so obviously they are doing something right.

No One Is Left Out Or Set Aside

Therefore, let's examine what they are doing. Much has been made about the lack of figurehead leadership and structured demands. Decisions are made by consensus through the General Assembly, in which all are free to air their opinions. This body creates the overall structure and direction for the group as a whole. No one is elected, all are equal and participation, as on every level, is voluntary. What gets done and what decisions are made are based upon personal involvement and initiative.

Below the general assembly are the working groups, which are broken down into two categories. The first are the Committees, the necessary organizational bodies that keep the occupation functioning, such as logistics, community safety, food and sanitation, or keep it focused and informed, such as education, outreach, demands and media. The

Occupy Movement: A Primer

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These demands, you may notice, are modest. They ask mainly for a return to the economic policies of the 1950s and 1960s. Some Occupy protesters, of course, are seeking much more, from cuts to military spending and pay raises to teachers to confiscatory taxation for those making over a certain income and the closure of the Federal Reserve. But this list of demands above encompasses the area of overlap for nearly all of the protesters. And it's a pretty good start.

Why occupy?

Aren't there other ways to effect change? What good does sleeping in the park, waving signs, and yelling do?

Occupying parks is only a start. Step one involves drawing the nation's attention to economic issues and building a movement around them. That begins with marches, signs, and conversations. The next steps will require organizing, building long-term institutions, and turning an inchoate movement into effective political action. But the importance of step one should not be dismissed. Social movements can achieve powerful gains—think of the civil rights movement or the movement to introduce gay marriage. And they are especially necessary at a time when normal political channels are blocked.

Isn't this futile? Don't powerful interests dominate politics?

But remember why politicians want money in the first place: to win elections. The standing bargain is that candidates facing election will pander to voters on the public issues that everyone follows and cares about (abortion, guns, health care, immigration) and will pander to their backers

on issues that voters don't understand or don't care about. The more confusing or hidden from public view an issue is, the more likely it is that politicians will represent their financial rather than their electoral base. Unfortunately, a lot of the rollback of economic regulation, introduction of various loopholes, and trimming of taxes on the richest one percent has taken the form of complicated legislation that few voters understand or follow.

Occupy puts politicians on notice: we are watching. If you continue to tilt the playing field in favor of the rich, we are going to call you out. If, on the other hand, you introduce or back substantive legislation that responds to our demands, you will have an active, energized base upon which to draw—a base that has shown itself to be capable of putting hundreds of thousands of people in the streets.

What to do?

The most important thing right now is to increase the visibility of Occupy Wall Street and its sibling movements. So visit the parks, put up signs, wear buttons, write "We are the 99%" on your money, talk to people, join one of the many actions taking place online and in your city, sign petitions, write articles, and so forth.

One thing that is particularly important is for people who do not fit the standard model of a protester to get visibly involved. That means teachers, lawyers, professors, businesspeople, professionals, and so forth. The media is drawn to drummers with body paint screaming half-baked ideas at the top of their lungs and antagonizing the police. We cannot let that be the whole of this movement. So put on some business clothes, put your kids in a stroller, make a sane sign, and get down there—in between the cameras and the crazy—and help broaden this movement.

National Lawyers Guild

The National Lawyers Guild has announced that it is in support of Occupy Los Angeles and all other major cities in the United States, as well as movements in smaller cities. The Executive Director from the Los Angeles Chapter, Jim Lafferty stated that the services the National Lawyers Guild will provide will be lawyers, legal observers at City Hall and council to those who need it. The legal observers role will be to make sure that the Los Angeles Police Department is here to protect the peace and serve the people of Los Angeles. The National Lawyers Guild called LAPD to make sure that this occupation would be able to exist. These services will mostly be provided to major cities, but if needed the National Lawyers Guild will do what it can to protect the rights of those involved within the movement. This declaration of solidarity with the movement is an amazing achievement and a major step forward in protecting the rights of all American citizens.

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WE ARE THE 99%

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I Didn't Get It... But We Will

continued from pg. 1

as limited as they may be, are free to all. Childcare services are being set up. A sanitation committee and a pledge to "leave no trace" ensures respect for our environment and local eco-system. We are phasing out all use of disposables plates and bottles. We are unique amongst similar occupations in that we have not yet suffered from police brutality despite engaging in many acts of civil disobedience.

We are diverse, inclusive and, non-hierarchical. On my first evening at City Hall, I spoke to a middle-class, clean cut, father of two who's never lost his home or his job, but has watched others suffer. I spoke to an unemployed 28-year-old mother who wants a future for her son. I spoke to a homeless Iraq Vet who sleeps on the sidewalk every night; an organic farmer from Northern California, who has seen the severe rises in tax hikes oust fellow farmers from their land; a gay fashion designer

from West Hollywood; experienced activists, who've fought in various campaigns over the decades; a disillusioned Republican accountant who no longer believes in Big Business.

There is no 'type' of person in our movement. We do not identify with a political party, race, economic or social class. We can't be written off as Socialists, Anarchists, Hippies, Liberals, Republicans, The Tea Party, Activists, or Vegans, although those who identify with these labels are welcome to be part of our movement. We are 'the 99%', because we represent everybody in America, who is not in the richest 1% and has suffered because of it. They have suffered because our system - our corporatocracy - is set up in such a way that this richest 1% cannot fail - if they do, the 99% will pick up the bill. So that richest 1% maintains their lifestyle we have had to make sacrifices, which have all but destroyed our pride, our hopes, our dreams. The corporatocracy has sedated us, so that we have become inured to pain. Steady setbacks served up on a daily basis have rendered us inactive. Despite watching Bush sign TARP

back in 2008, we did nothing. Perhaps we did not yet comprehend how little our government and our system cared about us, the 99%.

We are people who have had our homes taken away from us, lost jobs, had our cars repossessed, watched the APR on our (maxed-out) credit cards rise to 19% or more. Some dropped out of college, no longer able to afford the tuition; others could never go in the first place. We have no health insurance. We see a frightening future for our children. Life's daily pains have been made unbearably acute by the financial burdens of merely existing in today's America, of being made every day to feel like a failure. We are told if we do not earn enough money to be in the top 1 percent, that this is our fault, that this country is a meritocracy, that we are "envious," jealous of others' success. We are told that this 1 percent have earned their tax breaks and their bailouts, that if we were only better, we too could enter the hallowed halls of the mega-rich. We are never given the opportunity to reach even a fraction of our potential because our days are filled with the

painful task of merely subsisting, of striving hopelessly to survive.

We are the 99%, and we have felt the truth. The truth is the system is not 'failing' us. The system works exactly as those in power intended it to. Our movement has evolved naturally and organically. From a dozen or so protestors, we have grown into a global movement. The sheer numbers involved are clear evidence of a seismic shift in the consciousness of the vast majority who are sick of being the 99% who facilitate the 1%. Over 1,750 cities globally have now joined our movement. We have union backing, colleges have staged walk-outs, allies have closed accounts choosing local credit unions over corporate banks. Tent cities resembling micro-nations are springing up all around the world run by the people, using the General Assembly to make decisions. We are a growing movement of consciousness, and we are evolving rapidly. We are poised on the brink of a true bloodless Peoples' Revolution. We choose nobody to represent us, as we are building Direct Democracy. We welcome you to the General Assembly.

OCCUPY L.A. Committees

Within our new participatory structure, we have collectively formed committees to focus on the many moving pieces of a functioning and evolving revolution. In these groups, ideas are exchanged, strategies are collectively shaped and the future of the occupation is being written. Join us!

Arts

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Medicals & First Aid
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Research and Development
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Resources (Finance)
OLAResources@gmail.com
Sanitation: occupylasanitation@gmail.com, Twitter: @OccupyLA_San
Social Services
occupylasocialservices@gmail.com
Zero Waste
olazerowaste@gmail.com

Other Committees include:

Action
City Liaison
Group Dynamics/Facilitation(GA)
Legal
Media Subcommittee, Social Media
Media Subcommittee, Web
Objectives/ Demands
Outreach
Peacekeeping
Print Media/ Silk Screening
Translation
Welcome

GUIDE TO A GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly is a gathering of people committed to making decisions based upon a collective agreement or "consensus."

There is no single leader or governing body of the General Assembly - everyone's voice is equal. Anyone is free to propose an idea or express an opinion as part of the General Assembly.

Every General Assembly in every Occupation is slightly different and evolving all the time. But for right now, here at Occupy Los Angeles, we tend to stick to the following model:

The person 'chairing' the meeting is the **Facilitator**. The Facilitator composes the **Order of the Day** and makes sure that everyone gets a chance to speak. They are helped out by a **Shadow Facilitator**.

Both the Facilitator and the Shadow Facilitator are chosen by, and from, members of the Facilitation Committee. Think you'd be a good Facilitator? Come to the Facilitation Committee Meetings, held daily at 5.30pm on The North or South Steps (by the fountain) of City Hall. As with all Committees' meetings, check in with the Welcome Tent every day to get location changes.

The Facilitator changes for every single General Assembly, and the Committee tries to mix it up to represent our diversity. Occupy LA's facilitators have been male, female, young, old, single, married, Hispanic, Asian, African-American, homeless and poor, affluent and employed.

The Basic Agenda:

1. The Facilitator starts every meeting with a short **Welcome** speech, and then by reading out **The Principles of Solidarity** as outlined by Occupy Wall Street. This is a short document which outlines that our General Assemblies should embody "direct and participatory democracy" in order to offer a "new socio-political and economic alternative."

2. After the principles, the Assembly is introduced to the **Hand Gestures** (See the attached diagram) used for individuals to communicate with the facilitator. Hand gestures are used instead of voices because it doesn't interrupt speech or produce a cacophony of disordered noise. It's to keep the Assembly ordered, and allow speakers to be heard without being spoken over - and it works.

If someone cannot be heard, the crowd can yell out 'MIC CHECK' at any moment.

3. After the hand gestures have been explained, one representative from each Committee and Affinity group is called up to make any **Announcements**. Individuals can also stand up to make announcements. Announcements can be anything - unlike proposals, they are not decisions that should be voted on by the Assembly because they do not directly affect the movement and the direction the movement and its followers should take.

A committee has to be agreed on by the General Assembly - a committee can't just "invent" itself. A group that forms and has not been agreed on by the General Assembly is an **Affinity Group**.

4. After announcements, Proposals are heard by the General Assembly. Committees go before individuals or affinity groups.

What's a Proposal?

A **Proposal** is an idea set before the General Assembly which, if implemented, will affect everyone in the movement. They are representative of the group and need the official endorsement of the Occupy movement. Proposals shouldn't be vague, indistinct ideas, but properly fleshed out ideas, with a What, a How, a Why and a When. For example, when the 'Keepin It Real' affinity group proposed that Tent City have a properly organized

structure, the General Assembly asked them to draw up a city plan and present it. Simply 'the idea' of properly structuring Tent City into an organized layout was not enough for the Assembly to vote on.

Listening to proposals is an opportunity for the Assembly to make their feelings known via their hand gestures. If, as a member of the Assembly, you want to speak and ask a question, you should look for a **Stackperson**. The stackperson will also make sure those who want to speak keep to order, to prevent people speaking out of turn, or "jumping stack."

Proposals will not pass and become Resolutions unless the Assembly agrees, via hand signals of consensus, that they will pass. If someone Hard Blocks a proposal, which means they believe it threatens the movement or our solidarity, then the proposer has to answer questions until the Assembly can come to some kind of consensus. Anyone may offer a counter-proposal. In the event that no consensus is reached, the proposal is either dropped or tabled for a later meeting.

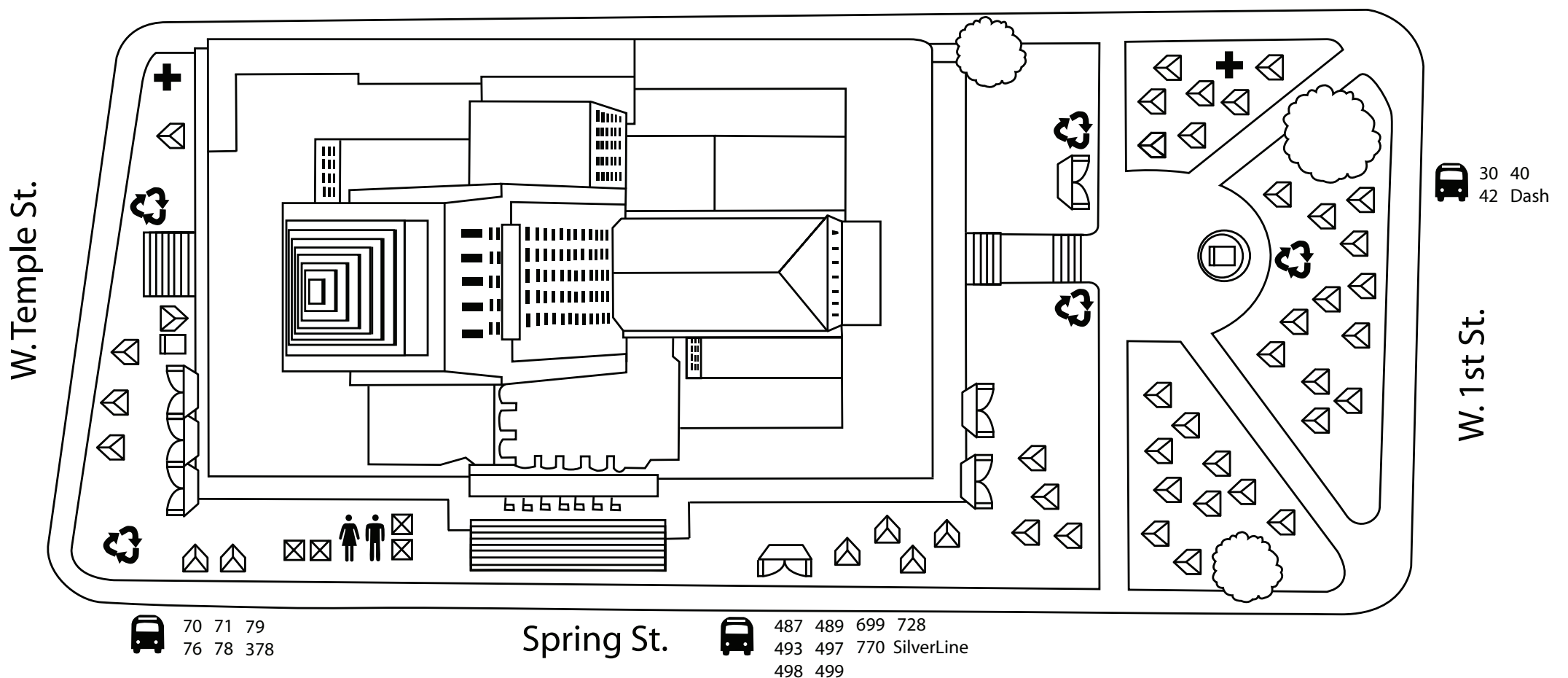
Individuals must contact a stackperson in order to put their name on a list to make a proposal in front of the General Assembly, and often they must wait in line for several days due to time constraints.

After proposals comes People's Mic where anyone can get up and talk for two minutes.

General Assemblies are held at 7:30pm outside City Hall on the North or South Lawn every evening. Anyone can attend, everyone in attendance participates, and everything is streamed live to viewers online. A notetaker also takes minutes, which are posted on our site: www.occupylosangeles.org.

We invite everyone to come participate!

Main St.



70 71 79
76 78 378

Spring St.

487 489 699 728
493 497 770 SilverLine
498 499