

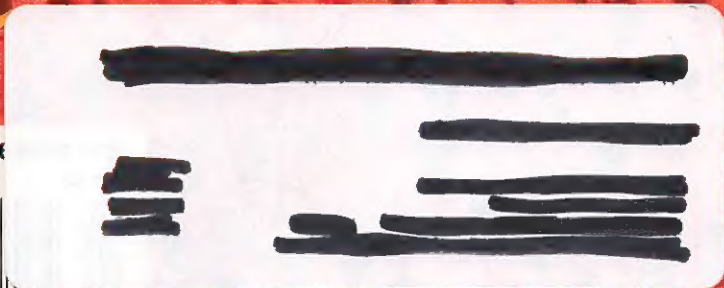
EDWIDGE DANTICAT AND EDUARDO GALEANO ON HAITI  
TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS ON SUNDANCE

# The Progressive

February 2012

## Inside the Occupy Movement

Arundhati Roy  
Barbara Kingsolver  
Breanna Lembitz  
Arun Gupta &  
Michelle Fawcett



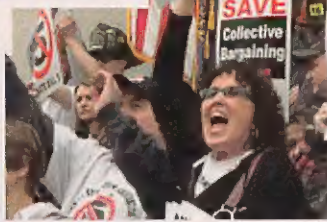
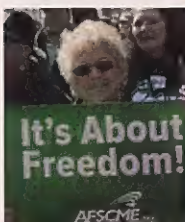
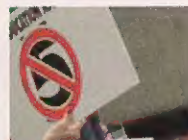
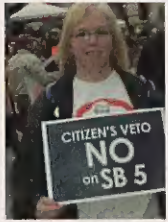
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ZINA SAUNDERS

From the 1.6 million members of AFSCME:

# A BIG THANK YOU



- To the voters in Ohio who stood up to the corporate-backed politicians and said that Main Street will no longer stay silent as Wall Street tries to steal the American Dream;
- To the men and women across the Buckeye State who worked day and night to tell politicians that jobs must be the priority, not attacks on workers' rights;
- To those in the 99% across the country who stand up for nurses, EMTs, firefighters, school teachers, librarians and other public employees;
- To those who defend public services against the smears, attacks and lies of right-wing media, politicians and groups;
- And to those who forge a Main Street movement with the message that Americans will fight back when the economic and retirement security of the 99% is under attack . . .

With our victory in Ohio, we now face the year ahead confident that when we stand united, we can win.

Together, we will defend America's working families . . . state-by-state in 2012.

## Together, we will shape the future.



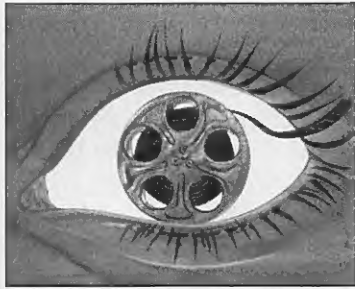
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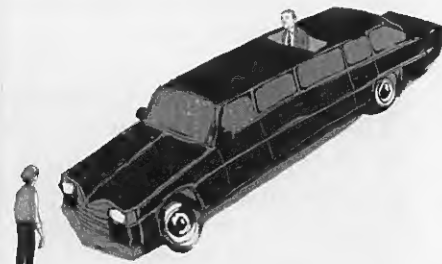
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Editor's Note Matthew Rothschild

# Preoccupations

Well, the election season is now in full sway, and I've got to admit I've been observing the Republican race with a mixture of delight and disgust: delight that it's been such a bad carnival act, with one candidate after another falling off the trapeze; disgust that the antipathy toward government is so intense, and the idolatry of the free market so fervid, especially after what this so-called free market has done to our economy.

I don't get paid enough to watch all the Republican debates, but I saw enough of them to recoil. Here are two appalling remarks that barely received any attention.

Newt Gingrich on October 19: "How can I trust you with power if you don't pray?" The former Speaker and smug historian appears not to know that it's unconstitutional to apply a religious test for the holding of public office.

Mitt Romney on November 22: In defending his stance that the United States should not "cut and run" in Afghanistan and Pakistan, he said we should stick by our allies, as we did with "Indonesia back in the 1960s." Said Romney: "We helped Indonesia move toward modernity with new leadership." That new leadership was the dictator Suharto, who killed between 500,000 and one million of his own citizens with the help of the CIA.

A couple of subscribers contacted me back in the fall wondering why we were neglecting the Occupy movement.

I tried to explain that, because of our publication schedule, we weren't able to sneak in even a passing reference to it until our November issue. That didn't mean we were neglecting it; we were just trapped by the old technology of the printing press and

the U.S. mail. I did mention, however, that we'd dedicated a whole section on our homepage at [progressive.org](http://progressive.org) to covering the Occupy movement as it's been developing, and I urged them to seek us out there—a suggestion I offer you not only on this subject but on breaking news, as well.

I promised the subscribers that we'd be covering the Occupy movement in the magazine in the following months. We did so in our special December/January issue, and we've been gratified by all the positive response to that issue from readers like you.

We redouble our coverage of the Occupy movement this month.

We lead off with a vivid first-person account from Breanna Lembitz, a college student who was at Zuccotti Park. Then we get a nice sense of the breadth and heart of the movement from Arun Gupta and Michelle Fawcett, who visited many occupation sites around the country last fall.

We round out our special section with wisdom from two of our favorite writer-activists: Arundhati Roy and Barbara Kingsolver.

Another favorite writer of ours is Edwidge Danticat. When she sent me an e-mail asking whether she could write an essay for us on the second anniversary of the earthquake in Haiti, we leapt at the chance.

Accompanying it is Eduardo Galeano's column on Haiti. With his characteristic brio, he offers a quick history lesson and then brings things up to the perilous present. He points out, as does Danticat, that the United Nations is playing a pernicious role in Haiti. What Haiti needs, he says, is not another invasion force, and not more charity, but simply solidarity—one of the crucial concepts of our time. ♦

## No Comment

### Stalin's Consumer Protections

Republicans first tried to stymie the creation of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau by blocking the nomination of former Ohio attorney general Richard Cordray as head. Then they expressed outrage when President Obama gave Cordray a recess appointment. Senator Lindsey Graham compared the agency to "something out of the Stalinist era."

### Secretary with Benefits

An Illinois lawyer accused of telling an applicant for a secretarial position that the job included "sexual interaction" has been suspended for one year, reports ABAJournal.com. The attorney posted an ad in the "adult gigs" section of Craigslist seeking a secretary and asking job seekers to send photos and measurements.

### Under the Influence

"Former senior Hill aides at the center of a brewing battle between Hollywood and Silicon Valley are packing their bags for K Street, where they'll work for two of the entertainment lobby shops trying to influence their former colleagues in Congress on the very same issue," reports Politico. But David Israelite, the president of National Music Publishers' Association, dismissed the idea that former Congressional staff were hired because of the ongoing legislative battles. "It has nothing to do with pending legislation," he said.

### Contracting Illness

At a shareholders' meeting, American Crystal Sugar president and CEO Dave Berg compared its labor contract to a cancerous tumor, reports Workers Independent News. "We can't let the labor contract make us sick forever and ever and ever. We have to treat the disease, and that's what we're doing here," Berg said. The company has locked out its employees over a new contract. "Keep the health benefit, give them a 2 percent wage increase, and don't change anything else. I know that because I negotiated the last two contracts," Berg said. "At some point, that tumor has to come out."

*Readers are invited to submit No Comment items. Please send original clippings or photocopies and give name and date of publication. Submissions cannot be acknowledged or returned.*

### Bloomberg's Army

"I have my own army in the NYPD, which is the seventh biggest army in the world. I have my own State Department, much to Foggy Bottom's annoyance. We have the United Nations in New York, and so we have an entree into the diplomatic world that Washington does not have," said New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg in a speech at MIT in November.



### Berlusconi Feels for Mussolini

Outgoing Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said he lacked power and compared himself to Benito Mussolini, reports News24. Berlusconi said he was reading a book of letters written by the Fascist dictator and his mistress Clara Petacci. "At a certain point he says: 'But don't you understand that I don't count for anything anymore, I can only make suggestions,'" Berlusconi said, adding: "I have felt in the same situation."

### Culture of Life?

The campaign director of Mississippi's "personhood amendment," which would have made in-vitro fertilization practically impossible, is himself a father through in-vitro fertilization, reports Salon.com. The legislation, which also would have limited many common forms of birth control, was soundly defeated at the polls.



### Pay to Stay

Supervisors of Riverside County, California, voted for an ordinance that would force jail inmates to reimburse the county for the costs of incarcerating them, reports Huffington Post. Supervisor Jeff Stone, who introduced the measure, called the jails "prison hotels" during the supervisors meeting.



STUART GOLDENBERG

## Letters to the Editor

### Defending Libraries

Your November issue was a standout in a long series of great reporting. I love Jim Hightower, as I really need his humor about the sad state of our dear country at present ("Perry Tales"). But my favorite article from that issue was the one by Antonino D'Ambrosio on the closing of libraries ("Overdue Notice: Defend Our Libraries").

This is a subject very close to my heart. I'm seventy-six now, but I can remember as clearly as if it were yesterday a moment when I had borrowed a book from a classmate in second grade at St. Peter's School in Reading, Pennsylvania. The day the friend asked me to return the book, I told her that I hadn't finished it. She said, "Well, go to the public library with me and check it out." I was too embarrassed to tell her I didn't have any money. Finally, I fessed up, and she said, "The library is free." I signed up that day, and I have been an avid reader ever since.

*Joan Kenneke  
Oakton, Virginia*

Antonino D'Ambrosio drew attention to the closing of libraries across the country. It's happening everywhere. Last spring, the Evanston Public Library Board, for budgetary reasons, closed the South Evanston branch that had served the community for over ninety years. This happened despite vigorous citizen effort to keep the branch.

Within three weeks of closing, the Evanston Public Library Friends channeled this support and rented a space a block away. They organized a group of volunteers who outfitted and opened the Mighty Twig (smaller than a branch, but still mighty), an all-volunteer experiment.

Books circulate on the honor system. No cards, no fees, no fines. The Mighty Twig is open thirty-eight hours a week and offers a wide variety

of programs for children and adults. It also serves as a book collection and distribution center, supplying hundreds of new or gently used donated books to fourteen other locations in the city.

*Suzanne Arist and Sally Schwarzlose  
Via e-mail*

### War on the Poor

Matthew Rothschild hit the nail on the head when he labeled our system "unresponsive" (Comment, "Class Warfare, Anyone?" November issue). Taxation without representation isn't considered tyranny anymore, because Congress is representing somebody—it just ain't us. Congress doesn't represent the middle class, and it definitely is not representing the poor. Our government works for the "tiny elite at the top." Until we get money out of politics and the word "person" out of the definition of corporation, I fear that the forty-six million living in poverty will only expand.

I agree with Rothschild that "Obama's rhetoric has improved" but it is just that, talk. Obama just can't "ask the super-rich to pay more." He has to rally Congress and the people to demand that the wealthy pay their fair share in taxes. If this is warfare, then there is a war being waged, and Obama has to choose a side. He is with the 1 percent or with the 99.

I'm just a kid, only seventeen years old, but even I can see the inequality of wealth in this country. I'm glad that there are publications such as *The Progressive* and movements like Occupy Wall Street shedding light on the dichotomy of income.

*Anthony Asuega  
San Francisco, California*

### An Interview with Jodie Evans

I was stunned when I read Code Pink co-founder Jodie Evans's comments in regards to Code Pink and Obama's war policies (Interview by David Barsamian, November issue). In the

interview, Evans stated, "Then, at the Inaugural, Code Pink was the only organization that was out there against Obama. We had our little pink ribbons on our fingers. And then we did can-cans outside of all the balls. 'Yes, we can-can end war.'"

But shortly after Obama's election in November, 2008, Code Pink sent out a letter stating that "an Obama victory is a victory for the peace movement," and "War is SO over."

During the campaign, Obama favored expanding the military and the war in Afghanistan and increasing the military budget. Clearly, he was not an anti-war candidate. Now, Evans is claiming that Code Pink was "the only organization against Obama"? This was certainly not the case.

Evans and Code Pink need to acknowledge their mistakes. If people don't acknowledge their mistakes, they're highly likely to repeat them. And we sure don't need that.

*Penelope Kaplan  
Chicago, Illinois*

I consider myself a liberal and agreed with most of Jodie Evans's answers. However, it turned me off when she stated she worked on Ralph Nader's campaign.

I also held Nader in high esteem until he ran for President with absolutely no chance of winning and effectively handed the Presidency to George Bush.

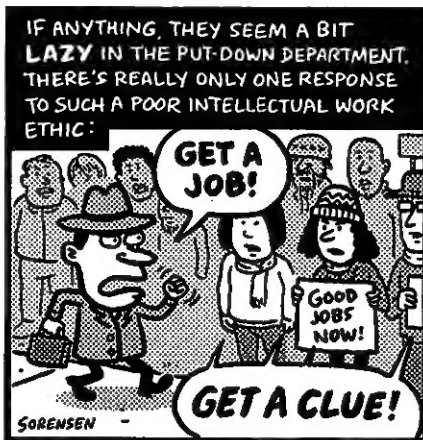
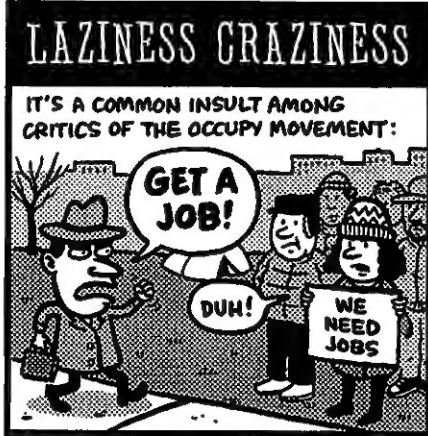
Had Nader kept his nose out of this race, it would not have even been close. I remember him campaigning about there being no difference between Al Gore and Bush. Does he honestly think Gore would have invaded Iraq and would have given huge tax cuts to the wealthy?

By his actions, Nader is responsible for the Roberts Supreme Court, which gave personhood rights to corporations in its *Citizens United* ruling.

*Marlin Morris  
Salem, Illinois*

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### Negative Ads Still Work

I'm writing to thank you for continuing to remind the public of the forces that seek to manipulate us. "The Group Behind the Republican Takeover" (by Elizabeth DiNovella, November issue) is just one of the many interconnected groups orchestrated and funded by the Koch brothers.

All of these groups work toward controlling the message and the media, and thus the voters. Whether it's Americans for Prosperity, or the Club for Growth, or the Republican Governors Association, or the Republican State Leadership Committee, they specialize in negative attack ads targeting the Republicans' opponents. As you pointed out, the onslaught of false, distorted, and mis-

leading ads works.

These groups are everywhere but too few know it.

Unless we can clean up campaign laws and reverse *Citizens United*, I fear for our future.

Susan Shoemaker  
Via e-mail

### Women's Voices

I noticed the increase in women's voices in the September issue. Sadly, it shouldn't have to be remarkable in this day and age, nor in the pages of *The Progressive*, yet it still is.

Please redouble your efforts to find women writers. Their perspective is subtly different, and worth hearing.

Melinda Dunker  
Chicago, Illinois

## Ripping Up the Magna Carta

One of the promises Barack Obama made when he was running for President the first time around was to defend our civil liberties and restore our reputation overseas. But by signing the National Defense Authorization Act at the end of the year, he broke that promise.

This new law builds another floor atop the edifice of repression that George W. Bush and Dick Cheney erected while they were in office. It's right up there with the Patriot Act, the Military Commissions Act, and the act that expanded domestic spying by the NSA in destroying the guarantees we thought we had to due process in America. It also makes it official: The United States is now a lawless country because key provisions of this act violate the Geneva Conventions.

The act enshrines the Bush-era practice of indefinite military detention without trial. And it greatly expands the categories of people the President can nab and throw into a military dungeon or kidnap and send abroad. U.S. citizens may now be in these expanded categories.

Under Bush's Authorization for Use of Military Force, which Congress passed after 9/11, the President was "authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons."

Under Section 1021 of the new law, this group has been expanded to include not just anyone who "was a part of or substantially supported" Al Qaeda and the Taliban, but also broad and undefined "associated forces that are engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners, including any person who has committed a belligerent act or has directly supported such hostilities in aid of such enemy forces."

Note that the term "belligerent act"

is not defined here. Nor is "associated forces." And note that anyone engaged in hostilities against "coalition partners" can be nabbed by the President and held indefinitely without trial. This gives the President the right to act as the Godfather against any person or group that is rebelling against one of our coalition partners, no matter how repressive that partner may be. So a Saudi or Bahraini dissident could conceivably fall within this category.

The new act says that those detained under the law of war may be placed under "detention . . . without trial until the end of the hostilities." And since there is no end in sight for the so-called war on terror, this means holding people indefinitely, without trial, which is against international law.

Those detained may also face "transfer to the custody or control of the person's country of origin, any other foreign country, or any other foreign entity." Note the total lack of restrictions here: "any other country" could mean a country that engages in torture. Prior to this law, under both Bush and Obama, the Executive Branch would at least give the assurance—as implausible as it was—that the country the detainee was being transferred to wouldn't engage in torture. Now this qualification no longer need apply. And what, pray tell, does "any other foreign entity" mean? Could Blackwater founder Erik Prince's new enterprise in Abu Dhabi qualify as a "foreign entity"?

One big question during the debate in the Senate over this bill was whether it applied to U.S. citizens or not.

Senator Rand Paul asked bill sponsor Senator John McCain: "My question would be under the provisions would it be possible that an American citizen then could be declared an enemy combatant and sent to Guantánamo Bay and detained indefinitely?"

McCain answered: "I think that as long as that individual, no matter who they are, if they pose a threat to the security of the United States of America, should not be allowed to continue that threat."

Senator Lindsey Graham, another backer of the

---

"This is the first time this power of indefinite detention is being expressly codified into statute."

—Glenn  
Greenwald



bill, said multiple times on the Senate floor that American citizens could be put into military detention without a lawyer. Here's what he said in the Senate on November 17: "The statement of authority to detain does apply to American citizens and it designates the world as the battlefield, including the homeland."

The Senate shot down numerous amendments that would have made clear that the bill did not apply to U.S. citizens, so its intent is obvious.

Thirteen Senators voted against the final bill: Among Democrats, they were Ben Cardin, Dick Durbin, Al Franken, Tom Harkin, Jeff Merkley, and Ron Wyden. Independent Bernie Sanders also voted against, as did the following Republicans: Mike Crapo, Tom Coburn, Jim DeMint, Mike Lee, Rand Paul, and Jim Risch.

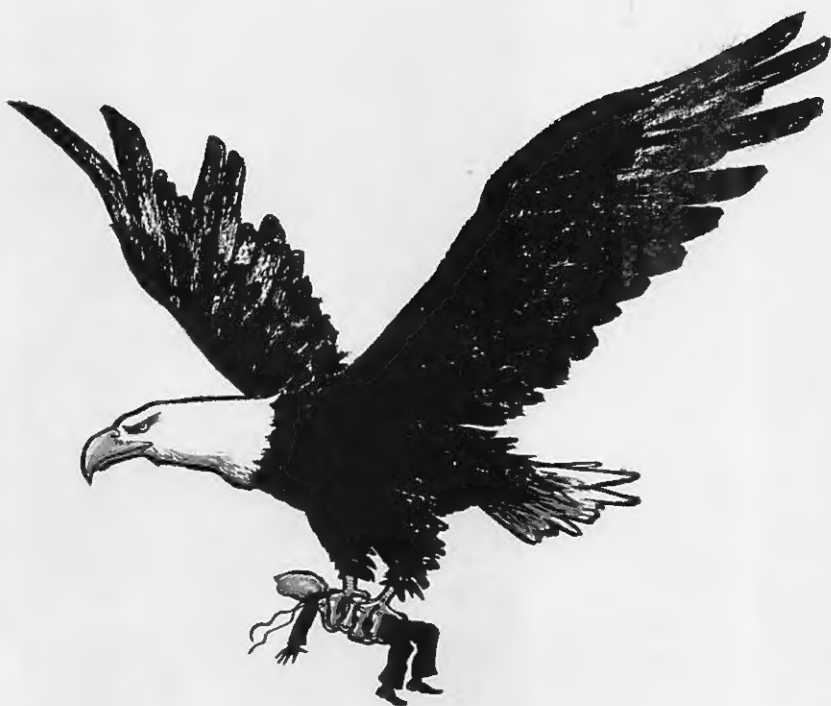
Obama had threatened to veto the bill not just because it assails our civil liberties. He also didn't like it for quite a different reason: because, he said, it interfered with his ability to carry out his duties as commander in chief.

When Congressional negotiators included a few fudges in the original language, Obama went ahead and signed the bill into law on New Year's Eve.

But those fudges don't actually provide protection for U.S. citizens. Here's what one of them said: "Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect existing law or authorities, relating to the detention of United States citizens, lawful resident aliens of the United States, or any other persons who are captured or arrested in the United States."

This is no prohibition against the President detaining U.S. citizens; it simply leaves vague whether he has the right to do so under "existing law or authorities." The Bush Administration repeatedly asserted that the Authorization for Use of Military Force already gave it the right to detain people—including U.S. citizens—indefinitely down in Guantánamo or Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan. This addendum does nothing to alter that interpretation. And, as Glenn Greenwald of *Salon* points out, it may allow the detention of U.S. citizens who are captured or arrested outside the United States, since the last clause of that disclaimer is conjoined by the word "or," making it seem like the whole thing applies only to those who are nabbed here at home. In his signing statement, Obama vowed: "My Administration will not authorize the indefinite military detention without trial of American citizens." But that won't prevent other Presidents from doing so.

Take a look at another fudge. In the next section of the law, Section 1022, it says: "The requirement to detain a person in military custody under this section does not extend to citizens of the United States." So



JOY KOLITSKY

the President isn't required to hold an American citizen in military custody. It's just an option.

I'm not surprised that Obama signed this law because he's proven, time and time again, that most of his campaign promises were empty. What's more, he himself had previously so expanded Presidential powers that this current expansion pales in comparison. After all, he has asserted the right to assassinate U.S. citizens anywhere in the world if he says they are terrorists. Tossing them into Guantánamo is nothing compared to killing them.

Back in the fall of 2006, as the Senate was debating the Military Commissions Act, which also greatly expanded Presidential authority to designate people as enemy combatants and deprive them of the right of habeas corpus, then-Senator Arlen Specter said, "What the bill seeks to do is set back basic rights by some 900 years."

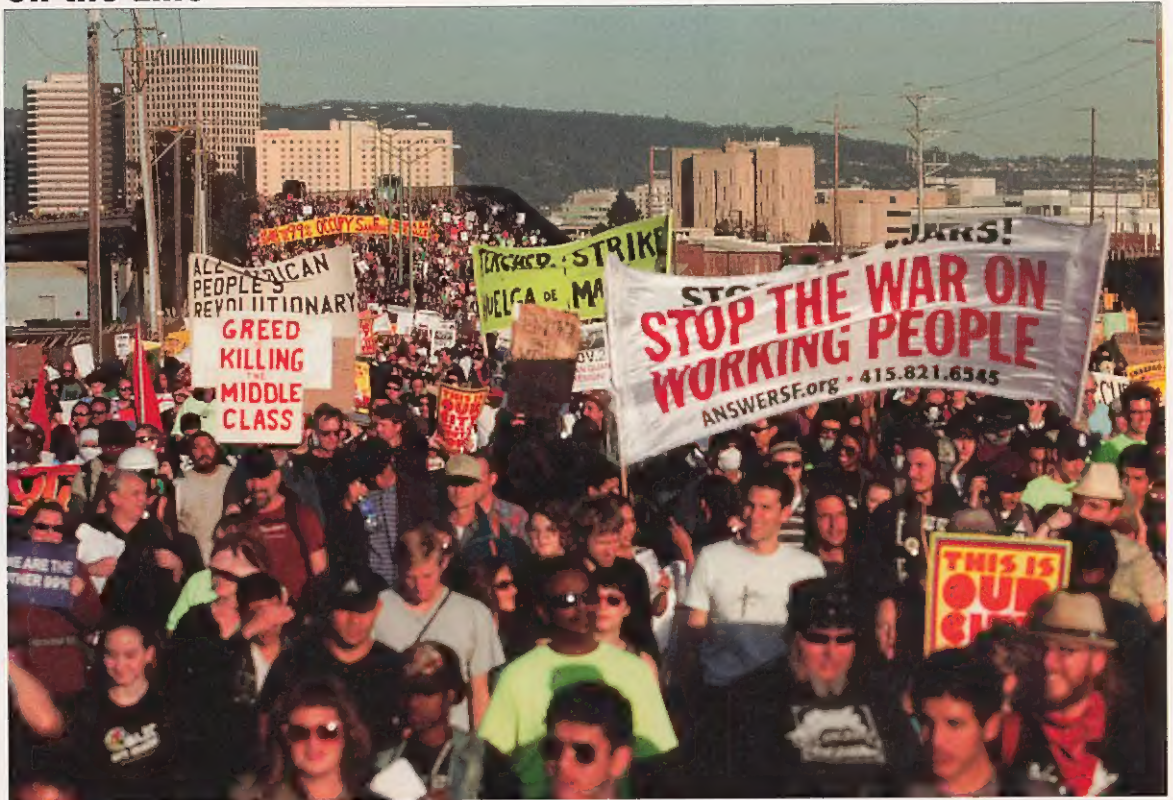
The National Defense Authorization Act similarly turns the calendar back to pre-Magna Carta days. And it allows the President of the United States to have the authority of a medieval king with the power of the largest military ever assembled on the face of the Earth.

That is one scary prospect. ♦  
—Matthew Rothschild

“The provisions on indefinite detention are inconsistent with the liberties and freedoms that are at the core of the system our Founders established.”

—Senator Al Franken

## On the Line



PETER DASILVA/EPA/  
AFP/NEWSCOM  
Oakland

# Occupying the Streets

The Occupy movement faced evictions from city parks across the country. Thousands in Oakland, California, closed down the port on November 2 and on December 12.



University of California-Davis  
MAX WHITTAKER/RTR/AFP/NEWSCOM



Philadelphia  
AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS/JOSEPH KACZMAREK



Washington, D.C.  
JOHN CETRINO/RTR/AFP/NEWSCOM

# Fight Foreclosure

December 6 was a national day of action to fight foreclosures and evictions, organized by the Occupy movement.



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# Cambodian Workers Strike

## Phnom Penh

Workers at a Cambodian garment factory that produces clothing for Gap, J.C. Penney, and Old Navy went on strike in late November over the suspension of their union representatives. The Workers Friendship Union Federation says the strike would continue until the three union representatives are reinstated. "This is a plan by the company to remove union leaders who had advocated for better conditions," union president Sieng Sambath told Reuters.



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS/NIENG SINITH



© DEAN ROGERS/STONE-ROGERS PHOTOGRAPHY

## Close For-Profit Detention Center



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS/LEDGER ENQUIRE/MIKE HASKEY

### Lumpkin, Georgia

Nearly 300 demonstrators marched from the town square of Lumpkin, Georgia, to the gate of the Stewart Detention Center on November 18. The protesters called for the closing of the center and highlighted inhumane conditions inside the facility. The center is the largest privately owned, for-profit immigration detention center in the United States and is run by the Corrections Corporation of America.

*For more information, contact the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights at [glahr.org](http://glahr.org).*

On December 10, the NAACP organized a voting rights rally in New York City. The protesters marched from the offices of Koch Industries to the United Nations. The rightwing billionaire Koch brothers have given funding to organizations that advocate for highly restrictive voting laws.

*For more information go to [www.stand4freedom.org](http://www.stand4freedom.org).*

## March for Voting Rights



BRUCE COTLER/ZUMA/AFP/NEWSCOM

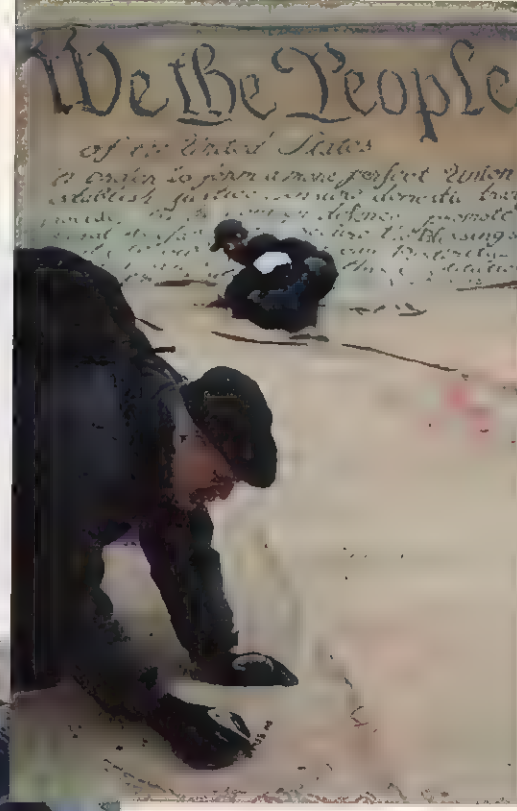


AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS/MARY ALTAFFER

## Opposing Cuts in Washington State

### Olympia

Protesters marched on the Washington state capitol in late November and early December during a special session of the state legislature. People spoke out against proposed cuts to education and other state programs.



PHOTOS © IAN TERRY

## Protesting ALEC

### Scottsdale, Arizona

Some 300 protesters marched to a resort where the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) was hosting a meeting between corporations and state lawmakers. Police pepper-sprayed the crowd several times and arrested seven people.



JACK KURTZ/ZUMA PRESS/AFP/NEWS.COM

Open Space Terry Tempest Williams

## Sundance's Winter Revolution



Everyone loves the movies. We go to the neighborhood theater with a friend, buy a ticket, buy some popcorn and a drink. We enter the theater together, find a seat, get comfortable, and the lights go out. For a couple of hours, we forget our lives and plan on being entertained. Unless it's a documentary.

Documentaries explore the landscape of ideas, focusing traditionally on social issues. Tough issues. Complicated issues.

Michael Moore's film *Sicko* comes to mind, tackling America's relationship to health care.

Or Al Gore's *Inconvenient Truth*, his brainy treatise on global warming that expressed the whys and hows of a complex and politically contentious debate over climate change.

These films expose reality rather than offering us an escape from it.

*The Cove*, Louie Psihoyos's eco-thriller about a group of agile activists committed to stopping the dolphin slaughter in a hidden cove in Taiji, Japan, went viral worldwide. It's a documentary with high drama:

---

*Terry Tempest Williams's forthcoming book, "When Women Were Birds," will be published this spring by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.*

Think *Flipper* meets *Ocean's 12*. Indeed, Flipper's trainer, Ric O'Barry, the protagonist of *Cove*, spent the early part of his career as a marine mammal specialist working with dolphins in captivity, including Kathy, one of the dolphins that played Flipper on the television show. After

following.

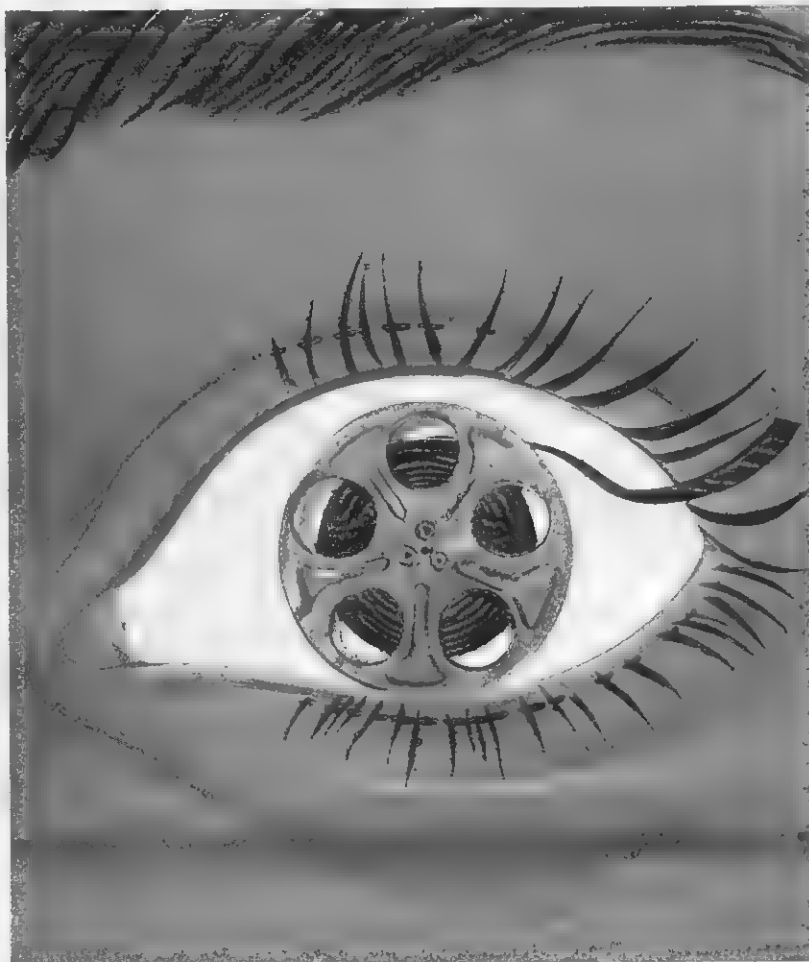
On December 9, 2011, the Empire State Building turned red as a reminder of the slaughter of dolphins in Taiji. Leilani Munter, a volunteer with Save Japan Dolphins, came up with the idea and convinced the building's owners to go along. O'Barry was there, along with director Psihoyos, producer Fisher Stevens, and actor-comedian John Leguizamo, to watch the building turn a shade of amber.

"Before the people of Japan can stop their government from supporting this annual slaughter, they need to know about it," wrote O'Barry on his Dolphin Project website. "And what better way than to light up the iconic Empire State Building in New York, the 'World's Most Famous Office Building,' in red lights?"

A few months ago, O'Barry held a public session in Singapore to campaign for the release

of twenty-five wild-caught dolphins bought by Resorts World Sentosa for its marine life park. He reminded the audience that the slaughter of dolphins persisted despite global awareness about the Taiji dolphin hunt.

"We still have a lot to do in the cove," he said. "Today, they captured and killed thirty dolphins. It is important to keep it in the news."



ALEX NABALM

Kathy died in his arms forty years ago, he vowed to do everything in his power to stop dolphin trading for aquatic theme parks.

In *Cove*, as the blue waters turn red with the blood of innocent dolphins, it's hard not to be radicalized into action. *The Cove* received the Academy Award for Best Documentary in 2010. It also received a cult

Enter a new star in the movie-making industry: filmmakers as activists. If you translate activist to protester, then you have *Time* magazine's Person of the Year. And if you carry this logic further, then the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, represents an annual winter revolution.

Sundance's founder and visionary, Robert Redford, has never been afraid of getting his hands dirty in the best of ways. In an interview a few years ago, Redford was asked if he thought documentaries have a role in affecting social change and why Sundance has been such a supporter of nonfiction films.

"I want Sundance to be a forum for cultural exchange and for political dialogue," he said. "We're not hearing the truth about a lot of issues, and I'm worried that people are giving up and getting numb and not even bothering to look for the truth. It's often in documentaries—when the focus is on personal stories—that we learn the truth of current situations and events. They're not just a cultural force for storytelling, they're also political truth. If you look at *Born into Brothels* and *Hoop Dreams* and *Super Size Me*, these kinds of films really are a huge channel to get back to the truth."

Geralyn Dreyfous, co-founder of Impact Partners, is committed not only to making independent films that ignite social change but also to financing them. She was one of the producers of *Born into Brothels*, which received the Academy Award for Best Documentary in 2004.

"In today's information-saturated and visual world, film is increasingly how ideas travel," she says. "They are virtual and intentional, and essential tools for community building and democracy building. It is increasingly the role of the storyteller to find its audience, and build new audiences, a skill set similar to grassroots organizing."

This year at Sundance, Impact

Partners entered four films in the documentary competition: *Queen of Versailles*, *The Invisible War*, *Detropia*, and *How to Survive a Plague*.

Early buzz on this year's favorite documentary centered on *Chasing Ice*, a heroic portrait of National Geographic photographer James Balog, whose Extreme Ice Survey is

ball game. Plans are in the making to show a three-minute trailer on the electronic JumboTron at halftime during the U of U basketball game this winter, with my dad as narrator. Students from the University of Utah's environmental humanities graduate program are helping organize the public service announce-



An activist defends dolphins in *The Cove*.

challenging even the most recalcitrant climate skeptics. With his deployment of time-lapse cameras recording receding glaciers worldwide from Greenland to Switzerland to the Himalayas to Alaska, Balog is deepening our perceptions of our changing world.

My own father saw a preview of *Chasing Ice* in Salt Lake City. A lifelong Republican who had been more than skeptical about rising temperatures and receding glaciers, he left Balog's presentation a believer.

"This is a tragedy," he said to Balog afterwards. "Only 100 people saw this presentation tonight. It needs to be shown to 45,000." My father was referring to the number of people at a University of Utah foot-

ment and are putting pressure on the athletic department.

Again, filmmaker as activist as organizer as storyteller.

Storytelling is the umbilical cord between the past, present, and future. Stories become the conscience of the community, a community that extends beyond our own species.

We don't need to be entertained. We need to be moved to action. Independent films with independent visions issue a stay against complacency and lethargy.

Sundance inspires me. Forget the popcorn and bring your attention. Documentary filmmaking is more than focusing on social change—it is creating the change we cannot escape from, frame by frame by frame. ♦

# Invisible Country



*Dedicated to Guillermo Chifflet, who was forced to leave Uruguay's Chamber of Deputies for having voted against sending Uruguayan soldiers to Haiti.*

Look it up in any encyclopedia:

What was the first free country in the Americas? The answer is always the same: the United States. But the United States declared its independence when it was a nation with 650,000 slaves who remained slaves for another century, and its Constitution originally held that a black slave counted as only three-fifths of a citizen.

And if you consult any encyclopedia to find out what was the first country to abolish slavery, the response will always be the same: England. Not true. The first country to abolish slavery was not England but Haiti, which is still paying penance for that sin.

The black slaves of Haiti defeated the glorious army of Napoleon Bonaparte, and Europe never forgave it for this humiliation.

*Eduardo Galeano is a Uruguayan writer and journalist and author of "Open Veins of Latin America," "Memory of Fire," and "Mirrors: Stories of Almost Everyone."*

Haiti was forced to pay France a gigantic indemnity over a century and a half for the crime of its liberation, but not even this was enough. That black insolence continues to rile the white masters of the world.

We know little or nothing of all this.



JON KRAUSE

Haiti is an invisible country.

The first time in years the world media paid attention to it was when the earthquake of 2010 killed more than 200,000 Haitians. Tragedy catapulted the country briefly into the media limelight.

And so today Haiti is known not

for its historic achievements in the war against slavery and colonial oppression or for the unique talent of its artists—magicians of scrap who can transform refuse into things of beauty.

It is worth repeating again so that even the deaf will hear: Haiti was the first independent country of the Americas and the first in the world to defeat slavery.

It deserves far more than the notoriety that blooms on disaster.

The border crossing between the Dominican Republic and Haiti is called Malpasó, the bad step.

Perhaps the name is a sort of warning that you are entering the black world of black magic and witchcraft.

Voodoo, the religion that the slaves took with them from Africa and nationalized in Haiti, does not deserve to be called a religion. From the point of view of the owners of Civilization, voodoo is just a black thing, the product of igno-

rance, backwardness, and pure superstition. The Catholic Church, which has no shortage of believers ready to sell the fingernails of saints and feathers of archangel Gabriel, worked to get this superstition officially prohibited in 1845, 1860, 1896, 1915, and 1942, but the people just didn't get the message.



# OUR ETERNAL GRATITUDE

goes out to the following extraordinarily generous and thoughtful subscribers who provided for *The Progressive* in their wills or trusts over the last few years. During their lifetimes, they were committed to the cause of peace and social justice, and we pledge to carry on for them.

Sincerely,



Matthew Rothschild

Editor and Publisher, *The Progressive*, on behalf of the entire staff

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But for a number of years now, Christian evangelical groups have taken up the war against superstition in Haiti. They come from the United States where some buildings do not have thirteenth floors and a significant percentage of the people believe that God made the Earth in seven days.

In the United States, evangelical preacher Pat Robertson explained the 2010 earthquake with the revelation that Haitians' victory over France was the result of voodoo because they sought the help of Satan deep in the heart of the Haitian woods. The devil helped them out but then caused the earthquake to even the score.

**A**t present, the armies of many countries, including my own, continue to occupy Haiti. How was this military invasion justified? By claiming that Haiti was a danger to international security.

Nothing new there.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the example of Haiti was seen as a threat to the security of all countries that continued to practice slavery. Thomas Jefferson said it: Haiti was the source of the plague of rebellion. In South Carolina, for example, it was legal to imprison any black sailor while his boat was in port because of the risk that he might infect others with the anti-slavery contagion. In Brazil, this plague was actually called Haitianism.

In the twentieth century, Haiti was invaded by the Marines for being an unsafe country for its foreign creditors. The invaders started by taking over customs operations, seizing the National Bank of Haiti, and turning it over to City Bank of New York. And since they were there already, they decided to stay another nineteen years.

**H**ow many years will foreign soldiers stay in Haiti? They came to stabilize the situation and provide assistance but they have spent seven years destabilizing and hampering aid

efforts in a country that doesn't want them there.

The military occupation of Haiti is costing the United Nations more than \$800 million a year.

If the U.N. directed these funds toward technical cooperation and social solidarity, it might provide Haiti with a real push to develop its own creative energies and so save the people from their armed saviors, who have a tendency to rape, kill, and spread fatal illnesses.

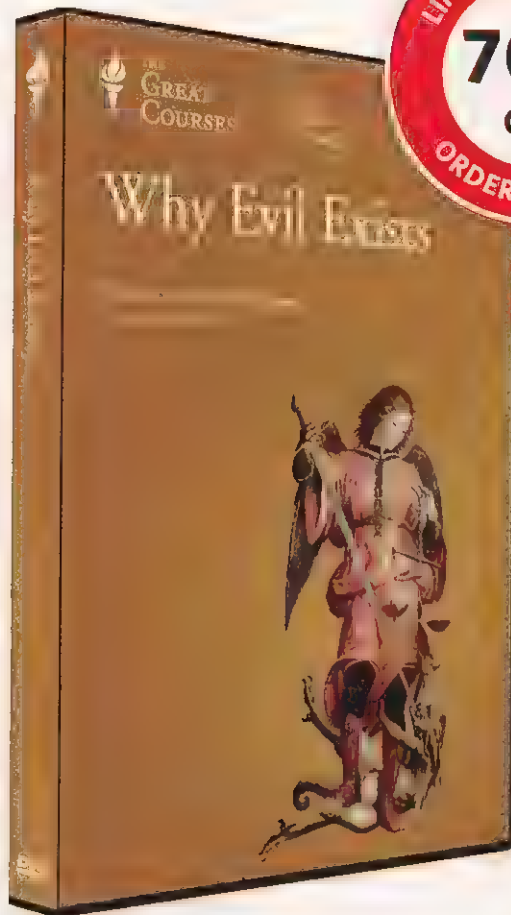
The last thing Haiti needs is people to multiply its disasters. Nor does it need anyone's charity. As an old

**The armies of many  
countries, shamefully  
including my own,  
continue to  
occupy Haiti.**

African proverb put it, the hand that gives is always above the hand that receives.

But Haiti does need solidarity, doctors, schools, hospitals, and real collaboration that will make it possible to regain its ability to feed itself, which was destroyed by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other philanthropic organizations.

We Latin Americans owe Haiti this solidarity. It would be the best way to thank this great small nation that in 1804 threw open the doors of liberty for us with its contagious example. ♦



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By Edwidge Danticat  
Illustration by Nicole Schulman

# Anniversary Blues



Anniversaries hurt. They brutalize the body. They pummel the spirit. Especially the anniversary of a catastrophe, where we are remembering the death not just of one or two people, but hundreds of thousands: 300,000 to be precise. Just when we thought our pain had subsided, it emerges again, it expands from a daily ache, which we hoped would one day disappear, to the throbbing agony we experienced at the moment that it seemed the world ended.

Two years ago in Haiti, the Earth opened, buildings collapsed, and people died. Armies descended, displaying military might worthy of a war zone. A flock of nongovernmental agencies came, too, growing from an estimated 10,000 to 16,000, making Haiti host to more nongovernmental organizations per capita than almost any other country in the world. Money was pledged by the world's powers,

---

*Edwidge Danticat is a fiction writer, essayist, and memoirist. In 2011, she edited "Haiti Noir" and "Best American Essays."*

great and small, \$9.9 billion worth of promises, with less than half of that actually delivered.

Two years ago, I watched all this unfold from my home in Miami, mostly with an infant in my arms. Three weeks later, when I was finally able to travel to Haiti, my chest nearly exploded in spite of the pumping and bottling one must do when away from a nursing baby. During that first trip, seeing so many people—including friends and family members—sleeping on the streets, in the shadows of shattered houses, cramped next to each other in public places in makeshift tents, I dreaded the first rain.

Since then lots and lots of rain has fallen. Even a hurricane has blown through.

Two years worth of rain and sun has thinned out the tents. Wherever they could, people abandoned the pretense of temporary shelter and converted cloth and tarp to tin and wood, even where the land was not theirs. Some have been forcibly evicted. Gunmen have come in at night—some sent by private landowners, others by the state.

You will hear that the number of the displaced has been reduced in half since the earthquake, that it has shrunk from 1.5 million to 600,000, but you will not hear where the displaced have gone.

In a devastated city of mostly renters, where unemployment is at nearly 60 percent, the displaced have been accused of purposefully squatting in squalor, living in open spaces where the heat dehydrates babies, and women and girls are raped, supposedly just to catch the attention of nongovernmental organizations. As if they had mansions that they were neglecting, hidden food and water that was going to waste, schools for their children that they were hoping to trade up for a better one, as if they had anything but their dignity left intact.

Then came the cholera. Imported by Nepali peacekeepers, who

disposed of their waste in a tributary of rivers at the heart of Haiti's breadbasket, cholera has now killed an estimated 7,000 people and could affect a million more. Cholera is now considered endemic in a country where it was not known to exist in the past. Since then, some Haitian and American lawyers have filed a lawsuit against the United Nations on behalf of the victims, demanding compensation for the sick and the dead. The ever-increasing number of cholera deaths and the videotaped rape of a young man by Uruguayan peacekeepers and other abuses led to increased public outcry over the seven-year presence of the United Nations in Haiti, inspiring countrywide demonstrations calling for the end of the occupation.

An election took place. A well-known musician with no previous political experience became president in a two-round controversial election. His desire to rebuild an army with a legacy of coups and human rights violations inspired former Costa Rican president and Nobel laureate Oscar Arias to write him an open letter. "In Latin America," Arias wrote, "most armies are enemies of development, enemies of peace and freedom."

Even the United States, which created the Haitian army during its occupation of Haiti between 1915 and 1934 and trained many of the recent generals at the School of the Americas, agreed. It would not fund a new Haitian army, it said. The president formed a committee to study the question. On January 1, the 208th anniversary of Haiti's independence from France, the committee approved the new army, the president announced.

Two former Haitian presidents returned from exile: one, the first democratically elected president of the country; the other, the heir to a thirty-year dictatorship. Individual photo ops by the current president with both men seemed conciliatory

but appeared also to equalize the two. The dream of a round table consisting of all of Haiti's former leaders was floated.

**T**he future seems to be all about business. "Haiti is open for business" is at the heart of the rebranding of post-earthquake Haiti. But is this going to be business at all cost, pennies-per-hour wages in harsh and inhumane conditions? Will workers desperate for jobs, any job, have any say? Will unions be allowed?

The future also seems to be all about tourism. We yearn for Haiti to become once again the Pearl of the Antilles. However, when it was the Pearl of the Antilles, most of our ancestors were slaves. They were not the ones benefiting from the bounty of that pearl.

Will Haitians benefit from this new tourism or will we become the newest foot servants to the world's well heeled? We need new models inspired by our visit-worthy historical sites whose walls crackle with heroism and pride, tales of endurance and victories against humiliation and impossible odds.

The majority of Haitians live those odds every day. They are, as the writer Langston Hughes said, perhaps symbolically, perhaps literally, the people without shoes. People "whose feet walked the dusty roads to market in the early morning, or trod softly on the bare floors of hotels, serving foreign guests . . . All of the work that kept Haiti alive, paid interest on American loans, and enriched foreign traders, was done by people without shoes."

Yet these people are rarely sitting at decision-making tables. There is rarely a representative of grassroots rural sectors in the international commissions and panels that will decide the future of the country.

Agriculture, the rural man and woman's main livelihood and the key to the country's internal survival and sustainability, deserves as much attention as hotels and factories. We

have ten million mouths to feed, and there are farmers in Arkansas and Vietnam, even in the neighboring Dominican Republic, eager to feed them. We used to be able to feed ourselves before the United States inundated Haiti with cheap rice and before the U.S. Food and Drug Administration destroyed 400,000 native Haitian pigs in the 1980s. It takes weeks, months, to grow local livestock but hours to fly chopped meat in from Miami.

In the past two years, Haiti has also become a mecca for salvation. Before any other kind of tourism takes hold, we have plenty of what the London-based Haitian American writer Isabel Dupuy calls redemption tourists.

"We have become professional beggars," Dupuy wrote in a September 6, 2011, opinion piece for *The*

*New York Times*, "stretching out our hands and showing our wounds to these saviors from fortunate lands. And in exchange for your money and your help, Haiti offers immediate, terrorist-free access to a version of a human condition near home." We should perhaps quote aboriginal activist Lila Watson to all our tourists—redemption, disaster, or otherwise: "If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is tied with mine, then let us work together."

Still, the human condition always demands that the conscientious do more. Sometimes it can feel as though none of us is doing enough. That feeling, especially among those of us children of Haiti who are living in the diaspora, is the opposite of

donor fatigue. It is sometimes hope and sometimes guilt. Hundreds of friends and family members rely on us. We finance homes, clinics, schools, weddings, and funerals, but there is always more to do for, and with, people who are eager to get a foothold themselves and do so proudly every day.

On this anniversary, while remembering the dead and celebrating those still living, I also want to recognize more than ever the marginalized members of Haitian society—people like my grandparents and their grandparents, poor, urban and rural, self-reliant and proud men and women who are the backbone of Haiti. Without their full inclusion and participation in the reconstruction of their country, Haiti will never fully succeed. ♦

# Leave a legacy

Help perpetuate your commitment to peace and social justice. Include *The Progressive* in your will. Bequests and life insurance proceeds to *The Progressive* are tax-deductible. Any gift, large or small, helps us remain independent and not for profit. For more information on including *The Progressive* in your will or life insurance policy, or to inform us that *The Progressive* is already mentioned in your will, please contact us.

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FIRST PERSON SINGULAR  
*by Lawrence Egbert*

# A Doctor's Proper Job

I believe that adults have a basic human right to end their lives when they suffer from a fatal or irreversible illness or intractable pain—when their quality of life is unacceptable, and the future holds only hopelessness and misery. I have believed that for years, and I have been doing something about it.

I joined the Hemlock Society, and afterward helped create the Final Exit Network. I became its first medical director, taking on the task of evaluating persons who wished to exercise the right to end life when life was no longer bearable.

For this work, I was arrested and put in jail. I am now out on \$60,000 bail. Being put in jail gets your attention, I can tell you. I once asked anti-nuclear activist Sam Day what it was like being in jail six

months. He laughed and said it was best to have a good reason to do that.

I have good reasons.

I've listened to the grim stories of persons with incurable diseases such as cancer, Lou Gehrig's disease, and emphysema. I've cared for them. And I've comforted them while guiding them towards the end of their suffering.

I remember Mary, who was injured in an auto accident and broke her back. She suffered excruciating back pain for eight years, every time she moved or coughed or even sneezed. But she had a lot of morphine pills, so I advised her. One day, in my presence, Mary began swallowing her morphine pills, three at a time, washing them down with a sip of fancy chardonnay. My colleague and I sat quietly. Then I

---

*Lawrence Egbert is a retired professor and practitioner of anesthesiology who served as the medical director for the Final Exit Network from its founding until his arrest in 2009. He was acquitted in Arizona and is engaged in a legal battle in Georgia. For information, go to [www.finalexitnetwork.org](http://www.finalexitnetwork.org).*



noticed Mary was smiling. She burst out of her morphine haze and said, "I haven't smiled in ten years with all that pain!"

It was wonderful telling Mary that the pain was now going to be gone forever. She smiled even more and swallowed three more pills, and three more, and three more, until she stopped.

I remember a patient with cancer spread to her bones and liver. She was a psychiatrist. She was quite aware that her weakness and weight loss meant that she was going to die. Although she could put up with the pain, she wanted control over herself.

"You know," she said when we had finished greetings, "I have been an atheist most of my adult life but . . ." She was quiet a moment, and then said, "God bless you." We were laughing through the sadness as she took her medicine.

We who are guides for the Final Exit Network often are invited into the intimate story of family life and caring. One patient had suffered with a nasty case of Huntington's chorea for fifteen years.

He was an attorney who began to twitch when he was in his thirties. His walking became unsteady; later, muscles all over his body would jerk irregularly. He had to quit his law practice but had struggled along until it became unbearable. We asked him how his family felt about his hastening death. His wife sadly agreed; he had put up with more than enough. She would sit with him while he died. His son felt the same, but his daughter was not sure. Would she hold his hand as he breathed his last or would she leave the house and not see this? Her parents and her brother did not want to put pressure on her to decide, so when we arrived at their home, the choice was still up in the air.

We needed to sort out her mixed emotions. Her choices were clear. She could stay with her father while he died or she could leave the room. If she stayed, she would remember all the rest of her life what he looked like

as he died. If she left, she would remember not being with him then. She went off for a few minutes, and we waited.

When she came back into the room, she said she would stay with

make decisions when the choices were devastating and complicated.

It has been an honor to be invited into their homes as a physician.

It has been sad to be near so much pain.



KOREN SHADMI

us. I asked her to stabilize her father's right shoulder; her brother was holding the left and her mother his ankles. She stopped us then, and said she would like to say something. She read a eulogy for her father: what a nice man he was; how courageous to struggle with the dread disease; how decent he had been for them all. We all began to cry. Still to this day, remembering her courage, I get tears in my eyes.

I have been with almost 100 patients as they died. It has been a time to witness courage, to be part of family agonies, sharing the need to

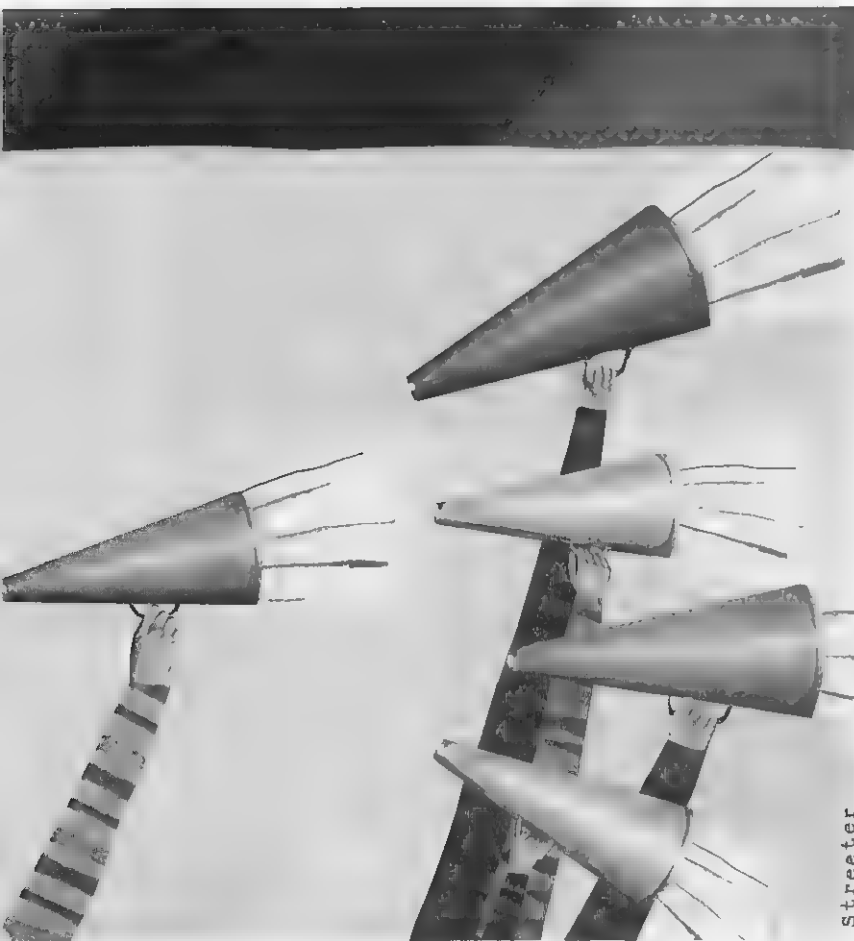
I believe what I do is a proper job for physicians. They do it legally in Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and here in Montana, Oregon, and Washington.

I cherish this quotation from U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis: The makers of the Constitution "conferred, as against the government, the right to be let alone—the most comprehensive of rights and the right most valued by civilized men."

Let me alone, and I will do my own deciding about how I die, when, and where. ♦

By Breanna Lembitz  
*Illustration by Katherine Streeter*

# A Taste of Freedom: *What I got at Occupy Wall Street*



streeter

On the night of September 24, 2011, I was sitting at my kitchen table at college checking my Facebook. Everyone was talking about a viral YouTube video of three women who had gotten pepper-sprayed earlier that day at Occupy Wall Street. I quickly found the live stream and began intently watching. I wanted to be there. I left the next morning.

I remember getting out of the subway that first Sunday. My smartphone told me I was two blocks away but I heard and saw nothing: Had I missed my opportunity to participate in economic change? I remember almost turning around, but deciding to go until I had at least seen Zuccotti Park itself.

It was smaller than I expected; the live stream had made it seem as if thousands of people were there. What I saw was fifty or so people milling around. I walked up to one and said, "Hi, I just got here."

"Cool," he said, and just smiled.

I walked a little bit farther and asked someone else

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*Breanna Lembitz is a twenty-one-year-old student at Clark University. She is majoring in economics and political science and will be graduating in May.*

what I could do.

"Well, you can put your stuff wherever you want; no one has been stealing anything," he said. "In fact, when there is money on the ground, people will hold it up and ask who it belongs to. You should try checking in with the info desk. They know what's going on."

I walked over to the info desk, which was one man sitting at a table with a sign that said Info. He told me the medics needed help and the kitchen always needed people.

I followed his pointing and found the medical team, which was about to have a meeting.

I had brought a comforter, a yoga mat, and a pillow. That night, I laid down my bedding and put a tarp over myself and slept on the ground. It was cold and hard. It took a couple nights to get used to, but this way of sleeping became the norm for the first few weeks. Where I slept would get soaked each time it rained. I would wake up freezing, in puddles of standing water, with no way to dry myself. I started taking the medical night shifts when it rained. Those nights all I saw were mental health issues and hypothermia.

I watched the numbers in the tiny park increase dramatically; people came from everywhere and squeezed themselves in. It got to a point where there was no longer space to sleep on the ground. Some people simply sat in their spot all day to ensure they would have a place to sleep at night.

I regularly attended the nightly general assemblies at the park, and I gave medical report-backs. They were usually things like, "Hey/ I'm Bre/ I'm on medical/ We help you stay healthy/ We have vitamins/ and earplugs/ come get some!" (The breaks between words and phrases represent the pauses I made in order to effectively use the human mic—the relay system for communicating at Occupy Wall Street, where members of the audience repeat the speaker's words and pass them on.)

I realized that anyone who was not

attending the general assembly had no idea what was going on. I wanted people, like the medics who were often on shift during the general assembly, to be able to read a report of what had happened there the night before. I found a dry erase board and a marker, and took notes of all the announcements and report-backs that were made. I continued to take notes and post them on the erase board for about a week. One day, the facilitation group asked me to facilitate.

I was terrified; I have always been a little afraid of public speaking, and this meant standing in front of 200 people and structuring their conversation. I started by explaining what our process was, and anytime anyone strayed from that process I would try to bring them back on track. The more the process worked, the more confident I became. The group then recruited me to facilitate again until I ended up facilitating a meeting of a couple thousand people.

I started hearing rumors about the finance team within the camp. I decided to offer my services so that I could find out what was going on with them. I followed them around and did the grunt work until they trusted me enough to come to the meetings. The meetings were brutal: hours of a bunch of big angry men screaming at each other while counting money.

The first couple weeks of being on the finance team meant counting, by hand, thousands of dollars in cash in sketchy locations and carrying it around in trash bags. It meant being screamed at by everyone on the finance team because I apparently did not understand. It meant being screamed at by the people in the park because they did not understand what was happening with the money. I would also sleep in the park with thousands of dollars in cash in my coat so that I could give the kitchen its money for the day early in the morning. Luckily, I lived next to the medical team and thus had what

became the equivalent of twenty-four-hour security guards.

The finance job was terrible, my facilitation job began to be criticized, and soon the only noncontroversial thing I could do was help out with the medical team. There was a point in time when I was working from 8 a.m. to 1 a.m. every day. But I could see the real impact we were beginning to make, and I was falling in love.

I met my current boyfriend in the occupation. Being one of the few young single girls staying in the park in the early days, I got a lot of attention. Had it not been for my medical brothers, I don't think I would have felt safe enough to stay in the park long term. I had decided that it was a bad idea to date anyone in the occupation, and made this very clear.

But my boyfriend was sneaky. He figured out that I was a vegetarian and started bringing me food that had non-meat forms of protein. He was constantly checking in on me. He heard me complaining about how water had soaked through my boots, so he found me a waterproof pair that fit.

**O**n November 15, we lay in the tent laughing, trying to figure out if we were going to go get food. I commented on how strange it was that we had been living in a park for seven weeks. It all seemed so surreal. The air was calm and still except for muffled conversations.

Suddenly, there were screams. "Oh, my God! Get out of your tents! Emergency! Emergency! Get out of your tents now!" The feeling of peace and calm disappeared instantly as people all moved to ready themselves.

We bolted upright. I grabbed my backpack. Inside were two bottles of liquid antacid solution to wash pepper spray out of people's eyes, a gas mask I had borrowed from a friend, a bag of cosmetics, and a change of clothes. I ripped the bag of cosmetics out and replaced it with a purse that had books, notepads, and my cell

phone charger in it. I slung the bag over my shoulders, pulled on my sneakers, and had the gas mask ready. I was wearing jeans, a T-shirt, a sweatshirt, and the same faux leather jacket with duct-taped red crosses on it that I had been wearing practically the whole time there.

Stepping out of the tent, I saw chaos everywhere. People were scared and running around with sticks. Some built blockades to prevent the police from entering the park; others started chanting and waving their sticks around in the air. Some occupiers stood motionless, unsure of what to do. The park was completely lit up and surrounded by police. A loudspeaker was blaring unintelligible announcements, and an officer was shouting through a bullhorn trying to serve eviction notices to anyone who would take them.

One of the members of the direct action team told me they had a plan; we needed to move everyone toward the center of the park and hold the kitchen. The cops were systematically moving through the park, tearing open tents and shaking their contents onto the ground, including the occasional terrified and bleary-eyed person. Their procession ended in a line about fifty feet in front of the kitchen.

A white-shirted cop reached for his megaphone. He warned members of the press that if they did not leave immediately, they would be subject to arrest. They looked confused. Why should they leave? What were the police planning on doing that could not be filmed? Some of the press left; a couple individuals started shouting at the police, and some huddled low, hiding behind a line of protesters.

We were singing songs, including the national anthem. We were chanting. We were making speeches. We were terrified and resolved at the same time. Eventually, the cops pushed us into a little circle around the kitchen and waited. Soon a group of men in green suits showed up and started tearing apart the park, picking

up anything and everything they found and moving it quickly into dumpsters.

I watched as a huge truck pulled into the park. A crazy circular thing appeared on the top of it, and it began emitting weird, alien-like noises—noises that sounded like a mix of an announcement, a skipping record, and a swarm of insects.

Someone screamed about it being a sound cannon, and we all cowered and covered our ears. Someone else had found a bag of garlic and started handing it out, explaining that if we got tear-gassed, we should bite down on it and it would make us feel better. I was skeptical but took a clove

**There was a point in time when I was working from 8 a.m. to 1 a.m. every day. But I could see the real impact we were beginning to make.**

for good measure anyway.

On my right arm was a terrified woman. She had placed a plastic crate over her head for “protection against pepper spray or tear gas.” She offered to share but I chose my gas mask. She had tears in her eyes as she explained that she did not have a home, this was her home, they were taking it from her, and she had nowhere else to be. She frantically locked down with my arms and said, “Don’t let go.”

Then the police officers were upon us. They began ripping us apart, dragging first one then another protester. I watched as one man

refused to lie with his face on the ground. The officer pushed him down, took his arm, and twisted it over three hundred and sixty degrees. The man laid there, motionless, his broken arm limp behind him.

Off on my right someone was screaming as an officer dealt him blows. My arrest was relatively painless in comparison. A couple officers rolled me over and cuffed me with plastic zip-ties, then stood me up. I tried to move forward to grab my bag, but the officer held the ends of my zip-ties so that when I moved away, my cuffs tightened. He then handed me off to another officer who escorted me out, and finally I was left to stand on the curb. The policewoman behind me told me to get down, and I asked her why. She shoved me and said, “It’s been a long time since I’ve drawn blood, if you want to keep playing cute.”

My cuffs were so tight I could not feel my fingers, so I asked to be recuffed. The officers heard my request and looked away. Eventually they brought over a woman cop who informed me that she would be my arresting officer. She was in charge of three young women and took us on to a bus.

In the bus, I asked again to be recuffed and was told that the officers did not have the tool to cut cuffs off. I could not sit down because of the pain, so I leaned with my feet on the ground and the back of my neck against the chair. Eventually, they got the clippers and did recuff all the white people who asked, but they had to be encouraged to recuff anyone else, specifically one woman whose hands were turning blue.

We were told we would be in the bus for five to ten minutes. We ended up being in there for more than two hours, and we spent that time singing freedom songs: “We Shall Overcome,” “Lay Down My Sword and Shield,” “This Little Light of Mine,” and “Three Little Birds,” among them.

When we were finally let out of

the buses, we were taken to a concrete yard at 1 Police Plaza. There were two lines, one for females, one for males. Each line of people would stop at a desk where we were asked for our names, addresses, and dates of birth.

From there we were moved into our cells. On the walk down the hallway, one of the white shirts turned to another officer and said, "Oh look, you brought me breakfast. So who's doing the searches on these ladies, huh?" They all laughed.

The cell I was put in had a plank, a stainless toilet, and a ceramic sink. It was around the corner from the rest of the protesters and was freezing. I was there with two other girls, and we all curled up and slept. Two of us took the fetal position and fit end to end on the plank, and the third slept on the ground. She woke up shivering so we all huddled around her on the plank to warm her up.

I awoke to a cough that would not quit. I tried to suppress it, but it would not listen. I was doubled over and could not breathe. I reached in my pocket, vainly hoping for something, and found the clove of garlic. I chewed it up raw and immediately felt better, warmer, and more alive.

Upon waking, I also discovered that the guards had brought bags of cheese sandwiches and paper cups for water. The bread was dry and flaky, and the American cheese left much to be desired, but I was cold, bored, and hungry, and ate them quickly, washing them down with water. When I later found out that other girls in the cell had not been given food, I felt guilty that I had eaten so quickly. I learned to eat only as much as I needed and save the rest in case others didn't get enough.

We all began mic checking to figure out what time it was, what news we had from the outside world, who all was in cells with us, and anything else we could think to mic check about. The beauty of the mic check is

that it is impossible to shut up the idea once it has been spoken. It automatically involves everyone and is extremely successful at sending concise bits of information.

We sang, we drummed on the walls, we did yoga, but it got old. The cells were small and the toilets were completely exposed to the outside world. Male officers would walk in and could see into the females' stalls. They acted as if they thought it was funny.

After a number of songs and hours, they brought us out to be processed. Walking out meant that we went by the male occupiers' cell. The guys were all held in one large room that had windows on all sides and benches inside. It even looked like it might have had carpet.

It seemed so much more fun than where we were. I found out later that they had held a general assembly and had crafted a statement about why they were there. This statement was the source of a new chant, one that we would use a lot throughout the next days: "We are unstoppable, another world is possible." Each and every time a comrade walked by, everyone would cheer. It was beautiful and made the cells bearable.

I went to get fingerprinted. I watched a girl standing in front of the camera. She told the officers she was sixteen. One officer turned to the other and said, "No wonder they are getting raped down there."

I was appalled and disgusted. I was so shocked that I couldn't say anything. I finished getting my fingerprints done and walked back to the jail cell and stayed there for a number of hours more. Eventually, our arresting officer came to pull us out of the cells. After almost twelve hours, I was excited to leave.

We arrived at 100 Centre Street, where we found more protesters, who were all singing "99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall."

Initially, I thought singing "99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall" was fun, but after a couple verses, it got

annoying. Then some of the protesters stopped singing and made an announcement:

"Mic Check"

"Mic Check"

"We are singing"

"We are singing"

"Because \*\*\*\*\* has a medical condition"

"Because \*\*\*\*\* has a medical condition"

"and needs to use the bathroom."

"and needs to use the bathroom."

"She has been asking for over an hour"

"She has been asking for over an hour"

"So we will continue singing"

"So we will continue singing"

"Until she can use the bathroom."

"Until she can use the bathroom."

At around 21 bottles of beer on the wall, she was given the opportunity to use the bathroom.

At one point, we were led into a cave-like room. In the center of the room was a desk, behind which sat a TV and a number of computers.

The TV was, ironically, broadcasting footage of the raid. It was heartening to know that what the police did was no secret and that people on the outside were standing up for us.

Eventually, after thirty-six hours in jail, I was arraigned. I walked out of the jail into a cold drizzle and collapsed among a number of my fellow occupiers.

**M**y outlook on the movement is that it will continue but this winter we won't see much coming out of it. Everyone is organizing for big events and actions in the spring.

My fellow occupiers have all had a taste of freedom, a taste of respect, and we have seen what can still be accomplished by such a small group of people. We held the attention of the world for months, and we will continue to educate and mobilize people, and the people themselves will continue to build communities. We have a power that refuses to quit. ♦

By Arun Gupta and Michelle Fawcett  
Illustration by Jeffrey Alan Love

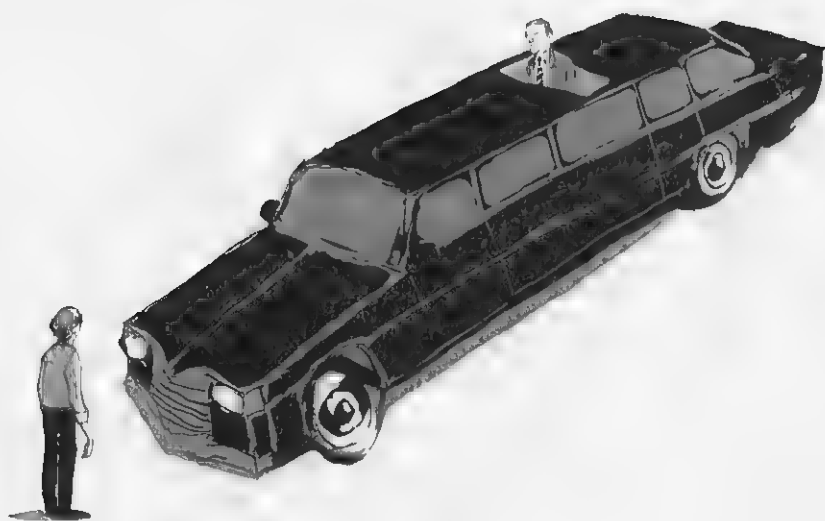
# Inside the Occupy Movement

Along the rutted roads in Youngstown, Ohio's factory district, cavernous brick and concrete shells crumble, a decaying testament to this city's industrial past. Among the few signs of activity are billows of diesel exhaust pouring from a demolition yard where concrete slabs are being pounded into rubble. In some neighborhoods, empty lots outnumber inhabited homes.

Occupy Youngstown planted its roots in this ravaged soil. On October 15, in the shadow of three different banks, historian and peace activist Staughton Lynd spoke at Occupy Youngstown's inaugural rally, which drew more than 400 people. One of those people was Chuck Kettering Jr., an aspiring actor who was unemployed for a year before recently snagging a

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*Arun Gupta is a founder of The Independent and the Occupied Wall Street Journal and is writing a book on the decline of the American empire for Haymarket Books. Michelle Fawcett is adjunct professor of Media, Culture, and Communications at New York University. They are covering the Occupy movement nationwide for Salon.com.*



position as a bartender at a local Mexican restaurant.

"We were once a huge steel city for America," says the twenty-seven-year-old Kettering. "In the 1970s, they started closing up all our steel mills, taking all the jobs and shipping them down south and overseas where labor is cheaper. Youngstown's been a city that has been going through this economic struggle for almost forty years now."

His family is living proof of the toll of deindustrialization. His father, Chuck Kettering Sr., fifty-six, calls himself "the poster boy for the Rust Belt." In 1973, he landed a job in the blast furnace division at U.S. Steel's Mahoning Valley Ohio Works. After that closed shop in 1979, he transferred to another U.S. Steel facility near Cleveland, which shuttered in the early 1980s. In 1985, he was hired by Packard Electric, a parts manufacturer for General Motors that was later acquired by Delphi Automotive Systems. His wife also worked at Packard but was forced into retirement by Delphi after thirty years and saw her pension sliced in half.

A few years after Delphi sank into bankruptcy in 2005, Kettering and some co-workers were given a one-time option: Stay on board Delphi with half rations—their pay would be squeezed from \$28 to \$16 an hour, with similar cuts in other benefits—or jump ship to GM and keep their wages, benefits, and pensions intact.

"It was a no-brainer," he says. But when he arrived at GM's Lordstown plant, he was stunned to find himself "starting at the bottom, working alongside twenty-one-year-olds and trying to keep up on the line." Soon he was in "excruciating pain" from repetitive stress injuries.

"They tell me I should be happy I have a job and that I should grin and bear it," he says. "But with these companies it's never enough. Bitterness can set in when you've given your all to these companies and they slap you down. It's all about the dol-

lars. That's why I've encouraged my son to join the Occupy movement. And that's why my wife and I joined."

Through the Occupy movement, the Kettering family has found hope amid despair. It is a remarkable story but hardly unique.

**O**ver two months this fall, we visited nearly thirty occupations in twenty states and discovered a movement of profound

### **The Occupation created mini-societies in public spaces without relying on money as an exchange and with full democratic participation.**

passion, diversity, and determination. We interviewed unemployed youth and retired professors, communists and conservatives, children of ranchers and farmworkers, small-business owners and homeless people, veterans and anarchists, and factory workers, doctors, teachers, and nurses.

Their stories and viewpoints are wildly divergent, but they are drawn to the protests for similar reasons: The Occupy movement is, at heart,

about democracy, empowerment, and fairness.

"This occupation is taking a lot of small voices and creating a larger unified voice," says Ashley Hanisko, an employee with JPMorgan Chase who flew from Texas to join Occupy Wall Street. "We are fighting this idea that you are expendable if you are not wealthy. And if you are not wealthy, it's through some fault of your own."

Standing on the Legislative Plaza in Nashville, Michael Anger, who left his job as a salesman for ADT Security to join the Occupy movement, echoed this sentiment. "Everyone standing out here," he says, "gives voice back to the people."

The desire for a unified voice, combined with the novel political form of occupying public spaces, sparked movements in more than 1,000 U.S. towns and cities in mere weeks. For the public camps to function, they had to provide for the needs of daily life, such as food, bedding, shelter, medical care, and education. This meant developing into mini-societies, but with two essential differences from the broader society.

First, the societies re-created themselves on a daily basis without the need, at least internally, to exchange money for goods or services. And for many, this experience of genuine community was an awe-inspiring inversion of their normal existence.

"The main thing we hope to accomplish here is building community," said Leo Zimmerman, a twenty-three-year-old web copywriter working in the open-air kitchen at Occupy Baltimore. "You're talking to people you wouldn't normally talk to, sharing resources, and trying to form a new society."

Second, consensus decision-making has allowed tens of thousands to participate in running these societies as equal citizens, not just as one-dimensional consumers.

"Everyone has a fair and equal say," observes Phillip Schlicher, a thirty-one-year-old "military brat"

who is about to enter college, as he speaks to us at the social media tent at Occupy Nashville, one of the best organized sites in the country.

Michael Custer, a forty-six-year-old line cook in Nashville, is a musician and father of four children. "This movement is providing an alternative to every form of government that is out there," he says. "It's called consensus. All of these people are practicing legislating."

In Philadelphia, Daniel, who works at a children's hospital researching the use of stem cells in treating leukemia, was volunteering with the occupation to see how "direct democracy, while slow, can work on a local scale."

By practicing democracy in public at the local level, the occupations reclaimed the commons, which, over time, had been usurped by shopping, entertainment, spectacle, and all manner of consumption. As shared, non-commodified, public enterprises, the occupations represent a rejection of the private, of individualism, and of capitalism.

"Let's face it, public space is controlled by the state and business and their nexus together," says Sarah Wild, a forty-four-year-old arts educator, at the site of regular protests near the Chicago Board of Trade. "By physically being here and being with each other, we're saying that we do not agree to that."

Anyone who thinks this movement doesn't have a clear agenda has not been paying attention: It is foremost against the concentration of power and wealth. The 1 percent is interchangeable with Wall Street. Both precipitated the economic crisis and then profited from the bailouts, while the rest of the country plunged into Depression-like conditions. Along with the poor and homeless, who are in evidence at many occupations, are members of the former middle class who are on the abyss of poverty. And they know who is to blame.

We've heard hundreds of heart-breaking variations of the same story: people who worked hard and played by the rules but are now barely scraping by.

Joan Starr, a retired educator from New York City whom I encountered in Zuccotti Park, told me her son who is a union electrician "cannot get work because companies are using low-paid, nonunion labor." She says his house has been foreclosed upon, and "my grandchildren are on food stamps, growing up in poverty." Starr

**"The homeless are part of the movement; they are fitting in." . . . But they don't always fit in seamlessly.**

directs her fury at Wall Street: "Corporations have never had more money in their coffers. Banks got all this bailout money, my tax money, and I never had a say. My husband and I are just hanging on by a thread. We have a small pension and Social Security that we paid into for forty years and now they act like we are on the dole. We bought into the American Dream and got fucked over."

Cyndi Tiferet, a fifty-three-year-old mother of four adult children who has been part of Occupy Boise from day one, says she and her hus-

band are doubled up with relatives. They lost their home after she was laid off and her husband's law practice went on the skids because of the downturn.

"I have done manual labor and tried getting office work with no success," says Steven Soto, a twenty-five-year-old unemployed college graduate who joined a protest organized by Occupy Houston on November 17. "I have thousands in student debt that I can't pay and am living with my parents."

The Occupy movement has also distinguished itself by embracing the lower class. "By its language and actions, it has reached out to the poor," says sociologist Frances Fox Piven, co-author of the groundbreaking *Poor People's Movements*. "To live out of doors, to link arms with the poor, and to share food with the poor is a major advance. And to make extreme inequality the central focus is really significant."

At Grand Circus Park in downtown Detroit, where the occupation took up residence before moving indoors in December, most people on a Saturday afternoon in the fall appeared to be without a home. "It seems like 90 percent of the people who eat at the kitchen are homeless," Jim Rehberg, a sixty-three-year-old worker at an automotive chemical factory and a Wobbly, told me while stirring a steaming cauldron of vegetable soup. "The homeless are part of the movement; they are fitting in."

But they don't always fit in seamlessly.

"There were definitely tensions with the homeless community and the occupiers at first," says Jane, an unemployed holistic therapist who is active with Occupy Detroit. "They didn't really want us here. They thought we were being pompous, and we were just a bunch of white kids from the suburbs when most of us are from Detroit. But we let them know we're here in solidarity."



At Occupy Pittsburgh, John Paylor, a fifty-eight-year-old homeless Marine Corps veteran who helps manage the supply tents, says the homeless regularly come in and get free food. "This is a drug- and alcohol-free zone," he says. "There are no altercations. Once in a while tempers flare, but everyone's getting along."

At the other extreme is New Orleans, a city physically, socially, and psychologically devastated. The occupation in Duncan Plaza, in front of City Hall, put a spotlight on the Big Easy's human toll. But the poverty, homelessness, and mental illness almost overwhelmed the occupation. At one point, campers formed small villages for protection. Taylor, a traveling musician who hitched his way from Texas to the camp, says it was normal to hear people yelling, "I will kill you, muthafucka!" Thomas Allen, who helped organize the camp while it existed, describes New Orleans as post-apocalyptic and admitted violence remains an issue, but said it was improving. "There is only one fistfight a night," he says, "whereas earlier four or five had been the norm."

**T**he Occupy movement is constantly evolving. In Portland on the morning of December 6, members of Occupy Portland joined with We Are Oregon and Unsettle Portland to defend two homeowners on the brink of eviction. One activist called it "the natural evolution of Occupy Wall Street." On the same day occupation activists in thirty other cities rallied to the defense of the foreclosed upon or moved families into empty houses, according to Michael Premo, an organizer with Occupy Wall Street.

Then on December 12, up and down the West Coast from Southern California to Alaska, members of the Occupy movement tried to shut down ports, showing significant success in Oakland and shutting down terminals in Oregon and Washington.

The hunger for a different world is what keeps the occupations going. In Denver, a few dozen occupiers were hanging on after Thanksgiving despite enduring five separate police assaults. The aggression had taken its toll; Saturday marches had dwindled from thousands to a few hundred. But the passion remained.

On the Sunday after Thanksgiving, Dwayne Hudson, a fifty-one-year-old Denver native, was spending his fiftieth straight day at the occupation. He had been living on the

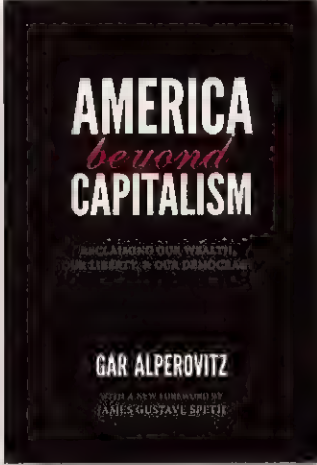
**The hunger for a different world is what keeps the occupations going. They offer a festival of true democracy.**

streets for more than six months after serving a seven-year sentence for dealing crack. An autodidact who quotes Erich Fromm and Nietzsche, Hudson says the movement has "given me courage and boosted my self-esteem. The fear for a person like me with felonies is that you could have something to offer but nobody will accept it. You've got this stigma. You're this modern-day leper. Here's a place where I can serve and know that I'm connected to a movement of conscious awareness."

The Occupy movement has given

courage to millions of people. The challenge now is how to sustain itself after the police uprooted the encampments around the country. Those encampments not only created the compelling theater of new societies in the making. They also offered a festival of true democracy that attracted so many people who hadn't previously been engaged in politics.

As long as the movement, wherever it reasserts itself, retains this sense of festival and this dedication to a new form of direct democracy, it will continue to grow and inspire. ♦



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REAL WORLD ECONOMICS

By Barbara Kingsolver

Illustration by Mike Flugennock

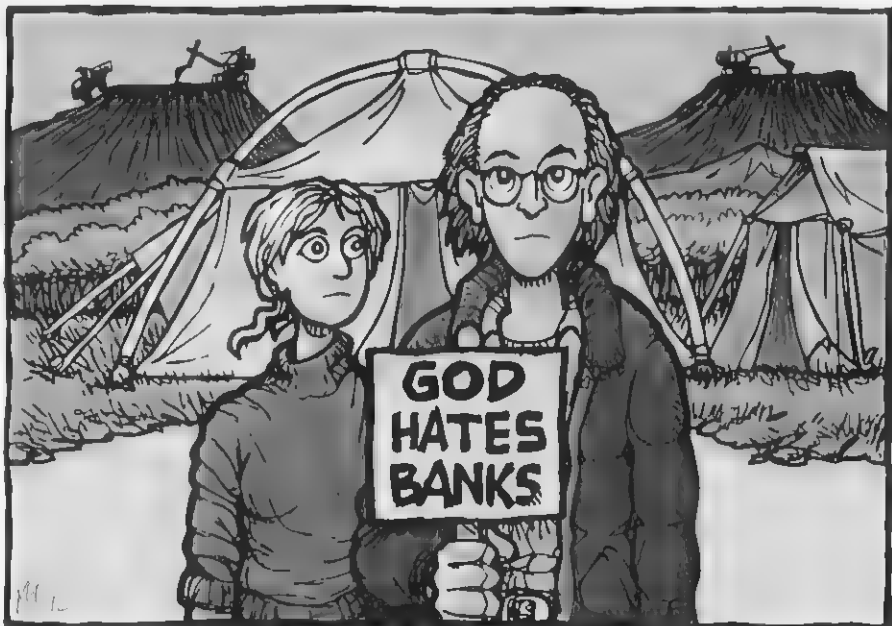
# Occupy Comes to Appalachia

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 reinvented 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

*Barbara Kingsolver's thirteen books of fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction include "The Bean Trees," "The Poisonwood Bible," and "The Lacuna." She lives with her family on a farm in southwest Virginia. This piece first appeared on the website [occupywriters.com](http://occupywriters.com).*



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 percent 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 Road, 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 percent because that's just it. We are. ♦

## THE PROGRESSIVE INTERVIEW

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*by Arun Gupta*

# Arundhati Roy

Sitting in a car parked at a gas station on the outskirts of Houston, my colleague Michelle Fawcett holds an audio recorder to my cell phone. At the other end of the line is Arundhati Roy, author of the Booker Prize-winning *The God of Small Things*, who is some 2,000 miles away, driving to Boston.

"This is uniquely American," I remark to Roy about interviewing her while both of us are in cars but thousands of miles apart.

Michelle and I are driving some 7,000 miles and visiting twenty-three cities (and counting) to report on the Occupy movement.

Ending pervasive corporate control of the political system is on the lips of almost every occupier we meet. And what's most striking about the trip is seeing how many Americans now live in poverty, on the edge, or fear a descent into the abyss. It's why

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*Michelle Fawcett contributed to this article. She and Arun Gupta are covering the Occupy movement nationwide for Salon, Alternet, and other outlets. Their work is available at [occupyusatoday.com](http://occupyusatoday.com).*

a majority still support Occupy Wall Street even after weeks of disinformation and repression.

Roy speaks to me before most of the police crackdowns start. She offers her thoughts on Occupy Wall Street, the role of the imagination, reclaiming language, and what is next for a movement that has reshaped America's political discourse and seized the world's attention.

**Q:** Why did you visit Occupy Wall Street and what are your impressions of it?

**Arundhati Roy:** How could I not want to visit? Given what I've been doing for so many years, it seems to me, intellectually and theoretically, quite predictable this was going to happen here at some point.

But still I cannot deny myself the surprise and delight that it has happened. And I wanted to, obviously, see for myself the extent and size and texture and nature of it. So the first time I went there, because all those tents were up, it seemed more like a squat than a protest to me. But it began to reveal itself in a while. Some people were holding the ground and it was the hub for other people to organize, to think through things. It seems to be introducing a new political language into the United States, a language that would have been considered blasphemous only a while ago.

**Q:** Do you think that the Occupy movement should be defined by occupying one particular space or by occupying spaces?

**Roy:** I don't think the whole protest is only about occupying physical territory, but about reigniting a new political imagination. I don't think the state will allow people to occupy a particular space unless it feels that allowing it would create a kind of complacency, and the effectiveness and urgency of the protest would be lost. The fact that in New York and other places where people are being beaten and evicted suggests nervousness and confusion in the ruling establishment.

The movement will, or at least should, become a protean movement of ideas, as well as action, where the element of surprise remains with the protesters. We need to preserve the element of an intellectual ambush, along with a physical manifestation that takes the government and the police by surprise. It has to keep reimagining itself, because holding territory may not be something the movement will be allowed to do in a state as powerful and violent as the United States.

**Q:** At the same time, occupying public spaces did capture the public imagination. Why do you think that is?

**Roy:** You had a whole subcutaneous discontent that these movements suddenly began to epitomize. The Occupy movement found places where people who were feeling that anger could come and share it—and that is, as we all know, extremely important in any political movement. The Occupy sites became a way you could gauge the levels of anger and discontent. But I think the time will come when the movement will have to somehow formulate something more than just anger.

**Q:** As a writer, what do you make of the term "occupation," which has now somehow been reclaimed as a positive term when it's always been one of the most heinous terms in political language?

**Roy:** As a writer, I've often said that, among the other things that we need to reclaim, other than the obscene wealth of billionaires, is language. Language has been deployed to mean the exact opposite of what it really means when they talk about democracy or freedom.

So I think that turning the word "occupation" on its head would be a good thing, though I would say that it needs a little more work. We ought to say, "Occupy Wall Street, not Iraq," "Occupy Wall Street, not Afghanistan," "Occupy Wall Street, not Palestine." The two need to be put together.

**Q:** What do you see as the next phase for this movement?

**Roy:** I don't know whether I'm qualified to answer that, because I'm not somebody who spends a lot of time here in the United States, but I suspect that it will keep reassembling in different ways and the anger created by the repression will, in fact, expand the movement. The greater danger to the movement is that it may dovetail into the Presidential election campaign that's coming up. I've seen that happen before, in the anti-war movement here, and I see it happening all the time in India. Eventually, all the energy goes into trying to campaign for the "better guy," in this case Barack Obama, who's actually expanding wars all over the world. Election campaigns seem to siphon away political anger and even basic political intelligence into this great vaudeville, after which we all end up in exactly the same place.

**Q:** Around the country, many occupiers we've talked to seem unable to reconcile their desires about President Obama with what Obama really represents. When I talk to them about Obama's record, they say, "Oh, his hands are tied; the Republicans are to blame, it's not his fault." Why

**do you think people react like this, even at the occupations?**

**Roy:** Even in India, we have the same problem. We have a rightwing that is so vicious and so openly wicked, which is the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and then we have the Congress Party, which does almost worse things, but does it by night. People feel that the only choices they have are to vote for this or for that. And my point is that, whoever you vote for, it doesn't have to consume all the oxygen in the political debate. It's just an artificial theater, which in a way is designed to subsume the anger and to make you feel that this is all that you're supposed to think about and talk about, when, in fact, you're trapped between two kinds of washing powder that are owned by the same company.

**Q:** Your essays, such as "The Greater Common Good" and "Walking with the Comrades," concern corporations, security forces, and the state violently occupying people's lands in India. How do those occupations and resistances relate to the Occupy Wall Street movement?

**Roy:** I hope that the people in the Occupy movement are politically aware enough to know that their being excluded from the obscene amassing of wealth by U.S. corporations is part of the same system of the exclusion and war that is being waged by these corporations in places like India, Africa, and the Middle East. Ever since the Great Depression, we know that one of the key ways in which the U.S. economy has stimulated growth is by manufacturing weapons and exporting war to other countries. So, whether this movement is a movement for justice for the excluded in the United States, or whether it is a movement against an international system of global finance that is manufacturing levels of hunger and poverty on an unimaginable scale, remains to be seen.

**Q:** You've written about the need for a different imagination than that of capitalism. Can you talk about that?

**Roy:** We often loosely use the term "neoliberalism" to actually avoid using the word "capitalism." But this model of U.S. economics, packaged in a carton that says "democracy," is being forced on countries all over the world, militarily if necessary. In the United States itself, it has resulted in 400 of the richest people owning wealth equivalent to that of half of the population. Millions are losing their jobs and homes, while corporations are being bailed out with billions of dollars.

In India, 100 of the richest people own assets worth



JOHANNA GOODMAN

“The element of surprise must remain with the protesters.”

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25 percent of the gross domestic product. There's something terribly wrong. No individual and no corporation should be allowed to amass that kind of unlimited wealth, including best-selling writers like myself, who are showered with royalties. Money need not be our only reward. Corporations that are turning over these huge profits can own everything: the media, the universities, the mines, the weapons industry, insurance hospitals, drug companies, nongovernmental organizations. They can buy judges, journalists, politicians, publishing houses, television stations, bookshops, and even activists. This kind of monopoly, this cross-ownership of businesses, has to stop.

The whole privatization of health and education, of natural resources and essential infrastructure—all of this is so twisted and so antithetical to anything that would place the interests of human beings or the environment at the center of what ought to be a government concern—should stop. The amassing of unfettered wealth of individuals and corporations should stop. The inheritance of rich people's wealth by their children should stop. The expropriators should have their wealth expropriated and redistributed.

"Democracy" no longer means what it was meant to. It has been taken back into the workshop. Each of its institutions has been hollowed out, and it has been returned to us as a vehicle for the free market, of the corporations, for the corporations, by the corporations.

**Q: What would the different imagination look like?**

**Roy:** In the forests of central India and in many, many rural areas, a huge battle is being waged. Millions of people are being driven off their lands by mining companies, by dams, by infrastructure companies. These are not people who have been coopted into consumer culture, into the Western notions of civilization and

progress. They are fighting for their lands and their livelihoods, refusing to be looted so that someone somewhere far away may "progress" at their cost.

India has millions of internally displaced people. And now, they are putting their bodies on the line and fighting back. They are being killed and imprisoned in their thousands. Theirs is a battle of the imagination, a battle for the redefinition of the meaning of civilization, of the meaning of happiness, of the meaning of fulfillment. And this battle demands that the world see that, at some stage, as the water tables are dropping and the minerals that remain in the mountains are being taken out, we are going to confront a crisis from which we cannot return. The people who created the crisis in the first place will not be the ones that come up with a solution.

That is why we must pay close attention to those with another imagination: an imagination outside of capitalism, as well as communism. We will soon have to admit that those people, like the millions of indigenous people fighting to prevent the takeover of their lands and the destruction of their environment—the people who still know the secrets of sustainable living—are not relics of the past, but the guides to our future.

**Q: One question that a lot of people have asked me: When is your next novel coming out?**

**Roy:** I have no answer to that question. I really don't know. Novels are such mysterious and amorphous and tender things. And here we are with our crash helmets on, with concertina wire all around us.

**Q: So this inspires you, as a novelist, the movement?**

**Roy:** Well, it comforts me, let's just say. I feel in so many ways rewarded for having done what I did, along with hundreds of other people, even at times when it seemed futile. ♦

## Poem

### **The Veteran**

I swore  
that if I lived, if I  
dodged the bullets and bombs,

I'd go back home  
and knock on every door  
and talk

of what I saw—  
how blood melts  
the snow,

how birds peck at  
the open maw  
of children,

how old women aim  
a glance  
you cannot bear.

But all I do  
since I've been back  
is pace this

shore looking for  
a shell, a fish, anything  
I've never seen.

—*John Kaufman*

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*John Kaufman's poems have been published in Long Island Quarterly, Kentucky Poetry Review, The Lyric, "Paumanok: Poems and Pictures of Long Island," and other publications, while his prose has appeared in the Madison Capital Times and Milwaukee Magazine. He lives in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.*

# Penn State and Other Fiefdoms



Welcome to Happy Valley, Pennsylvania, the world Joe Paterno made. It's a world where libraries, buildings, and statues bear his name. It's a world where the school endowment now stands at around \$2 billion. It's a school where the social, cultural, and economic life of the campus revolves around the football team. It's a company town where the company is football, and moral posturing acts as a substitute for actual morality.

It's the only way to understand how Paterno's longtime assistant Jerry Sandusky, sixty-seven, could be charged with forty sex crimes against boys from 1994 to 2009, with many bearing silent witness and not saying a word.

The minors were under the care of Sandusky's charity for impoverished youth, the Second Mile foundation, which Sandusky founded in 1977. As the grand jury presentment stated: "Through the Second Mile, Sandusky had access to hundreds of boys, many of whom were vulnerable due to their social situations."

Sandusky is denying all charges, but the grand jury report is a damning and detailed indictment of a man abusing his power and authority allegedly to rape young boys.

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*Sport in Society and the Northeastern University School of Journalism have selected Dave Zirin as the winner of the Excellence in Sports Journalism Award in Print/Online Media for 2011. His newest book, in collaboration with John Carlos, is "The John Carlos Story," from Haymarket Books.*

Many Penn State students refused to let this staggering abuse of power sink in. Embarrassingly, as fellow students at other college campuses joined the Occupy movement to protest economic injustice, students at Penn State rioted to protest the firing of their head coach, who appeared to have coddled an alleged pedophile.

Later, one PSU student named Emily wrote the following to *Sports*



PATRICK MARTINEZ

*Illustrated's* Peter King: "Truth is, if not for Paterno's philanthropy and moral code (until his fatal lapse of judgment), I and thousands of others wouldn't be here right now. If not for Paterno . . . Pennsylvania State might still be an agriculture school and State College might be lucky if there were a Walmart within a thirty-mile radius. Paterno made a huge mistake, but that doesn't mean he's not a good man."

Bullshit.

Emily's words ring as false as the apologists for the Vatican, Wall Street, and the military command at

Abu Ghraib. The same moral code that Emily praises absolutely cannot be the same moral code that covers up child rape. Emily's gratitude that her school isn't more than "thirty miles from the nearest Walmart" can't justify defending Paterno. To do so is to make the very notion of morality meaningless.

This sordid scandal lifts the lid on a slew of disgraceful practices that are common in college towns around the country, places where everyone genuflects before the football team.

It has created academic cultures where the head football coach is deified (with salaries that reflect this fact), and the university president is subservient to the coach.

It has created athletic departments that exist as their own fiefdom, oblivious to the needs or honor codes of the greater institution, where athletic directors cover for the criminal behavior of their staff and their recruits, and where all is sacrificed on the altar of "revenue-producing" sports.

It has created a sports media culture where reporters become extensions of the athletic and information departments: flaks more comfortable cozying up to power than challenging it. Rumors of Sandusky's alleged predatory behavior were rife for years in Happy Valley, but journalists failed to track them down.

A century ago, W. E. B. Du Bois decried what he saw as the growth of "King Football" on the college campus.

I can't imagine what he'd say today, except it's time to end the monarchies. ♦



# Hillary's Brief for Gay Rights



I want to live in the Community Secretary of State Hillary Clinton talked about in her historic speech on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) human rights on December 6 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

The community where inspirational, courageous LGBT people lead the effort to bring the world to embrace human rights for all people.

The one where LGBT people spend, and sometimes give, their lives to achieve human rights.

The one where LGBT people work side by side with those toiling to end racism, religious persecution, and sexism.

That community.

In her powerful speech, Clinton—and by extension the Obama Administration—integrated sexual orientation and gender identity into the international human rights framework. She made her case in plain, powerful language and debunked arguments against such integration.

First, to the notion that human rights and LGBT rights are separate and distinct, she said that human rights are gay rights and gay rights are human rights.

Second, to the issue that being gay is a Western invention, she said that being gay is a human reality.

Third, to the belief that religious and cultural values can justify violence against LGBT people, she forcefully asserted that violence is not cultural—it is criminal.

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Kate "call me consubstantial" Clinton is a humorist.

Fourth, she emphasized that though we are each free to believe whatever we choose, we cannot do whatever we choose in a world where we protect the human rights of all.

To the final question of what's to be done, Clinton noted that minorities cannot achieve full human rights without the leadership and commitment of majorities. She assured LGBT men and women worldwide whatever their circumstances that they are not alone. She



LOUISA BERTMAN

urged nations to take leadership and committed the Obama Administration's will and wallet to the advancement of gay human rights internationally.

After my thirty-plus years of LGBT work, it was staggering to hear a full-on, forceful, no-nonsense brief for our human rights, not some pro forma rah-rah at an LGBT fundraising dinner for an applause line and campaign donation. The claim was argued not to the choir but to an international gathering.

I was still reeling that night when I saw the off-Broadway production of *Standing on Ceremony: The Gay Marriage Plays*, a night of six wonderful actors giving readings of ten short plays. I'm sure the hope is that the play will do for gay marriage what *The Vagina Monologues* has done for, well, you know. Actually, *The Vagina Monologues* has become a grassroots organizing and fundraising phenomenon and an international force to end violence against women, so if the marriage plays achieve that status, it would be a good thing.

It was a fine, enjoyable night of entertainment. But watching it through the lens of Hillary's challenge reminded me again of the limits of the LGBT community I live in. Only two of the ten plays were written by women. The narratives were all from decidedly upper- to middle-class perspectives. There were no African American actors, certainly no talk of jumping the broom.

Please do not think me ungracious. Just as I know that the Obama Administration's domestic LGBT record is imperfect, I know the play does not aim for the lofty ideas of some eight-hour Ring Cycle.

Sometimes I have felt like I'm living in a gayted community with restrictions about membership, income, pool use, children, pets. I worry that when we achieve full federal marriage equality, we will go the way of other utopian communities. Passion and funding will dry up, devastated by the ravages of Mad Vow Disease.

Hillary Clinton's speech on international human rights reminds me of the LGBT community I want to live and work in. ♦

# Pigging Out

## Olivia Says Good Night

By Gabe Pulliam and Farrah McDoogle

Illustrated by Patrick Spaziante  
*Simon Spotlight, an imprint of Simon & Schuster. 24 pages. \$16.99.*

## Olivia Goes to Venice

By Ian Falconer

*Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster. 48 pages. \$17.99.*

## By Ruth Conniff

School book fairs are notorious for pushing schlock. I've grown accustomed to dragging my kids past the Disney princess tchotchkes, the books that are really TV show spin-offs, the stuffed animals and gaudy electronic games that have nothing to do with reading.

But unlike cookie dough and wrapping paper sales, the book fair is not supposed to be just another effort to make up for shrinking school budgets by getting you to buy crap you don't want.

Since it takes place in the school library and is often promoted with events like "family literacy night" at my kids' school, the book fair has an aura of educational respectability.

The Scholastic company ships the books to school librarians, and parent volunteers run the cash register. Kids get "book bucks" from their teachers, so they can buy a book even if their parents can't afford it. In the end, the school makes a cut of the profits, and kids are encouraged to read. What's not to like?

Wading through the winter book fair with my preschooler, dodging stuffed animals and overpriced

erasers, I emerged with a pile of nice-looking books that my five-year-old and I could agree on. Phew.

When I got home, I cracked open two new bedtime stories featuring Olivia, the spoiled but lovable pig created by famed *New Yorker* cover artist Ian Falconer.

That's when I realized I'd been had.

These were not books in the familiar series by the witty and sophisticated Falconer, a protégé of artist David Hockney, who spun out the Olivia stories from a book he designed in 2000 as a gift for his favorite niece, setting a new standard for children's book design.

No, this was a transcript of the Nickelodeon cartoon.

I should have been tipped off by

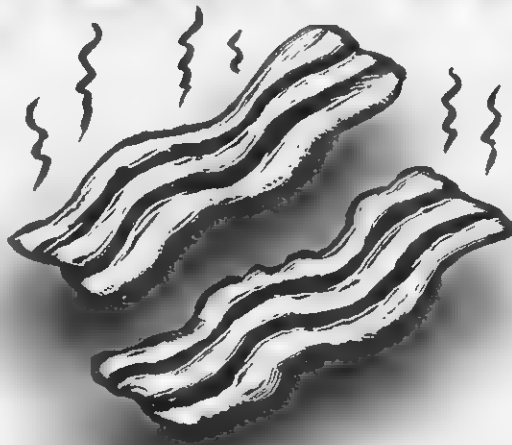
that tiny trademark sign next to the name Olivia on the front of the book. Those little letters don't appear on the real Olivia books.

I could tell the difference on the flimsy paperbacks, with their busy, cartoon covers. They don't look anything like Falconer's simple, beautifully spare design. Plus, there's the banner on the cover: "As seen on Nickelodeon."

But *Olivia Says Good Night* is deliberately designed to look just like a real *Olivia* book—a clean, simple hardback with no extra words on the cover, not even the author's name.

On closer inspection, Falconer's name is nowhere on *Olivia Says Good Night*—except in the microscopic trademark copy on the back.

Clearly, the author is not averse to



*Ruth Conniff is the political editor of The Progressive.*

making a buck. And he's had lots of opportunity. *Olivia* was a runaway bestseller. Falconer, who did set and costume design for the New York City Ballet and the Los Angeles Opera, won a Caldecott and made a huge splash in the design world when he turned his doodles into a full-scale commercial enterprise. There are *Olivia* toys, diaries, T-shirts, and other products, as well as the Nickelodeon show.

But this is a new low.

Strictly on aesthetic grounds, you would think Falconer would not want to allow his "brand" to be sullied. His simple, black-and-white charcoal drawings have been turned into a goopy color cartoon. Worse, there's the writing.

If there is one thing notable about Falconer, besides the gorgeous design and striking use of real art, like the portrait of Eleanor Roosevelt that hangs over *Olivia's* bed, or the real Jackson Pollock reproduced in the first *Olivia* book, it is his spare prose and understated humor.

In the first book, *Olivia* tells her mother at bedtime, "Only five books tonight, Mommy."

"No, *Olivia*, just one."

"How about four?"

"Two."

"Three."

"Oh, all right, three. But that's it."

After they read a biography of Maria Callas, *Olivia's* mother says, "You know, you really wear me out. But I love you anyway."

*Olivia* replies, "I love you anyway, too."

That line appeared recently in a *New Yorker* cartoon, spoken by a woman to her husband, as she turns out the bedroom light. Such a staple of the culture has Falconer's ironic good humor become.

Here, straight from the book fair, is Nickelodeon's *Olivia Says Good Night*:

*Mom looked around Olivia's room, which was all cleaned up. Then she saw Olivia's tent and was amazed. "That is a beautiful tent," Mom said.*

"Great job!"

"*Ian helped!*" *Olivia* reminded her.

"*But it's missing something,*" said Mom.

"*It is?*" *Olivia* exclaimed. *What could possibly be missing? She wondered.*

"*Your tent is missing a beautiful girl sleeping inside,*" Mom explained.

*Olivia* settled inside and Mom tucked her in.

I was so disgusted by this namby-pamby sellout, I had to take our books back to the fair after I tucked my own kid into bed. I got a refund from the annoyed book fair manager.

Still, I was curious.

What the hell happened to *Olivia* the pig?

I stopped by Barnes & Noble and found the real *Olivia* books on a separate shelf from the crappy Nickelodeon versions.

Here, at least, *Olivia Says Good Night* is right next to *Olivia Builds a Snowlady*, both produced by the robots at Nickelodeon.

But what really took me aback was the depressing deterioration of Falconer's *Olivia* idea. This is only a theory, but it seems to me that transforming his work of art into a multimillion-dollar merchandising bonanza has pushed Falconer to jump the shark.

In *Olivia Goes to Venice*, Falconer's latest, the pig heroine seems more crass and demanding as she wanders the city with her family, eating more and more gelato.

"Oh, please—OH, PLEASE, MOTHER—can't we live in a palazzo on the Grand Canal?"

The drawings lack Falconer's old confidence. The lines are wobbly and uncertain, like sketches. The background is much busier than before.

Toward the end of *Olivia Goes to Venice*, our porcine heroine takes a brick out of the bell tower in San Marco, causing it to collapse. The whole family has to run away from the falling rubble. The wry, subtle *Olivia* has become *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Somewhere, someone is writing a dissertation on the connection between children's literature and our culture's collapse.

You can get a sense of the outline by looking at a school book fair or perusing the children's section at Barnes & Noble.

Here are the old children's literature classics, where kids confront the beauty and terror of the world—both outside and within.

The "Stories Every Kid Should Own" shelf at Barnes & Noble includes:

*The Giving Tree*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *Goodnight Moon*, and *Where the Sidewalk Ends*.

There is *Madeline*, first published by Viking in 1939.

There is the gorgeous visual poem *Snowy Day*, by Ezra Jack Keats (Viking, 1962).

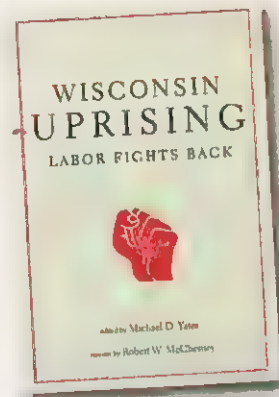
There are your old friends *The Velveteen Rabbit* and *Ferdinand*.

Then, in a section called "Kids'

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—MATTHEW ROTHSCHILD,

*The Progressive*



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Favorites,” there is the real trash. *Magical Princess Songs, The Princess Encyclopedia.*

And then there are the tween books reacting to the toxic narcissism and materialism that threaten to consume us: Take Rachel Renee Russell’s *Dork Diaries*. These books decry mean girls, but portray a world where you are what you buy.

In between are the children’s books that speak to anxious, ambivalent parents.

Like the neglected “poor little rich kid” Heloise of the 1940s, the cute Trixie of Mo Willems’s hip *Knuffle Bunny*, and the insufferable Fancy Nancy, Olivia is indulged, whiny, and overpowering.

It says something about the state of our culture that parents seem to relate so readily to the idea of being tyrannized by their kids.

Another big hit last year, designed like a kids’ book but obviously meant only for parents, was titled *Go the Fuck to Sleep*.

Kids and parents alike are drawn to funny, comforting stories that soothe their insecurities, making them feel that they are normal. And

that’s probably fine.

But what is not fine is the idea that we are helpless in the face of our most childish impulses, or our complete surrender to the takeover of our culture and our children’s imaginations by crass commercialism.

*Slate* reported in September that Simon & Schuster, *Olivia*’s publisher, has launched monthly story-hour programs at seventy-nine malls across the country to push its products and fill a gap left by library closings.

This is just a step up in marketing from the book fair.

“We’re always looking for innovative ways to expose kids to our books,” *Slate* quotes a director of marketing at Simon & Schuster saying about the new program, adding that it will “build awareness for our bigger properties and brand our characters.”

That’s exactly what has happened to *Olivia*. She’s been branded.

Children’s publishers and their partners in crime are pushing far worse products than *Olivia* the pig. Just last spring,

Scholastic stopped distributing “The United States of Energy,” a fourth grade curriculum paid for by the American Coal Foundation, after a campaign led by the Campaign for Commercial-Free Childhood, Rethinking Schools, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace USA, and the Center for Biological Diversity drew attention to the sleazy sponsorship.

Rebekah Cohen of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood gave an interview to a blog called *Outside the Toybox*, where she said this about the folks at Scholastic: “On one hand, their role as a massive educational publisher providing low cost books to children, schools, and families is laudable. . . . On the other hand, the very position that allows Scholastic to wear a halo also places them in an ethically questionable position as a business. Sadly, I think Scholastic has used the former (halo) to achieve the latter (profit), which quickly raises questions about their products’ educational value.”

Add to that their artistic and literary merit.

Good night, *Olivia*. ♦

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## COLORFUL PAINTINGS



# Newt, the Influence Peddler



Mea culpa, my bad. I've been calling Newt Gingrich a lobbyist. Apparently, he hates that tag, even though he has gotten very wealthy by taking big bucks from such special interest outfits as IBM, AstraZeneca, Microsoft, and Siemens in exchange for helping them get favors from federal and state governments. But Gingrich, his lawyers, and staff adamantly insist that it's rude and crude to call him a lobbyist. No-no, they bark, The Newt is—ta-da!—"a visionary."

Major corporations, they explain, pay up to \$200,000 a year to the corrupt former House Speaker's policy center, seeking nothing more from Newt than the sheer privilege of bathing in the soothing enlightenment of his transformative vision. Also, as the man himself constantly reminds everyone, he has a Ph. By-God D. So he's "Dr. Newt," the *certified* visionary.

Yet the sales pitch to lure potential corporate clients to his center makes crystal clear that the visionary services he offers entail precisely doing what (excuse the term) lobbyists do. For example, the center brags that Newt has "contacts at the highest levels" of government, and that being a paying customer "increases your channels of input to decision mak-

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*Jim Hightower produces The Hightower Lowdown newsletter and is the author, with Susan DeMarco, of "Swim Against the Current: Even a Dead Fish Can Go with the Flow."*

ers." One corporate chieftain who hired Newt for \$7,500 a month (plus giving him stock options) says he "made it very clear to us that he does not lobby, but that he could direct us to the right places in Washington."

So, Mr. Do-Not-Call-Me-A-Lobbyist is, in fact, selling his government contacts and peddling his political influence. But he does not lobby. Instead, we're told that he directs,



JEM SULLIVAN

makes calls, arranges meetings, opens doors, and, of course, has visions.

I'm glad we got that cleared up. From now on, I'll call Newt what he is: a Washington influence peddler. Yes, that's much better.

**F**rom Washington to Wall Street, we now have too many 5-watt bulbs sitting in 100-watt sockets. As a result of our leaders' dimness,

America's uniting and constructive ethic of "We're all in this together" and "Together we can" is being supplanted by a shriveled, dispiriting ethic that exalts plutocratic selfishness and scorns the public interest as intrusive, wasteful, ideologically impure, and morally ruinous. They're pushing us toward a forbidding Kochian jungle in which there is no "we," where money rules, everyone's on their own, and such matters as justice, general welfare, tranquility, and posterity are none of society's damned business.

So here we are, the wealthiest nation on Earth with massive needs and an industrious population eager to get working on those needs, yet our leaders throw up their hands and say: "No can do."

However, there is hope in the people themselves.

We see it in the ongoing Wisconsin rebellion that is rejecting the Koch-fueled autocracy of the imperious Governor Scott Walker.

We see it in the 61 percent grassroots victory in Ohio on November 8 to throw out the repressive anti-labor law that rightwing Governor John

Kasich arrogantly tried to hang around the people's neck.

We see it in the Occupy protests that are so big and so deeply felt by so many angry/hopeful people that even police sweeps cannot make them go away.

What we Americans have the most of is the very thing our failed leaders have the least of: bigness of spirit. They say no, but we say yes. ♦

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## The cell phone that doesn't play music, take pictures or surf the Internet.

Over the years, cell phones have gotten smaller and more complicated. The buttons are too small to find, the speakers are too soft to hear and I need my reading glasses just to see the display. That's all changed, thanks to Jitterbug. It comes ready to use right out of the box, with your favorite numbers already programmed. It has large, bright numbers on a big display and features a soft ear cushion and louder volume controls so it's easy to hear. Best of all, it features affordable rate plans that fit your needs and there's no contract to sign. Call now and see why hundreds of thousands of people are catching the Jitterbug craze. *Call today. 1-888-773-7309 Please mention Promotional Code 43883.*

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What would you do in an emergency if you could not get to the phone. No one likes to think about it, but falls, fires, accidents and medical emergencies happen every day. Now, thanks to the Medical Alarm, all you have to do is touch a button on the wireless pendant and you'll immediately be connected to a state-of-the-art emergency response center that can notify 911, your neighbors and your family. With this lifesaving product, you'll never have to worry about being alone in an emergency. It's extremely affordable, with no set-up, activation or equipment fees. Don't wait until it's too late. *Call today. 1-877-459-4542 Please mention Promotional Code 43884.*

"Good morning. This is Nancy with Medical Alarm. Do you need assistance Mrs. Smith?"



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