

Occupy to put human need before corporate greed

The Occupy Wall Street protest started small. But it has now become a global movement, with occupy events planned in about 1500 cities worldwide.

It's born out of the recognition that, in country after country, ordinary people are being made to pay for an economic crisis caused by the super-rich. The 99% are being told they must surrender their livelihoods, their future, their security and their dignity to keep a broken system afloat.

In contrast, the 1% are having a wonderful crisis. The world's biggest corporations have emerged stronger, more profitable and more powerful than ever before.

To add insult to injury, the 1% want to convince us that we, the 99%, are to blame for the crisis. They say our wages are too high and that we don't work hard enough. They say our social security systems are not affordable and that our rights at work are should be done away with. They say our public education and health systems are not efficient and that our public services must be privatised.

The occupy movement is raising a challenge to the power of the 1%. Its strength lies in its diversity, breadth, unity and grassroots democracy.

In New York, after two weeks of discussion, the protesters agreed on a declaration that said none of our big problems can be overcome unless the 99% can unite in a movement for real democracy.

The occupy movement has spread to Australia, with protests planned to start here from October 15.

It's true the economic situation here is not yet as dire as in the US, where the richest 400 Americans have more wealth than the poorest 150 million.

But Australia is headed in the same direction. We should not wait to protest until things get as bad as the US, Spain or Greece, where inequality reigns supreme.

Inequality in Australia is large and growing. Already, the richest 20% of Australians have 61% of the wealth. The poorest 20% have just 1% of the wealth. Australia's richest 11 individuals have more than the poorest 800,000 households combined.

Further, there are many reasons why we should take this opportunity to start to bring Australia's own 1% to account.

We should occupy because White



Australia has occupied stolen Aboriginal land for more than two centuries. The dispossession of Aboriginal land and culture continues today with the infamous Northern Territory intervention, which is forcing Aboriginal people from their traditional homelands. Today, Aboriginal Australians are the most imprisoned people in the world. To Australia's eternal shame, their life expectancy is still 19 years lower than other Australians.

We should occupy cities in Australia because the richest mining and energy corporations already occupy our atmosphere, pumping it full of greenhouse gases and ignoring the warnings from scientists that climate change threatens to destroy life as we know it.

We should occupy because coal seam gas and other fossil fuel companies already occupy our farmlands, our forests, our drinking water catchments and our communities. With government support, the fossil fuel industry has free reign across the country, regardless of the serious health and pollution risks.

We should occupy because the Australian military already occupies other countries, and is bringing endless war and countless civilian deaths to Afghanistan.

We should occupy because Australian governments, Liberal and Labor, have occupied Australia with refugee detention centres — modern-day concentration camps that bring immense suffering to desperate asylum seekers that deserve our help.

We should occupy because government laws occupy our relationships, denying the right of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people to marry if they choose and making queers second-class citizens without equal rights.

We should occupy because restrictive

anti-union laws already occupy our workplaces, denying the right of working people to organise to defend their rights at work.

We should occupy because governments have helped corporations occupy our public assets, turning services for the public good into profit machines for the 1%.

And we should occupy because Australia's richest corporations already occupy our parliaments, state and federal.

The best democracy capitalism can deliver today is the right to tick a box once every few years. Between elections, corporations have open access to politicians while the rest of us are shut out, expected to bear the consequences in silence.

The 1% give millions to the big political parties each year and they demand a return on their investment. They skew the mainstream media debate in their interests because they are the mainstream media. They pour millions into cynical public relations and advertising campaigns. Corporate power over the political process is growing relentlessly.

The global 1% will not change their ways on their own account. Profit and greed are their only gods. Only the 99%, acting together, can put an end to the system of corporate rule and build something new in its place, a system that puts human need before corporate greed.

We won't be silenced. Our power lies in our numbers. United as communities, with our unions and with each other, we can raise a challenge to corporate power.

[The Socialist Alliance released this statement on October 14.]



Join Socialist Alliance

- I want to join the Socialist Alliance
 - \$100 solidarity \$60 high-waged \$30 waged \$15 welfare/low-waged/tertiary student \$5 school student
 - Cheque/money order Mastercard Visa
- Number ____ / ____ / ____ / ____
- Expiry date ____ / ____
- Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

Town/city _____ PC _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Phone 9639 8622 Post Socialist Alliance, PO Box 12427, A'Beckett St, VIC 8006 Email vic.socialist.alliance@gmail.com

www.socialist-alliance.org