

WE STAND WITH THE MAJORITY: Human Needs, Not Corporate Greed



PHOTO BY ELLEN DAVIDSON



PHOTO BY CHIP SOMODEVILLA

A MOVEMENT TOO BIG TO FAIL

By Chris Hedges

There is no danger that the protesters who have occupied squares, parks and plazas across the nation in defiance of the corporate state will be co-opted by the Democratic Party or groups like MoveOn. The faux liberal reformers, whose abject failure to stand up for the rights of the poor and the working class, have signed on to this movement because they fear becoming irrelevant. Union leaders, who pull down salaries five times that of the rank and file as they bargain away rights and benefits, know the foundations are shaking. So do Democratic politicians from Barack Obama to Nancy Pelosi. So do the array of "liberal" groups and institutions, including the press, that have worked to funnel discontented voters back into the swamp of electoral politics and mocked those who called for profound structural reform.

Resistance, real resistance, to the corporate state was displayed when a couple of thousand protesters, clutching mops and brooms, early Friday morning forced the

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A large majority of the American people consistently support the following agenda:

- Tax the rich and corporations
- End the wars, bring the troops home, cut military spending
- Protect the social safety net, strengthen Social Security and provide improved Medicare for all
- End corporate welfare for oil companies and other big business interests
- Transition to a clean energy economy, reverse environmental degradation
- Protect worker rights including collective bargaining, create jobs and raise wages
- Get money out of politics

The government, dominated by elite economic interests, is going in the opposite direction from what the people want. We feel that the people could rule their own destiny better, more kindly, more efficiently and certainly more sustainably than the corporate elite who now hoard the wealth and power.

The broad agenda for Stop the Machine: Create a New World is to end corporatism and militarism and shift power to the people.

TAX THE RICH AND CORPORATIONS

How government funds itself adequately to meet the needs of the people of the United States is one of the key budget questions not being adequately addressed in Washington. Americans know there are huge disparities of wealth between small numbers of extremely wealthy

Americans and the rest of us—the 99 percent.

The U.S. people support taxing wealthy Americans more than they are currently taxed but in addition to this we must end wars, overseas occupations, oil, coal and gas-based sources of energy, all huge profit makers for the elite. All these sources of corporate profit have continuously devastated the environment of our planet. This must stop.

END THE WARS, BRING THE TROOPS HOME, CUT MILITARY SPENDING

Military spending is one of the most propagandized areas of policy in the United States. Some media, like NBC (along with MSNBC and related outlets), are owned by a major military contractor, General Electric, which has fired several on air personalities, like Phil Donohue, because they were critical of war. The Pentagon has a massive multi-hundred-million-dollar military propaganda budget that gets information into the media and does a great deal to control media coverage by having retired military officers as the primary commentators on the air. Rarely is opposition to war included in the media. Before every war there is a massive propaganda effort to support the war effort resulting in a spike of war support followed six months or so later with disenchantment and opposition to war.

Americans almost never hear discussed on the air the reality that we are the largest empire in world history—yes, we are a massive empire, but it is a secret

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Too Big to Fail

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the Gulf of Mexico is the perfect metaphor for the corporate state. It is part of the same nightmare experienced in postindustrial mill towns of New England and the abandoned steel mills of Ohio. It is a nightmare that Iraqis, Pakistanis and Afghans, living in terror and mourning their dead, endure daily.

What took place early Friday morning in Zuccotti Park was the first salvo in a long struggle for justice. It signaled a step backward by the corporate state in the face of popular pressure. And it was carried out by ordinary men and women who sleep at night on concrete, get soaked in rainstorms, eat donated food and have nothing as weapons but their dignity, resilience and courage. It is they, and they alone, who hold out the possibility of salvation. And if we join them we might have a chance.

Chris Hedges, formerly a New York Times correspondent, writes a regular column for Truthdig.com and is the author of many books, most recently *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*.

We the People

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In his remarks in D.C., Hedges challenged us all by saying “Either you are rebel or a slave. Here are some excerpts from his speech:

“There are no excuses left. Either you join the revolt taking place on Wall Street and in the financial districts of other cities across the country or you stand on the wrong side of history. Either you obstruct, in the only form left to us, which is through civil disobedience, the plundering by the criminal class on Wall Street and accelerated destruction of the ecosystem that sustains the human species, or become the passive enabler of a monstrous evil. Either you taste, feel and smell the intoxication of freedom and revolt or sink into the miasma of despair and apathy. Either you are a rebel or a slave.”

There is indeed, “something happening here.” But what it is, is getting clearer. The people are rising up to take back our country. We stand together in this new movement.

Michael Orange is a member of local Chapter 27 Veterans for Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and the author of *Fire in the Hole: A Mortarman in Vietnam*. Cynthia is also a long-time peace activist and author of *Shock Waves: A Practical Guide to Living with a Loved One's PTSD*.

Submitted for VetSpeak.org

Black America: Time to Rejoin the Developing Revolution

*What happens to a dream deferred?/
Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?/Or
fester like a sore—/And then run?/Does it
stink like rotten meat?/Or crust and sugar
over—/like a syrupy sweet?/Maybe it just
sags like a heavy load./Or does it explode?*

—Langston Hughes

By Larry Pinkney

The struggles for economic, political, and social justice of everyday Black, White, Brown, Red, and Yellow peoples has been, and remains, a long, arduous, and protracted one. The legacy of Black America in this regard has been a particularly sterling one.

The wealthy elite of this nation have always sought to mask, co-opt, and distort the history of these ongoing struggles.

bury genuine people's movements remains precisely the same.

Even as the United States, and humankind as a whole, have entered into the 21st century, the corporate elite of this nation has dipped yet again into its hypocritical and bloody bag of tricks to neutralize the legitimate yearning of Black America (and everyday people of all colors) for economic, political, and social justice nationally and globally. A new trick was needed. The essence of that trick was put forth by the corporate elite in the form of the articulate, nominally “black,” de facto Wall Street-backed Barack Obama.

It was decided that the most effective way to neutralize Black America's cultural, political, economic, and social struggle would be to present us with the illusion

everyday Black people in this nation has virtually tripled. The incarceration rate of Black people under the Obama regime (including the privatization of prisons) has more than doubled. The rate of Black people attending colleges and universities has, and continues, to rapidly dwindle. The unconstitutional so-called “Patriot Act” has been extended and enhanced, as has the U.S. program of international kidnapping and torture known euphemistically as “extraordinary rendition.” Openness in government has become null and void. Universal single payer health care remains but “a dream deferred.” Judicial justice is now overwhelmingly a sick joke. And of course U.S. wars abroad, and economic austerity at home, continue unabated.

None of these horrible realities should come as a surprise in view of the fact that Obama's past and present “hope and change” rhetoric was, and continues to be, nothing more than a corporate-brand smoke screen. Instead of “hope and change,” what Black America (and indeed all everyday people in this nation) have received, is the smoke and mirror reality of the corporate / military's systemic rope and chain.

What Barack Obama arrogantly refers to as “whining” on the part of everyday people who are in terrible pain, is what is known, in any serious democracy, as being held accountable to one's constituency.

But of course Obama's de facto constituency is the corporate pharmaceutical, insurance, and banking, etc. corporate elite. It is time for everyday Black Americans to return to our proud legacy of serious struggle. We have been bamboozled and economically and politically pimped long enough. Enough already!

Indeed, what does happen to a dream deferred? The time has come for everyday Black Americans to collectively and resoundingly answer that question for Barack Obama and his Democrat and Republican corporate accomplices. We must remember the words of Frederick Douglass: “Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never has and it never will.” It is time for systemic change. Time to collectively rejoin the developing revolution in this nation and around the world! Wake up and organize as a part of this protracted struggle while there is yet time!

Onward, then, my sisters and brothers! Onward!

BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board Member, Larry Pinkney, is a veteran of the Black Panther Party.

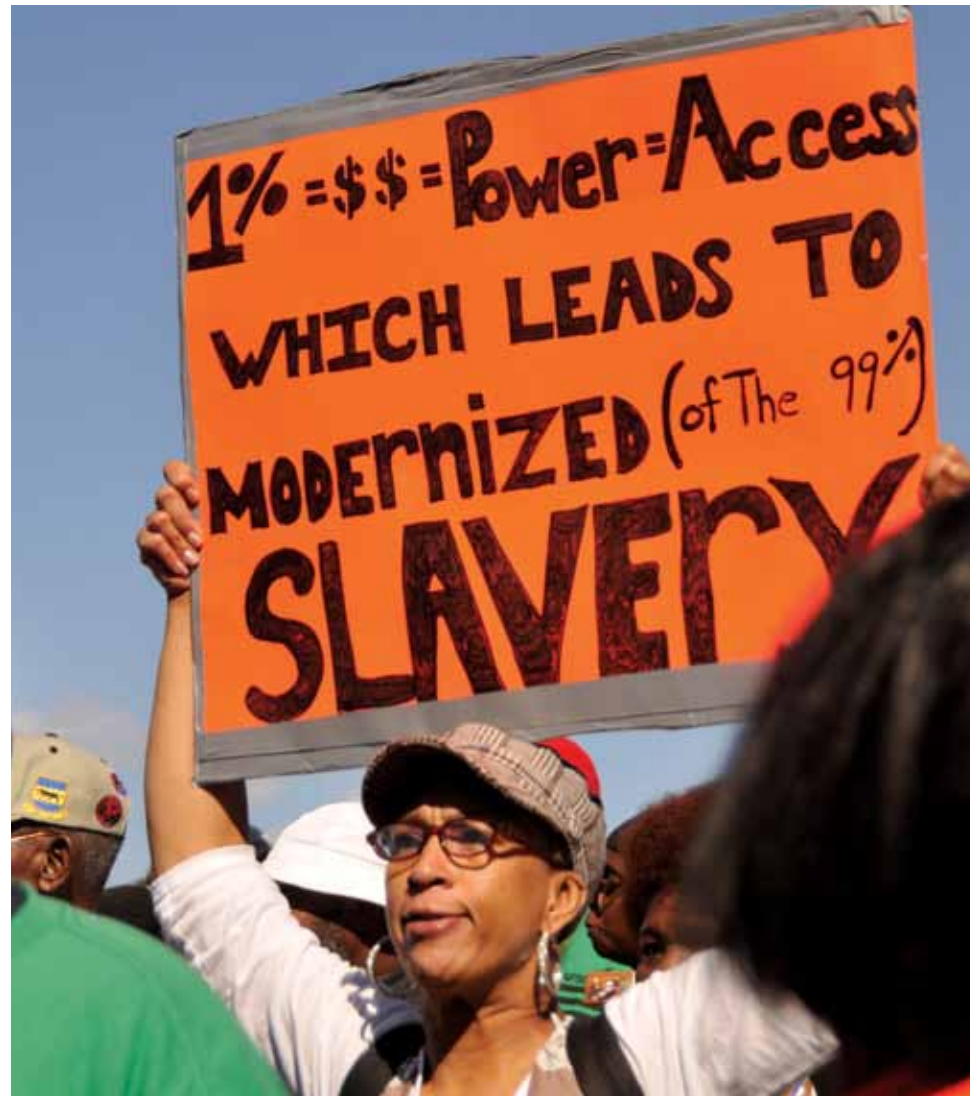


PHOTO BY ELLEN DAVIDSON

Since the very inception of this nation, color, gender, and class have consistently been used by the aforementioned wealthy elite to divide, stifle, and bury revolutionary movements. This is nothing new.

However, the wealthy elite (now known as the corporate elite) have, like mad scientists, consistently tweaked their insidious designs against ordinary everyday people. Their objective to divide, distort, stifle, and

of change, but with absolutely no real systemic change at all. Thus, while many everyday people of all colors were euphorically celebrating and bamboozled by this illusion, the clock was in fact being turned backwards by the corporate elite, by way of their articulate tool, the corporate-brand Barack Obama.

Under the corporate, profit-driven auspices of Barack Obama, joblessness among