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# THE INDYPENDENT

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A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

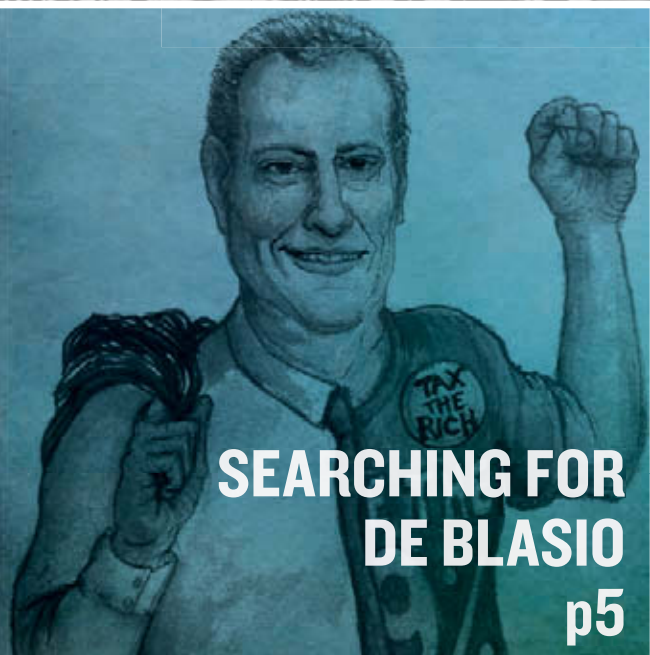


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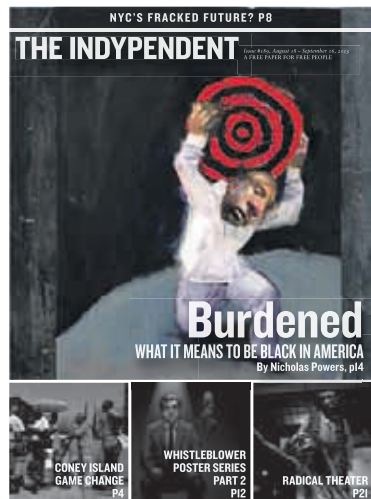
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## the reader's voice



### DEEP DRILLING

Thank you for such wonderful coverage about fracking ("Putting It All on the (Pipe)line: How the National Fracking Debate Is Playing Out in New York City," August *Indypendent*). In an ocean of non-journalistic news, it's refreshing to see a journalist dig and ask questions about things that don't seem quite right and give such a great report.

—KIM FRACZEK

It's astounding that citizens have to take energy policy into their own hands as the political leadership currently is biased toward doomed fossil fuels. Even if gas wells were performing to estimates, which they are not, they are still going to run out. Is NY going to destroy their farmland and tourism industry for a resource that won't last? Incredible.

—DOROTHEA

Excellent information and analysis of the threat of fracked gas in New York City and Harbor. A further

note on those high radon levels and why it's a matter of serious concern for NYC kitchens fed by Con Ed and National Grid: when fracked natural gas is extracted from the Marcellus shale, extremely radioactive radon gas is in the mix. If these pipelines start running, every time we turn on the oven or stove our young children, our animals would be especially exposed, being closer to the ground and with smaller lungs.

The radon is heavy, it lingers near the floor, is breathed in, accumulates over time and as it decays in the lungs it gives off deadly decay particles. There is no safe lower limit for this gas, which is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. And there is no requirement to monitor the levels of radon in these pipelines. Fortunately, Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal (D-Manhattan) has crafted a bill to do just that, and to shut down the flow when a certain level of radon is detected. We are looking forward to seeing the State Legislature pass this bill next session.

—JK CANEPA

### HELP SANDY VICTIMS WHO NEED IT

Why are they not pouring some of that money back into the residents? ("After the Disaster: How Sandy Has Changed the Game in Coney Island," August *Indypendent*). Not the rich ones in Sea Gate who can afford to rebuild but the folks in the housing projects where conditions are not much better today than they were when Hurricane Sandy struck ... just another example of King Bloomberg's emphasis on helping the real estate barons like Joe Sitt.

—ANONYMOUS

### BACKROOM ACTIONS

I would have mentioned the U.S. backroom actions to get a friendly director appointed to the International Atomic Energy Agency to help slam Iran. ("Manning's Top Ten Revelations," August *Indypendent*).

—THOMAS BAXTER

### EATING OUR YOUNG

I would donate a year of incarceration for Manning ("Prison on a Time Share Plan," August *Indypendent*). Every time I think about how much Dick Cheney has stolen from us, and how we eat our young ... I'm willing to stand up for Manning, he stood up for us!

—HEIDI LUCKEN

*Editor's Note: These two articles appeared before the former Army private known as Bradley Manning announced that she is transgender and changed her name to Chelsea Manning.*

### PEN STILL MIGHTIER THAN SWORD

Thank you for your insightful article about the "Al Mutanabbi Street Starts Here" exhibit ("Word," August *Indypendent*). I will raise my hand and gently challenge you on this project being "limiting." Al-Mutanabbi Street and the car bombing that occurred in March 2007 may have happened thousands of miles away, but truly, we all know that it could and has happened here. And yes, anywhere. This street is exactly like our own Main Street. Main Street belongs to us, and so does Al-Mutanabbi Street.

And as Mother Teresa claimed, she would never participate in an anti-

war event, only a pro-peace event. It's a totally different energy and space.

—KAREN CHEW

I think Mr. Newton's review is very well expressed. However, as a participant in the exhibit who has done both a broadside and a book for the project, I do disagree with Mr. Newton's cavalier "But of course, that's not really true" in regard to the shared intellectual (and emotional) human experience. Al-Mutanabbi is a physical place that has endured for centuries, but it is also a metaphor, a symbol, for the futility of violence, as expressed eloquently in the words of artists such as Frederick, Winant, Tichy, al-Dulaimi and Tetenbaum. As humans we are ephemeral and subject to the whims of our uncivilized violence, but we are also hosts for a living language that transports our growing knowledge through time and space with pens, ink, paper, pixels and books.

—KEN DALEY

*Comment on the news at indypendent.org or send a letter to The Indypendent, 666 Broadway, Suite 510, New York, NY 10012 or email letters@indypendent.org. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.*

"The Sheriff's in Town," a review of Eliot Spitzer's *Protecting Capitalism Case by Case* that appeared in the August *Indypendent*, was authored by Bennett Baumer. We apologize for having omitted the byline.



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JED BRANDT

**GENERAL EDUCATION:** CUNY students say, "Give Petraeus the boot!" (see calendar entry).

**EVERY MONDAY**

2–4pm • Free  
**PROTEST:** CUNY students and their allies will hold weekly rallies for the rest of the school year calling for the dismissal of former General David Petraeus from his teaching position at the Macaulay Honors College because of his role in orchestrating atrocities in Iraq and Afghanistan.  
 Outside Macaulay Honors College  
 35 W 67th St

**FRI SEP 27 & SAT SEP 28**

Midnight • \$10  
**FILM SCREENING:** *BRAZIL*. Terry Gilliam's (Monty Python) film, originally released in 1985, presents a dystopian, industrialised future in which one man dares to defy the system. More slapstick than George Orwell's *1984* and more earnest than Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*, this cult black comedy's not to be missed.  
 Sunshine Cinema  
 143 E Houston St  
 212-260-7289 • landmarktheatres.com

**SAT SEP 28**

11am–3pm • Free  
**EVENT:** STREET TREE CARE DAY. Enjoy the weather while you can and get active by helping the Lower East Side Ecology Center protect and beautify the neighborhood's street trees. The day's goal is to plant flowering bulbs and ground cover plants in new tree beds.  
 Joseph C. Sauer Park  
 534 E 12th St  
 212-477-4022 • lesecologycenter.org

**SAT SEP 28**

8pm • \$18

**MUSIC:** MARLENE FEINGOLD TRIBUTE

**CONCERT.** Celebrate the creator of The Sage Singers, a folk singing group founded by Sage, the largest LGBT group in the U.S. for senior citizens. Marlene Feingold, their late founder, will be remembered with folk music and dancing.  
 The People's Voice Café  
 40 E 35th St  
 212-787-3903 • peoplevoicecafe.org

**SAT SEP 28**

7–10pm • Free  
**READING:** THE UNBEARABLES AND THE FEMINIST POETS IN LOW-CUT BLOUSES ARE WATCHING YOU (BEING WATCHED!). Buckle down for a night of humor and wit as One Hundred Thousand Poets For Change host a reading on the all-too-timely theme of surveillance.  
 A Gathering of The Tribes  
 285 E 3rd St, 2nd Fl  
 212-712-9865 • tribes.org

**SAT SEP 28 & SUN SEP 29**

All Day • Free  
**FESTIVAL:** LUNGS HARVEST ARTS FESTIVAL IN THE GARDENS. Head over to the community gardens in Alphabet City and the Lower East Side for the second annual harvest arts festival, which will feature music, yoga, environmental workshops, puppets, photography and more. Gardens are united through local organizing, but each is planning its own program!  
 Loisada United Neighborhood Gardens  
 32 gardens in Alphabet City & LES  
 info@lungsnyc.org • lungsnyc.org

**SUN SEP 29**

2–4pm • Free

Lady K Fever.

The Bronx Museum of Art  
 1040 Grand Concourse, Bx  
 718-681-6000 • bronxmuseum.org

**MON SEP 30**

7–8pm • Free  
**BOOK TALK:** GRAHAM NASH. Join Graham Nash, the political activist and famed musician of Crosby, Stills & Nash (CSN) and The Hollies. He'll discuss a life journey that included Woodstock, dating Joni Mitchell and superstardom with CSN, as well as where he found the inspiration to write over 200 songs, including "Military Madness," "Immigration Man" and "Chicago: We Can Change The World."  
 The Strand  
 828 Broadway  
 212-473-1452 • strandbooks.com

**WED OCT 2**

6:30pm • Free  
**PANEL:** LATIN@ IDENTITY IN A SHIFTING CITY. Journalist Ed Morales, anthropology professor Arlene Davila and artist Miguel Luciano come together to discuss the development of Latino identity in NYC from the 1980s to the present. El Museo del Barrio, NYC's only fully dedicated Latino museum, is organizing the discussion.  
 El Café  
 1230 5th Ave  
 212-831-7272 • elmuseo.org

**WED OCT 2**

7:30pm • Sliding scale: \$6/\$10/\$15  
**BOOK SIGNING:** *SMOKE SIGNALS: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF MARIJUANA*. Martin A. Lee provides an overview of his latest book, exploring how cannabis came to be

**TOUR:** BRONX LAB – STREET ART ON THE GRAND CONCOURSE. The opening of the Bronx Lab, a test site for new cultural ideas about the Bronx at the Bronx Museum of Art, has arrived. Enjoy a guided walking tour of street art along the Grand Concourse, and then put your skills to the test during a graffiti-inspired activity with renowned artist

outlawed in the U.S. and how that has led the countercultural movement for legalization to transform into a revolt against conventional medicine.  
 Brecht Forum  
 388 Atlantic Ave, Bklyn  
 212-242-4201 • brechtforum.org

**THU OCT 3**

6:30pm • Free  
**PANEL:** THE SOAP BOXES OF UNION SQUARE. The square has long been one of the primary spaces for protest and dissent in NYC. Join authors, professors and journalists in discussing its history and importance to NYC radicals, then stick around for reenactments of notable speeches given at the square, such as those by Alexander Berkman and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.  
 The Tenement Museum  
 103 Orchard St  
 212-431-0233 • tenement.org

**SAT OCT 5**

9am–5pm • Sliding scale: \$10/\$30/\$50  
**CONFERENCE:** POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE ENVIRONMENT. Come for a day of radical thought and discussion about the intersection of climate change and economics. Organized by the Union for Radical Political Economics and co-sponsored by New Politics, the day-long event will feature two plenaries and tons of workshops.  
 St. Francis College  
 180 Remsen St, Bklyn  
 413-577-0806 • urpe.org

**FRI OCT 11**

6:30–9:30pm • Free  
**EVENT:** BRONX STORIES: NATIVE AMERICAN EDITION. Come celebrate an open mic night at the Bronx Museum with storytelling, music, poetry and more. The event will take place in honor of Native American Day, and the stories are inspired by the works of art on view.  
 The Bronx Museum of Arts  
 1040 Grand Concourse, Bx  
 718-681-6000 • bronxmuseum.org

**TUE OCT 8 – SUN NOV 3**

Tue–Sat 8pm/Sun 5pm • \$25  
**THEATER:** *ROOSEVELVIS*. In this experimental and gender-bending performance, the spirits of Teddy Roosevelt and Elvis Presley — who happen to be played by female actors — go road tripping cross-country. Main topic of conversation? A battle over the soul of Ann, a shy meat-processing plant worker, and what kind of man or woman she should become.  
 The Bushwick Starr  
 207 Starr St, Bklyn  
 boxoffice@thebushwickstarr.org •

thebushwickstarr.org

**THU OCT 17**

1:15–2:30pm • Free  
**LECTURE:** RACE AND SEXUAL POLITICS IN THE AIDS CRISIS: CHICAGO, 1981-1996. Timothy Stewart-Winter, assistant professor of history at Rutgers University, will explore how racial and class differences — and how they affect people's access to healthcare — divided parts of the gay community in Chicago in its attempt to grapple with the outbreak of AIDS.  
 New York Public Library  
 Stephen A. Schwartzman Building, South Court Auditorium  
 Fifth Ave at 42nd St  
 917-275-6975 • nypl.org

**THU OCT 17**

7pm • Free  
**BOOK TALK:** *RUTH FIRST AND JOE SLOVO IN THE WAR AGAINST APARTHEID*. Oral historian Alan Wieder presents his new book on the contributions made to the anti-apartheid movement by white anti-racists Ruth First and Joe Slovo.  
 Bluestockings Bookstore  
 172 Allen St  
 212-777-6028 • bluestockings.com

**THROUGH NOV 2**

M–Th 10am–5pm; Fri 10:30am–2:30pm; Sat 10am–3pm • Free  
**EXHIBIT:** CHILE VIVE! HISTORICAL POSTERS FROM THE POPULAR UNITY GOVERNMENT (1970-73). The exhibit commemorates the 40th anniversary of the military coup that deposed Chilean socialist president Salvador Allende, showcasing eighteen posters that portray the short-lived Popular Unity government's commitment to collective power and solidarity.  
 Grady Alexis Gallery at El Taller Latino Americano  
 2710 Broadway at 104th St, 3rd Fl  
 212-665-9460 • tallerlatino.org

**THROUGH JAN 4**

Mon–Sat 10am–6pm • Free  
**EXHIBIT:** CLAIMING CITIZENSHIP: AFRICAN AMERICANS AND NEW DEAL PHOTOGRAPHY. What is citizenship? This exhibit of historical photos explores the question by showcasing ways that African Americans took opportunities opened up by the New Deal to claim their status as citizens.  
 New York Public Library  
 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture  
 515 Malcolm X Blvd  
 212-491-2200 • nypl.org

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# Searching for the Real Bill de Blasio

BY STEVEN WISHNIA

I met Bill de Blasio when he was campaigning near my neighborhood bagel shop the weekend before the Sept. 10 Democratic primary.

Holding a bag with two pumpernickel and two cinnamon-raisin, I introduced myself, mentioned the publications I write for, and told him that I'm working two part-time jobs making half what I made before the recession and that a lot of other people are in similar situations. "This is the worst economy I've ever seen," I said.

"Let me tell you what I'm going to do," he responded. Ending the Bloomberg administration's harassment of small businesses with not-so-petty fines would encourage them to hire more people. Expanding access to the City University of New York would get more people an education.

Coming from someone who'd made economic inequality a central theme of his campaign, these ideas sounded tepid, essentially a liberal version of trickle-down economics. I suggested a new Works Progress Administration, the 1930s federal program that at its peak employed 3 million people nationwide. It built LaGuardia Airport and Brooklyn College, refurbished Central Park and hired artists, writers, and actors.

"In a perfect world," de Blasio answered. As if this idea, one of the greatest achievements of 20th-century Democratic liberalism, was hopelessly idealistic.

## REJECTING BLOOMBERG

In a city where recent surveys have found that the top 1 percent claim almost 40 percent of income while nearly half the people live in poverty or not far above it, de Blasio's "tale of two cities" slogan connected with voters. His victory was unquestionably a rejection of Michael Bloomberg. City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, long the perceived

front-runner and the enabler of Bloomberg's third term, finished a distant third. Though she would have been the city's first openly gay or lesbian mayor, she lost her own district, the Greenwich Village-Chelsea "gay seat," to de Blasio. From 1989 to 2009, the map of mayoral election returns almost exactly mirrored the city's racial map, but de Blasio carried the mostly black neighborhoods in Harlem and central Brooklyn over African-American Bill Thompson, who ran a more centrist campaign.

The city's 1 percent, who have had mayors actively working for their agenda for 20 years, are predictably appalled. Some are moving toward Republican Joseph Lhota, a Giuliani acolyte who as head of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority raised the subway fare yet again, and who recently implied that he'd rather run over kittens than delay the Q train for half an hour. With the likes of fossil-fuel billionaire David Koch (richer and further right than Bloomberg) raising money, their strategy is to portray de Blasio as the candidate who will "turn New York into Detroit" or bring it back to the 1970s, with blocks of charred rubble and joggers getting raped in Central Park by "wilding" gangs of black teenage boys. (The five youths jailed in that 1989 case, one of the highest points of racial tension in the city's recent history, were framed. Their confessions were coerced, and another man whose DNA matched the evidence later confessed.)

Yet that scheme may not work without the widespread crime and racialized fear that fed Giuliani's popularity, or the nine-figure sums Bloomberg poured into his campaigns. The Real Estate Board of New York's PAC, Jobs for New York, spent more than \$4 million to elect City Council candidates sympathetic to its pro-development agenda, but it had mixed results. Incumbent Margaret Chin turned back a challenge in Chinatown

and Laurie Cumbo took an open seat in Fort Greene, but Sara Gonzalez was unseated by community organizer Carlos Menchaca in Red Hook-Sunset Park.

An alternative plan would be to domesticate de Blasio, to tell him that yes, we know you have to talk populist to get elected, but you have to govern "responsibly." He raised almost \$4.5 million for his campaign, and among those giving him the \$4,950 maximum were the Rent Stabilization Association (which actually lobbies against rent controls) and Leonard Litwin, a real-estate billionaire who is the most prolific stretcher of the state's campaign-finance loopholes.

## "HOPE AND CHANGE"

So how much substance is behind de Blasio's "tale of two cities" talk? This isn't the first time in recent memory that people fed up after years of plutocratic, authoritarian rule voted enthusiastically for a politician who promised hope and change, one who has a photogenic multiracial family and got lambasted by the 1 percent as a raving socialist.

De Blasio will definitely be an improvement over Bloomberg in many areas. He won't appoint hardline anti-tenant members to the Rent Guidelines Board, or bust a strike by school-bus matrons making \$14 an hour. But how likely is he to pursue policies

to reduce economic inequality that directly challenge the power of the 1 percent and that will bring down the wrath of the city's Wall Street and real-estate power elite? Is he willing to risk the fate of Dennis Kucinich, who as mayor of Cleveland in the late 1970s refused to privatize the city's electric-power system to pay off bonds, and fell from "boy wonder" to "the mayor who let Cleveland go into default"? Will the most he does to bring down our too-damn-high rents be requiring a few more "affordable" apartments in luxury developments?

"If you had told me 35 years ago that in the New York of the future an apartment would be \$2,500 and the minimum wage would be seven bucks an hour, I would have said that's a radical agenda," I told de Blasio when I met him. "It's happened, and we need a radical agenda to turn it around."

I don't know how much he wanted to hear that.



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155 First Ave.
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331 E. 10th St.
- Cinema Village  
29 E. 12th St.
- St. Mark's Books  
31 Third Ave.
- Mamoun's Falafel Restaurant  
22 St. Mark's Pl.
- Theater 80  
80 St. Marks Pl.

McNally Jackson Books  
52 Prince St.

- Shakespeare & Co.  
716 Broadway
- Think Coffee  
248 Mercer St.
- Hudson Park Library  
66 Leroy St.

### 14TH TO 96TH ST.

- TEKSERVE  
119 W. 23rd St.
- Muhlenberg Library  
209 W. 23rd St.
- Chelsea Square Restaurant  
W. 23rd St. & Ninth Ave.
- Columbus Library  
942 Tenth Ave.
- Manhattan Neighborhood Network  
537 W. 59th St.

### ABOVE 96TH ST.

- Bloomingdale Library  
150 W. 100th St.
  - Aguilar Library  
172 E. 110th St.
  - Harlem Library  
9 W. 124th St.
  - George Bruce Library  
518 W. 125th St.
  - Uptown Sister's Books  
W. 156th St. & Amsterdam
- BROOKLYN**
- Brooklyn Museum  
200 Eastern Pkwy.
  - Brooklyn Library  
1044 Eastern Pkwy.
  - Tea Lounge  
Union St. & Seventh Ave.

- Verb Café  
Bedford Ave. & N. 5th St.
- Purity Diner  
43 Underhill Ave.
- Pacific Street Library  
25 Fourth Ave.
- Outpost Café  
1014 Fulton St.
- YWCA of Brooklyn  
30 3rd Ave.
- Wyckoff Starr  
30 Wyckoff Ave.
- Kaisa's Café  
146 Bedford Ave.
- Bedford Library  
496 Franklin Ave.
- Parkside Deli  
203 Parkside Ave.

### QUEENS

- Astoria Library  
14-01 Astoria Blvd.
- Aubergine Cafe  
49-12 Skillman Ave.
- Terraza 7 Live Music  
40-19 Gleane St.
- Jackson Heights Library  
35-81 81st St.
- Corona Library  
38-23 104th St.
- Flushing Library  
41-17 Main St.

### BRONX

- Mott Haven Library  
321 E. 140th St.
- The Point  
940 Garrison Ave.

- Mothers on the Move  
928 Intervale Ave.
- Hunt's Point Library  
877 Southern Blvd.
- Woodstock Library  
761 E. 160th St.
- Mi Casa Bakery  
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# Queens in the Crosshairs

BY MARTY KIRCHNER

On August 30, a group of workers and small business owners in Willets Point, Queens, launched a hunger strike in advance of a City Council hearing on development plans that will force the removal of 250 mostly immigrant-owned auto-body shops and scrapyards, and the more than 1,800 workers they employ, from the neighborhood. Their eviction would pave the way for a 1.4-million-square-foot shopping mall and entertainment center backed by Sterling Equities, the owners of the New York Mets baseball team.

The mall, which would rise next to Citi Field and become the largest in New York City, has the backing of the Bloomberg administration.

"This plan, Bloomberg's plan, is almost criminal," says Sergio Aguirre of the Willets Point Defense Committee. "They make this mega-plan for rich people, for rich developers and private owners of big business corporations, and Bloomberg gives the land to them, and he kills our businesses, our jobs, our form of living."

The Willets Point mall is only one part of a cluster of overlapping development projects that city officials have targeted for northwestern Queens in recent years, says Arturo Ignacio Sánchez, an urban planner based at LaGuardia Community College and long-time member of Queens Community Board 3. Other initiatives include the expansion of the U.S. Open Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, a proposed 25,000 seat Major League Soccer stadium, and the construction of Flushing Commons, an \$850 million complex of retail, luxury apartments and office space in downtown Flushing.

Meanwhile, on the westernmost edge of Queens, large-scale construction is transforming Long Island City, once an important hub of urban manufacturing, into an area dominated by luxury condominiums, office towers and high-end retail stores stretching from Hunter's Point and the waterfront area along the East River to Court Square and Queensboro Plaza.

## RIPPLING OUTWARD

"So you have these two growth poles," ex-

plains Sánchez, "and these are two planning anchors that are coalescing." According to Sánchez, city planners have sought to direct real estate investments into these areas, creating the conditions for rising land values to ripple outward, and eventually for the growth poles to converge. Facilitated by successive waves of rezoning and historic districting, signs of gentrification expanding through northwestern Queens have been evident for some time. And now, in the waning months of Bloomberg's administration, city officials are racing to push through large-scale real estate projects that could have a profound impact on the future of the borough.

In March, with mega-development projects in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park and Willets Point under city review, City Councilmember Julissa Ferreras (D-East Elmhurst) announced plans to form a massive Jackson Heights-Corona Business Improvement District. This would be a public/private partnership that would require property owners to pay an additional tax for services, from increased garbage collection to district marketing to the installation of surveillance cameras, that Ferreras says the city is unwilling to bring to Roosevelt Ave., a bustling commercial thoroughfare that runs beneath the elevated tracks of the 7 train between Long Island City and Flushing.

"The current problems on Roosevelt Avenue hurt everyone," says Ferreras, citing safety issues, poor lighting and cleanliness. "This is why I believe a Business Improvement District is a solution to this problem."

Critics, however, argue that the plan is designed to raise property values and commercial rents, remove street vendors and displace the dense network of family-owned immigrant businesses that line Roosevelt Ave, thereby creating the conditions for high-end chain stores to gentrify the neighborhood and accomplishing a major step in the process of convergence described by Sánchez.

If approved, Ferreras's plan will expand an existing two-block BID in Jackson Heights, known as the 82nd St. Partnership, into one of the city's largest. It would span from 81st to 114th St. along Roosevelt Ave., incorporate retail shopping areas along Junction



**NEIGHBORHOOD LIFE:** Pedestrians walk on Roosevelt Ave. near 89th St. in Elmhurst. A proposed Business Improvement District along Roosevelt Ave. could displace immigrant-led small businesses and local residents in one of the most diverse urban areas in the world.

Bldv., Corona Plaza and National St., and end at the edge of Flushing Meadows Corona Park. Encompassing more than 1,000 businesses, the BID would run through the heart of social, commercial and public life in Corona, Elmhurst and Jackson Heights, some of the most ethnically mixed immigrant neighborhoods in the world.

## BIG BIDNESS

First introduced in New York City during the fiscal crisis of the mid-1970s, BIDs are associations of property owners who pay special assessment fees for private services they deem beneficial to enhancing a business environment. Over the years, BIDs have been used to draw affluent consumers back to the city by remaking urban public space into a quasi-privatized, highly-regulated zone for consumption, modeled on the suburban shopping mall. Once a BID is formed, all property owners within the BID's boundaries are required to pay yearly assessment fees. Frequently, the property owner's assessments and additional tax burden, incurred as property values increase, get passed on to their commercial tenants. With more BIDs than any other U.S. city,

New York currently has 67 BIDs, a third of which were formed during the Bloomberg administration.

In Corona, Elmhurst and Jackson Heights, immigrant small business owners, street vendors, students and community leaders have formed the Roosevelt Avenue Community Alliance (RACA) to oppose the BID. On September 8, they held a lively rally in Corona Plaza before marching to Julissa Ferreras' district office, an event that drew coverage from the *New York Daily News*, NY1, DNAinfo.com, and several local Queens papers. Organizers estimate that around 100 people attended the rally, which included a cultural performance with live music and spoken word.

"Today, along with other small business owners, we are leading a campaign against raising rents along Roosevelt Avenue," shouted Freddy Castiblanco, owner of Terraza 7, a bar and live music venue in Elmhurst, to a crowd that gathered at the rally. "Our concern is that the BID will put small businesses at a competitive disadvantage to corporate chain stores, and that we'll get displaced."

Protesters also rejected Ferreras' argument that a BID was necessary because of competition from a future Willets Point mega-mall.

"We are not competing with the mall because we don't have the things the mall has," said Leticia Ochoa, a student and member of Vendedores Unidos, a street vendor organization on Roosevelt Ave. "We already have three malls nearby. If they really want to improve the community, they should start by investing in after-school programs for kids."





MARTY KIRCHNER

## OPPOSITION

Community opposition to the Jackson Heights-Corona BID is having an impact. The proposal to form a BID will be voted on by property owners and commercial tenants in the affected area. Seth Taylor, the executive director of the 82nd St. Partnership who is leading the effort to install the Jackson Heights-Corona BID, is overseeing the vote, which had initially been scheduled for August, but has had multiple setbacks and is now expected for early October.

“So the way it is looking right now,” explained Taylor, “is because of the concerns that people in the community have been raising we are sort of taking a step back and wanting to do some more meetings.”

According to Taylor, discussions are now underway to reduce the BID’s proposed boundaries and annual budget. “The boundaries are likely going to be smaller, and the budget is going to be decreased by quite a bit,” Taylor said. “Again, this is all in response to the concerns that we’ve been hearing from some members in the community.”

But critics of the proposed BID say that the changes won’t help and that Taylor’s aggressive advocacy for the BID has rankled some community leaders. David Rosero is a property owner and member of Queens Community Board 3 who, along with Rubén Peña, a business owner and community activist in Corona, was initially supportive of the BID and served on the BID’s steering committee. When Rosero and Peña raised concerns about the BID’s impact on the neighborhood, concerns they were hearing from their own constituencies as community representatives, Taylor removed them from the steering committee.

“He didn’t tell me anything, any email, any kind of note, he just erased me off the

steering committee,” said Rosero.

PowerPoint presentations given by Taylor have claimed that the “majority of the board must be property owners and commercial tenants,” according to a slide from a presentation that has been shown at community outreach meetings. Taylor’s claim is at odds with New York City Department of Small Business Services’ regulations, which state that property owners and commercial tenants are distinct categories of stakeholders and that the majority of a BID’s Board of Directors must come from the minority that actually owns property and stands to gain the most from a wave of gentrification moving through the area.

## MAKE THE ROAD

Despite the inherently undemocratic nature of the Board of Directors, Make the Road New York, a prominent community-based organization whose Queens office falls within the boundaries of the BID, has obtained a seat on the BID’s steering committee.

“Our interest and perspective in participating in it is to be able to represent the entire community, street vendors included,” said Daniel Coates, lead organizer with Make the Road.

But Rafael Samanez, director of VAMOS Unidos, a street vendor organization that is opposed to the BID, disagrees. “Community organizations should not support projects that overwhelmingly promote the interests of large corporations over small businesses and street vendors,” he says. “Organizations like VAMOS Unidos have throughout the years felt the effects and the pressure from BIDs as they always move to severely cripple street vending in communities where they are formed.”

Continued on page 18

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# Occupy's Legacy

## A MASSIVE BURBLING OF POSSIBILITIES

BY ETHAN EARLE

I'd like to propose a toast to Occupy Wall Street, which celebrated its second birthday this September 17 with protests, marches, puppet shows and ballet lessons atop the Financial District's iconic Charging Bull.

Not quite ready to join me in celebration? You're not alone. Popular sentiment today largely wavers between ignoring, dismissing, making fun of and lamenting the death of Occupy. Nor has the view from the left been a whole lot cheerier. With an old and familiar penchant for criticism, its many tendencies — from liberal to progressive to socialist to anarchist — have caught Occupy in a veritable crossfire of all that it hasn't done right.

These various strains of doom and gloom perpetuate the idea that Occupy is disappearing and disappointing. This negativity engenders self-fulfilling prophecies and, more importantly, is mistaken. Even those critiques that hold water obscure a simple truth: Occupy has opened a new, fertile terrain of radical thought and action that will yield unexpected and important fruits for decades to come. The Occupy movement, as so many deem it, isn't so much finished as not yet truly begun.

### BIRTHING PAINS

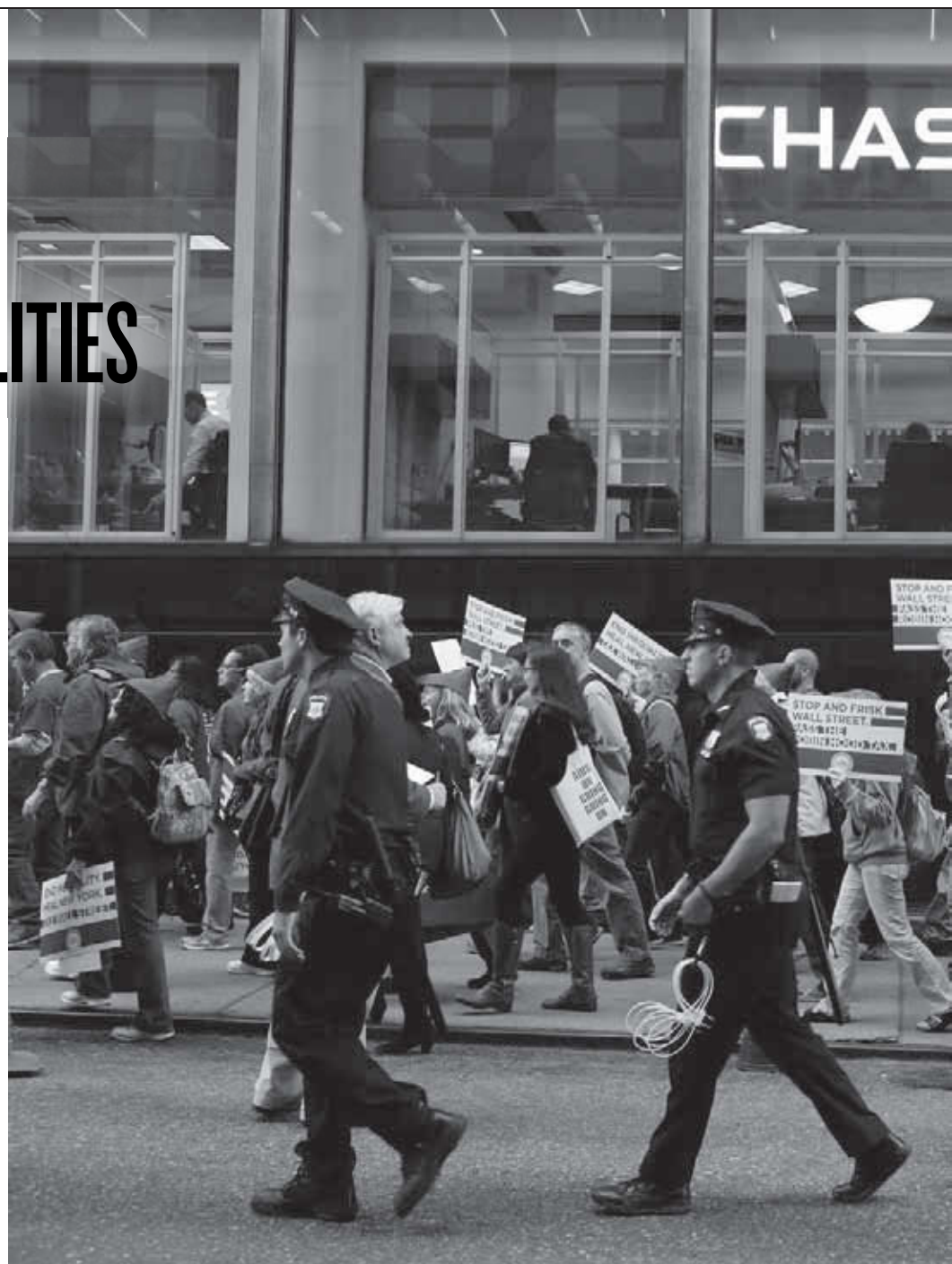
Occupy was born in downtown Manhattan's Zuccotti Park, first conceived as a protest against the economic inequality embodied by nearby Wall Street and the New York financial district. However, from the start Occupy was much broader than any one political issue. An early invitation to the 99% brought a kaleidoscopic range of people to the park to voice their own stories of exploitation and oppression. Equal parts social media and police violence sparked a

wildfire that was clearly waiting to happen, and within weeks there were hundreds of Occupations across the country.

Over the next months, millions of people across the United States — more than at any time since the 1970s — came into contact with open political dissent. The slogan "We are the 99%" lent the protests a common symbolic language around which people coalesced, crossing long-standing boundaries in the process. The issue of economic inequality was forcefully reintroduced into mainstream public discourse, with the top 1% of economic elites unequivocally fingered as the villains. Hundreds of thousands of people participated directly, while countless more donated money or food, joined a credit union or otherwise sought to act in solidarity with the multi-faceted politics of Occupy.

And then, as suddenly as they began, the Occupations were over. In November 2011 police swept through and cleared nearly every encampment, injuring dozens, arresting hundreds and generally causing constitutionally-suspect mayhem. Attempts to reoccupy were put down with brutal resolve, and protestors were left unsure how to continue. Occupiers themselves often had no place to go. Some uneasily argued that the timing was actually *good*, since the coming cold would have soon forced the occupations to voluntarily disband anyway. Most agreed that Occupy would go underground for the winter to organize, prepare and emerge stronger when the weather warmed. But spring arrived and, measured against the grandeur of the previous fall, proved to be a letdown.

While mainstream media had treated Occupy Wall Street like an existential threat from the start, it was at this point that many on the left started to have their own existential crises about Occupy. Should there have



**STILL CHASING THE BANKERS:** Protesters (and of course, cops) march through Manhattan on Sept. 17 while marking the second anniversary of the birth of Occupy.

been more concerted attempts at reoccupation? Was Occupy hampered by a lack of specific goals, or an unwillingness to engage electoral politics? Should it have refocused on Wall Street and economic inequality? Did it belie a lack of organizational discipline, or the limits of horizontalism? Why couldn't it have blossomed into a more cohesive movement? Why had Occupy faded out so quickly? Why do the capitalists always seem to win?

### A SERIES OF HAPPENINGS

Many of these dour assessments are underpinned by an at least tacit, if not explicit, assumption that Occupy is a movement, which isn't altogether accurate. To judge Occupy as a movement, particularly in popular discourse, is to compare it to the likes of the Civil Rights or Anti-War Movements of the 1960s and 70s. The implication is that Occupy is a phenomenon with a coherent, singular vision and a linear direction.

Rather, I would argue that Occupy, at least during the period of Occu-

ptions, constituted a series of transformative *Happenings*. Borrowing from the art world, *Happenings* are extended performance pieces without set narratives. They intervene in different natural environments, inviting onlookers to shape their form and participate in their development. In the late 1950s, *Happenings* became popular as forms of cultural agitation in which mutual collaboration trumped the authority of any one artistic intention. In this way *Happenings* sought to be radically democratic, breaking through the traditional walls that separated the artist, the viewer and the art establishment.

One of the great tricks of neoliberal culture is to convince us that history has ended, that there is no alternative. The Occupations, as *Happenings*, were a series of interventions that profoundly disturbed dominant culture and opened a wide array of new possibilities for those who encountered them.

On an immediate level, Occupy changed the lens through which protest in the United States is popularly viewed. It upended a decade or more of single-day protests that had largely disappointed, bringing hundreds of thousands into the streets to protest everything from the Iraq War to a woman's right to choose with little discernible effect on either policy or the mainstream public. More and more, progressives had been left to ponder the old, uneasy question about whether a tree falling in the forest makes a sound if nobody is around to hear it. The "permanent," aesthetically jarring nature of the Occupations forced Occupy into the self-reflexive media cycle — in which news begets news begets news — and made countless



**ROBIN HOOD WAS RIGHT:** One of the Sept. 17 protests in NYC called for the reinstatement of a small tax on each financial transaction.





TIMOTHY KRAUSE

people see and hear something profoundly different.

This power, palpable through all the hundreds of Occupations, enabled people to think of Occupy as a single entity. But as soon as the Occupations ended, this particular façade was lifted and the Happenings' participants dispersed — a realistic outcome, considering how varied their backgrounds and goals were from the start. Those tethered to the idea of Occupy as a defined unit or identity, or indeed as a movement, were left disappointed.

Certainly, the speed and physical presence that marked Occupy in its first month had in some respects flattered to deceive, and its sudden withdrawal from public space created a vacuum effect. Compounded by the sharp decline in media coverage, sympathizers felt suddenly deflated, as if Occupy had come *this* close to doing something truly transformative but instead was dead and gone, before it ever really had the chance to change the world. In reality, Occupy's Happenings had already succeeded by leaving a massive burbling of possibilities in their wake.

#### OCCUPY SANDY

Over the past year, Occupy Sandy has been the most visible project to emerge from these Occupy Happenings. When Hurricane Sandy came ravaging through New York on October 29, 2012, former Occupiers were the first non-local responders in many of the city's poorer neighborhoods. Indeed, before the storm had even hit land, the social and working networks created during Occupation were abuzz with activity. The same nimbleness that had permitted Occupiers to join flash mob protests or defend the park at a moment's notice was employed to rush to

the aid of families in distress. The ability to quickly assemble practical resources (vans, buckets, food) proved instrumental that night and in the days that followed. Experience at quickly adapting to uncertain conditions in a moving environment allowed Occupiers to tailor their help more closely to residents' needs.

From the start, Occupiers engaged the organizations that were already in place in the neighborhoods where they intervened. They visited churches, schools and community centers where relief centers were being set up, asking what was needed and doing what they could to help provide it. This was powerful for many reasons, but especially because it linked the radical ideals of Occupy to existing institutions in poor, and largely black and brown, communities where disproportionately young and well-educated Occupiers had previously struggled to make connections. Now, nearly a year later, disaster relief has long since given way to the arduous task of rebuilding, and ongoing work with organizations that might not share Occupiers' political views has challenged participants to find new ways to put their ideals into practice.

True to Occupy's multifaceted nature in the post-Occupation phase, the many groups working under the Occupy Sandy banner have handled this differently. Work in Red Hook, for example, was ultimately torn apart by disagreements over how to engage neighborhood and business associations, other relief agencies and the police. In the Rockaways, where Occupy Sandy has been most durable, the response has been more varied, with different Occupy groups addressing different aspects of the rebuild-

*Continued on next page*



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## Legacies

Continued from previous page

ing process. Some focus on direct services to repair damaged buildings. Others work to help strengthen pre-existing community groups by providing technical, organizational and political support. Still other Occupy groups are more explicitly radical, creating new structures — from community centers to worker cooperatives — that will help Rockaway residents pursue greater economic autonomy and political power.

This has been messy at times — as one should expect of such a large-scale and, let us not forget, *young* attempt to implement radical visions in a real-life setting — but it has also been beautiful in what it has accomplished. Literally thousands of people have been helped by Occupy Sandy, and their communities have been touched by and imbued with Occupy's radical politics. Meanwhile, the notion of disaster capitalism — the exploitation of natural disasters to enrich elites at the expense of the poor — has gained traction in mainstream society, and an alternative, in which these same disasters are instead used to build democratic power in low-income areas, has been positively enacted.

Occupy Sandy's fiercest critics, many of whom actually come from other tendencies within Occupy, have maligned it as accommodationist charity work that diverts valuable energies and holds little transformative power. Aside from being presumptuous, their arguments simply miss the point. They assume that Occupy has one direction it should take (and ostensibly that they have a better idea of what that direction is), when its real strength is an ability to open up new avenues of action within the wider spectrum of the left.

And indeed, other Occupy efforts are finding their way into our society in surprising and often potent ways.

### OCCUPY EVERYWHERE

Some of this work continues to operate principally under the Occupy banner. Occupy Our Homes, which has been especially active in Atlanta, Los Angeles and Minneapolis, supports people who are fighting bank foreclosure and eviction. Occupy the SEC has moved away from direct action and into the trenches of legal filings and amicus briefs, serving as an important watchdog in the murky, wonky world of finance. Strike Debt!, which has shed the Occupy moniker but firmly maintains its roots, spreads theory and practice about how debt is used to exploit and debilitate the poor. Through its *Rolling Jubilee* campaign, Strike Debt! has bought more than \$12 million dollars of mostly emergency-room medical debt and abolished it. Other similarly-minded and overlapping groups, like *Tidal Magazine* and Occupy University, develop and make accessible educational materials for people to learn about the theory that drives these types of projects.

Meanwhile, other Occupy efforts — particularly those oriented toward direct action and street protest — act as the left wing of existing progressive campaigns. In New York City, Occupiers have thrown weight behind wide-ranging community efforts to challenge the police department's stop-and-frisk policy. Largely organized through grassroots work before Occupy's time, this movement appears positioned to put an end (for now, anyway) to the heinous practice by which black and brown people throughout the city are arbitrarily subjected to unconstitutional police



STEVE RHODES

**CONSISTENT:** Since its inception, Occupy has insisted that all issues are interconnected.

lice searches. The recent wave of fast-food worker strikes has also received crucial support from people emerging from Occupy, often working in conjunction with Service Employees International Union (SEIU) members and Fast Food Forward activists. Beginning in New York last November with 200 striking workers, the movement has spread outward to over 60 cities and pulled in thousands of workers

across the country. At the same time, an array of different Occupy constellations, many going under different names, have joined forces with groups like 350.org and Tar Sands Blockade to fight the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline.

And the work directly linked to Occupy makes up only a part of its impact. There's been a wave of new worker cooperatives, mutual aid groups and community finance

## SEVEN WAYS OCCUPY CHANGED AMERICA — AND IS STILL CHANGING IT

### 1. PUTTING INEQUALITY ON THE AGENDA

Before Occupy came along, the Tea Party narrative was dominant in American politics. Conservative activists told a story about how big government was strangling taxpayers and small businesses, holding back growth, fiscally bankrupting the nation, and attacking freedom. Occupy's rise was a pivot point away from that narrative. It legitimized public discussion of inequality and helped embolden Democrats to talk about this problem, including President Obama, who gave a hard-hitting speech on inequality in Osawatimie, Kansas just three months after demonstrators first appeared at Zuccotti Park.

### 2. SHAPING THE 2012 ELECTION

Occupy had a huge influence over the 2012 election by putting inequality on the national agenda just six months before the GOP selected a wealthy financial leader as their nominee. By late spring 2012, the Obama campaign was pounding Mitt Romney with a toned-down version of Occupy's anti-Wall Street message. That message would have felt jarring and off if Americans hadn't spent the fall of 2011 hearing discussion of economic disparities and financial abuses thanks to Occupy. Instead, the message resonated deeply with a prepped public and Romney never recovered from being cast as a plutocratic villain.

### 3. INFLUENCING TAX DEBATES

Occupy didn't just push inequality into the mainstream of politics, it also helped legitimize one key solution to inequality: raising taxes on the rich. In the past, conservatives had been able to successfully demonize plans to raise taxes on high earners using a broad "tax-and-spend" attack on liberalism. But in 2012, Presi-

dent Obama drew on broad public support when he campaigned on a platform to raise taxes on the rich and was largely inoculated against the typical anti-tax attacks. After the election, Republicans capitulated in the fiscal cliff negotiations and allowed taxes to rise on high earners for the first time in twenty years. Governor Jerry Brown of California also secured higher taxes on the wealthy in 2012 as a result of a successful ballot initiative. Occupy deserves a share of credit for these victories.

### 4. REVIVING PROGRESSIVE POPULISM

The Tea Party had a monopoly on populist energies before Occupy. Bizarrely, the right had successfully channeled American anger at an economic collapse caused by Wall Street into a stepped-up assault on government regulation and redistributive policies. Occupy grabbed some of that anger for the left and redirected it to the proper targets: corporations, financial elites and the politicians who cater to them. Occupy awoke dormant activist energies on the left and became the strongest display of progressive populist muscle since the anti-war movement 40 years earlier. This new energy has helped fuel a variety of organizing efforts unrelated to Wall Street or the economy. Occupy will endure as a seminal moment in the lives of young progressive activists who grew up largely during the Clinton and Bush years with no memory of mobilized progressive energy beyond the 2008 Obama campaign.

### 5. SEEDING THE NEW UNION ORGANIZING

The wave of worker protests and strikes over the past year, targeting low-wage employers, is partly an outgrowth of Occupy. By showing the power of public protests, combined with online organizing and support from the progressive media and policy world, Occupy encouraged other social movements. And by elevating the problem of inequality, Occupy helped frame the larger chal-

lenge that low-wage workers were taking on when they walked off of jobs paying poverty wages amid record profits for their employers. Thanks partly to Occupy's groundwork, the strikers and protestors have enjoyed wide public and even elite support.

### 6. KEEPING THE HEAT ON WALL STREET

While Occupy was a broad attack on economic and power disparities, it was also a very specific attack on a financial industry that remained arrogant, unrepentant and under-regulated three years after the collapse of Lehman Brothers. Occupy's sharp and fresh critique of Wall Street power came at a crucial moment, as regulators struggled to implement the historic Dodd-Frank law and various civil suits against financial firms remained pending. Putting the misdeeds of the financial industry back in the spotlight helped bolster the push for accountability amid massive resistance by the industry and their political allies in Congress.

### 7. OFFERING ALTERNATIVES TO CAPITALISM

Finally, Occupy helped strengthen a weak thread of the American progressive tradition — namely, exploring alternatives to capitalism. After the protests and encampments were gone, a significant piece of Occupy energy was channeled into building and promoting various cooperative and collective forms of commerce and community. These efforts have brought new energy to a growing constellation of work focused on creating community-based wealth, worker ownership, state banks and the like. This part of the story is still ongoing. But, ultimately, Occupy's legacy in questioning capitalism may be its most enduring

—David Callahan

An earlier version of this list appeared on the Demos Policy Shop blog at [demos.org/policyshop](http://demos.org/policyshop).

September 27-29, New York City

# URBAN CONVERGENCES



Dharavi Slum in Bombay, by Thomas Leuthard

efforts, to name a few. Participants in these efforts have drawn from the lessons of solidarity economy practiced in the park and are now seeking to reproduce more sustainable practices in the world around them. Others have gone to work for a wide range of pre-existing organizations: from radical non-profits to more established NGOs to book publishers and media outlets and, yes, even to the electoral political arena. Who, for instance, could imagine the meteoric rise of mayoral hopeful Bill de Blasio — whose campaign has centered on the economic inequalities that make for a Tale of Two Cities in New York — without Occupy having forced these issues back into public debate? And while not every one of these people or groups will fight for the revolution until the end, the rise in radical political energy is already having tangible effects on our economic and political systems and will continue to do so for years to come.

## THE SWEET HEREAFTER

Now that we've raised our glasses and cleared the air, I'll close with a more sober assessment of what we can expect from Occupy going forward.

Sobriety of course requires recognizing the problems. After all, the Occupations took shape as microcosms of the 99%, and this mass of humanity naturally brought with it a lot of accumulated baggage, as well as a few demons. To say it another way, while Occupy's little worlds brought into relief many of the ills of broader society, there were others that it simply reproduced. Many if not most Occupy projects have struggled with issues of race, class, gender and privilege. Prime culprits have of course been privileged white males, and too many meetings still get dominated by those who can stay longest and are most steeped in the language of victory.

And the dangers are by no means just internal. Occupy's open nature also makes it uniquely permeable to the problems that pervade the world around it. Not surprisingly, this often starts with the market. Most Occupy work is not economically sustainable, forcing participants to work multiple jobs or otherwise exploit their own labor. In this context, the non-profit industrial complex is always knocking at the door, offering paid positions that sometimes allow its converts to take on the system but on other occasions lures them in to simply reinforce it. There is also the lurking threat of active cooptation: corporations, politicians and other powers-that-be seeking to take the edge off this new wave of activism, harness it and use it for their own gain. And of course the most sinister danger: the infiltrators and informants, sadly prevalent in Occupy since the start and to this day.

These are all very real issues. Taken together, they threaten to stifle the more transformative social justice work emerging from Occupy. They also threaten to debase Occupy's image — and by extension that of radical protest as a whole — in mainstream society.

I ask you to toast with me because sometimes positivity is a political act. We live in a society that is eager to define and desperate to make sense of the messy world

around it. Occupy defies this impulse. It is uncertain, constantly evolving and resistant to simple categorization. Will the Occupations return? No, at least not the way they happened in late 2011. But no two Happenings can or should develop in the same way. To bring about radical social, economic and political change, the next wave of Happenings — that is, of mass demonstration and mobilization — will have to look different; it will need to pierce and take hold and shake our society in another unexpected way. And perhaps the greatest danger that Occupy faces is the inability of many of its supporters to simply let it breathe and become.

Occupy has already created an activist base that will bolster the ranks of the next generation of progressive actors. In most cases, they will fight to push their respective projects further to the left. This will be true for activist groups, of course, but it will also include media, academia and government, among others. The extent to which Occupiers will be able to shape and guide these institutions will be key to its ultimate impact. However, where movements usually end — when a sufficient number of participants become convinced that enough has been won — Occupy will go on, precisely because it is something different to each person who was part of it. It can only end when each of their visions for change is realized.

Because of this, if for no other reason, the radicalism stirred up by Occupy will play a key role in the next period of great social upheaval in the United States, which appears quite likely in the context of ongoing austerity and a political and socioeconomic structure cracking under the weight of its own contradictions. And yes, Occupiers will figure prominently in the next great movement in U.S. history. Who knows? It might have already begun, quietly, right before our eyes.

*Ethan Earle is a project manager at the New York office of the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and the author of the study, "A Brief History of Occupy Wall Street," published by RLS in November 2012.*

## WEB EXCLUSIVE

### OCCUPY USA

Occupy encampments sprouted up in more than 650 U.S. cities and towns in the fall of 2011. Within months, most had vanished. What became of the movement's participants and the communities of resistance they formed?

Author and documentary filmmaker Crystal Zevon decided to find out, traveling 30,000 miles in her car over four months earlier this year. From an embattled corner of coastal Maine to Appalachia's shattered mountains, on to nascent intentional communities in Mississippi, Native American reservations in the Southwest and foreclosure fighters in Seattle, Zevon found people who were still inspired to act everywhere she went.

To read about her journey, see the full story at [independent.org/occupy-journey](http://independent.org/occupy-journey).

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**DATE OF BIRTH**  
December 12, 1970

**HOMETOWN**  
Columbia, Maryland

**EDUCATION**  
Brown, Yale Law School

**CAREER**  
Radack was a Justice Department legal ethics attorney when the U.S. launched its "War on Terror" in 2001.

**CONTROVERSIAL CASE**  
In December 2001, Radack warned superiors at the Department of Justice (DOJ) that the FBI had committed an ethics violation during its interrogation of so-called "American Taliban" John Walker Lindh. Radack concluded that Lindh's confession might have to be sealed, something the government was loath to do in its first major post-9/11 terrorism prosecution.

**INITIAL RETALIATION**  
Radack received a scathing job performance review in February 2002 and was told to look for employment elsewhere.

**WHAT SHE LEAKED**  
In June 2002, Radack supplied copies of more than a dozen emails she wrote on the Lindh interrogation to a *Newsweek* reporter after the DOJ only released three of her emails to the judge in Lindh's case. After Radack's leak, the DOJ reached a plea bargain deal with Lindh rather than taking his case to trial.

**FURTHER RETALIATION**  
Anonymous DOJ senior officials attacked Radack in the media as a "traitor" and a "terrorist sympathizer," while the government leaned on her new employer, a Washington D.C. law firm, to fire her. The government vendetta against Radack included helping her employer contest Radack's unemployment benefits claim, referring ethics complaints against Radack to the two state bar associations where she is licensed and placing her on the government's "No-Fly" list. By her count, she was subject to at least 19 extra security searches before being removed from the list.

**LEGAL STATUS**  
The DOJ pursued a criminal investigation against Radack for 15 months before declining to file charges in September 2003. Facing the threat of disbarment, she was unable to get legal work for years.

**CAN'T KEEP A STRONG WOMAN DOWN**  
In 2008, Radack became Director of National Security and Human Rights at the Government Accountability Project, an organization that defends whistleblowers. Radack's clients include NSA whistleblowers Thomas Drake and William Binney and CIA whistleblower John Kiriakou. Radack has authored a book on her experience and is a columnist at the *Daily Kos*.

**IN HER OWN WORDS**  
"As someone who has been the target of a ruthless leak investigation, I believe ... that government employees should be protected, not retaliated against, when they disclose conduct evidencing illegality, fraud, waste or abuse."

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# AFL-CIO Charts a New Course

## ONCE-INSULAR LABOR FEDERATION THROWS OPEN ITS DOORS, BUT WILL IT WORK?

By MICHAEL HIRSCH

LOS ANGELES — At the time of its merger in 1955, the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) represented one third of all American workers. Once called “Big Labor” by critics, it was rightly credited with winning the sorts of concessions that allowed working people to enter into what was identified as a rising and broadening middle class. Today, less than one in eight workers is unionized. Organized labor is no longer “big.” It even borders on the powerless when it comes to reversing soaring levels of inequality and beating back the decades-long corporate attack on its own members’ living standards, let alone being a champion for the rest of the workforce. That’s been the case at least since the 1980s, regardless of which party controlled the White House.

With the prospect of its own extinction now recognized even by itself, the AFL-CIO — the nation’s largest labor federation, with 57 affiliated unions and 13 million members — gathered in early September for its quadrennial convention in the City of Angels seeking something of a miracle.

In the weeks and months leading up to the convention, AFL-CIO president and former miners’ leader Richard Trumka emphasized that it was no longer possible for the Federation to continue with business as usual. This once-insular labor federation decided to throw open its doors — announcing that it would aim to organize much of the 89 percent of the U.S. workforce that is not in a labor union and do so in tight, mutually beneficial coordination with non-traditional worker organizations that do not engage in collective bargaining. It pledged to work with movements of feminists, youth, people of color, the LGBTQ community and the lowest paid members of the workforce, who even many of the Federation’s own affiliated unions traditionally ignore.

### WELCOME WORDS

“The labor movement consists of all workers who want to take collective action to improve wages, hours and working conditions,” reads the key resolution adopted at the convention. “Our unions must be open to all workers who want to join with us.”

One hopeful observer in attendance, the National Organization for Women’s Terry O’Neill, called the effort “not just transactional, but transformational.”

Certainly the rhetoric is bracing and welcome. If you go by a strict reading of the resolutions passed, this is a solidly progressive organization ready to speak with brio for all working people and not just its current members and retirees. Calls were made for a smooth transition to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, rejecting the politics of austerity, organizing and acting in solidarity globally with other workers, transforming Obamacare into health care for all, ending mass incarceration, organizing the anti-union South and supporting workers of all sexual preferences.

It’s come a long way from the cretinous public remarks of former AFL-CIO head George Meany, who in 1972 said that the “Democratic

Party had been taken over by people named Jack, who look like Jills and smell like Johns.”

Hopeful too are the plans to build up state and local labor federations as active community organizations with an eye toward cooperating with militant social movement organizations on their goals as well. One more indication of the changing times: the AFL-CIO no longer calls itself “the” labor movement but *a part* of the labor movement. Admitting that alone is refreshing.

The selection of Tefere Gebre, 45, the charismatic, Ethiopian-born leader of the Orange County, Calif. Federation of Labor, as the Federation’s new executive vice president at least symbolizes the change in direction.

### MANY HURDLES

Despite all the positive signs, the effort to revitalize the AFL-CIO faces many hurdles. The largest one is the unremitting hostility of corporate America toward all but the most servile unions. But other challenges flow from the contradictions built into the Federation’s “big tent” structure, which includes more conservative elements such as unions that represent workers in the construction, energy and armaments industries. They hold jobs in the most politically conservative sectors of corporate capitalism, which employ a correspondingly lower proportion of females and people of color — workers that have been most closely touched by the progressive movements of the last four decades.

Predictably, Trumka’s “y’all come” call is garnering opposition from key elements within the Federation that bridle at being yoked to environmental groups like the Sierra Club, which has opposed the Keystone XL pipeline, coal-fired power plants and more.

“These groups have no equity with the work,” grouched Laborers International Union of North America President Terry O’Sullivan, a vocal supporter of the Keystone XL pipeline, which could create thousands of temporary construction jobs in the Great Plains states where it is slated to be built. “I grew up believing you didn’t get in each other’s way ... but these groups are taking food off our table.”

At this point, the concerns of the AFL-CIO’s “Old Guard” seem overstated. Despite press reports that the Sierra Club and the NAACP are already part of the effort, no pact has been made to bring them on board as affiliated organizations. The only group of national note that can be pointed to is the National Organization for Women. The eight other announced organizations — including Make the Road New York and the Blue Green Alliance (a longstanding coalition of unions and environmentalists chaired by the heads of the Steelworkers Union and the

Sierra Club) — suggest only the potential of an inclusive strategy.

### OLD HABITS

On political action, myopia still prevails. The Federation’s preference remains for insider politicking over the kind of mass campaigning that has been a hallmark of recent efforts by fast-food and Wal-Mart workers to win a living wage and union representation (see page 15). President Obama, perhaps the worst Democratic chief executive since Woodrow Wilson, sent a lackluster three-minute video message to be played during the Convention and was praised repeatedly for keeping the door open to union lobbyists. Open it is, but not in any way answerable.

A senior staffer told me that the Federation isn’t looking back much further than the 2010 election debacle or ahead to more than the 2016 election cycle. And while there is some interest in grooming explicitly labor candidates to run in Democratic Party primaries, there will be no jump-starting of insurgent independent campaigns that would challenge officeholders from both parties.

Sadly, the Federation’s newfound feistiness appears to stop at the proverbial water’s edge. There was a cathedral-like silence hanging over any discussion of the Obama administration’s then-anticipated Syria bombing plans. The AFL-CIO also refused to take a position on the bloated military budget, even tabling a Wisconsin state federation resolution to do so.

Rationalizing the silence on military spending, another senior staffer told me that the group’s leaders didn’t want the Obama administration caught in “a pissing contest with the GOP over what to cut in the federal budget.”

The AFL-CIO wants to reinvent itself, and it should, but too much of the convention had an air of rebranding if not magical thinking. Still, the Federation remains the largest institutional actor on the left, with hundreds of millions of dollars in its war chest and a clear self-interest in forming alliances with movements for social change, in order to turn back the wave of attacks coming not just from the far right but from corporate America, too. Succeeding here means more than talking a better talk; it means artfully putting into practice its stated commitment to social justice unionism for all working people, not just for its own members. It also needs to ensure that its affiliates are on board so that cooperation with allies is transformational and not just a series of tactical, momentary alignments.

*Michael Hirsch blogged daily from the AFL-CIO convention for The Independent. He is a longtime labor and political writer. A member of the National Writers Union, he has worked for four unions as a writer and organizer, served on the executive board of two and taught labor education and sociology in Massachusetts, Indiana and New York.*



MARLENA BUCZEK SMITH

# Fast Food Strikes Rumble Through America's Low-Wage Underbelly

BY PETER RUGH

Something is wrong in America. In towns and cities across the country, fast-food workers have been walking off the job. That's not how it's supposed to work. They are supposed to say, "May I take your order, please?" But, in a series of strikes that escalated to national scale in late August, workers at Burger Kings, Dairy Queens and other leading quick meal palaces weren't taking orders, neither from customers nor from managers. Workers in Colonel Sanders's army broke rank at Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets. Picket lines went up under the golden arches of McDonald's. America's low-wage underbelly rumbled.

"Everybody is standing up today," said Naquasia LeGrand, a 21-year-old New Yorker who divides her time between working for two Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets — one

in Brooklyn, the other in Queens — and organizing for a union. She was among a crowd of 100 or so that shut down a Midtown Manhattan McDonald's before dawn on August 29.

The atmosphere inside the restaurant was like that of a revival. The two-story McDonald's was packed to capacity with strikers and their supporters, clapping and chanting "Can't Survive on \$7.25" — a reference to the New York State and federal minimum wage. A local pastor emceed the occasion while city council members jockeyed for stage time.

The job action on August 29 was the latest show of force from a campaign demanding union recognition and \$15 an hour that began with a one-day strike involving 200 people in New York City last November. Since then, the union drive has taken root in several East Coast and Midwestern cities, including Boston, Washington, D.C., Chicago,



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**SIGN OF THE TIMES:** Fast-food workers have gone on strike several times in the past year, in NYC and across the country.

Detroit, Flint, Mich. and Milwaukee. The fresh wave of strikes marked new territory for the campaign as workers stepped out of kitchens in West Coast and Southern cities — Los Angeles, Seattle, Tampa, Fla. and Raleigh, N.C., among them.

## EVEN IN TEXAS

Jose Avila, a 22-year-old Houston resident who works for Subway, watched on TV as the fast-food strikes spread earlier this year. "Why aren't we stepping up?" he asked himself.

That summer, campaigners with the Texas Organizing Project approached Avila while he was working behind the counter at his job. It was one of the hottest days of the year and the store's air conditioner was broken. On top of that the restaurant was understaffed and Avila was doing a job meant for two.

"They came in and they saw the struggle I was going through," he said. "They spoke about the strike they were planning, and I decided to jump in and fight the fight." Avila

*Continued on page 19*



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## U.S. War Plans Derailed BUT GOALS REMAIN THE SAME

BY FR. DAVE SMITH

For leading Western powers, the chemical weapons attack that killed hundreds in Ghota, Syria on August 21 was never more than a propaganda device.

The real issue is simple — U.S. and Israeli control over the entirety of the Middle East. This has always been the agenda, and despite all recent efforts at re-embroidering the emperor's new clothes, Obama's guise is looking increasingly transparent.

The contours of the plan for U.S. hegemony in the Middle East were leaked quite plainly by General Wesley Clark in his 2003 book, "Winning Modern Wars." Clark recounts, "As I went back through the Pentagon in November 2001, one of the senior military staff officers had time for a chat. Yes, we were still on track for going against Iraq, he said. But there was more. This was being discussed as part of a five-year campaign plan, he said, and there were a total of seven countries, beginning with Iraq, then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Iran, Somalia and Sudan."

The program is behind schedule, certainly, but the systematic destruction of independent governments across the Middle East has been as brutal as it has been thorough. We've watched the dominoes fall, from Afghanistan to Iraq to Libya and now Syria and Lebanon, with Iran not far behind, and as each domino falls the cries of millions of suffering human beings fades into the background as we move on to the next target.

Even if Clark had not spelled out the grand plan, the actions of the United States speak clearly enough. The game is one of domination and control of the oil-rich Middle East.

Having said that, the reality we have just witnessed was the failure of Obama's war-marketing machine.

Too many people started asking the wrong questions. Instead of keeping to the intended dialogue over whether Assad should be punished and what the consequences of that punishment would be, ordinary people everywhere strayed from the script.

People questioned whether Assad was guilty and whether the United States had the right to act as the world's moral policeman. Not many went so far as to ask the truly off-limits questions as to what U.S. intentions in the region really are. Even so, the propaganda machine stumbled and crashed.

While this battle for Damascus may have been lost, the war (for both Syria and Obama) is far from over. Since chemical weapons were never really relevant to U.S. war plans to begin with, we should not expect war to be abandoned even if chemical weapons are taken off the agenda entirely. There most surely is a Plan B.

Even now the U.S. administration is trying to reframe the dialogue. On the issue of United Nations jurisdiction over Syria's chemical weapons arsenal, Secretary of State John Kerry is saying that there will be "consequences" if the proposed U.N. oversight

**EVEN NOW THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION IS TRYING TO REFRAME THE SITUATION IN SYRIA TO JUSTIFY A FUTURE ATTACK.**

isn't conducted satisfactorily and the Syrian government doesn't keep to its "obligations."

The framework for a new public dialogue is being laid out, where the appropriate questions will be "is Assad keeping to his obligations?" and, if not, "does the United States have any choice but to force his compliance through re-igniting the war machine?" We only

have to remember the U.S. demands placed on Saddam Hussein to give up his weapons of mass destruction, where whatever the Iraqi dictator did was interpreted as non-compliance, to see how this scenario plays out.

And so the groundwork has been laid for the second battle for Damascus. The question now is whether the church and peace activists around the world will continue to be able to hold their ground against a renewed assault in rhetoric.

*Fr. Dave Smith is an Anglican priest from Sydney, Australia. He traveled to Syria in May as a member of a peace delegation. This article is excerpted and adapted from an article ("How Obama Lost the Battle of Damascus") that originally appeared at [prayersforsyria.com](http://prayersforsyria.com).*

### ON DEADLINE

The Syrian government met the first deadline in a disarmament plan brokered by the United States and Russia by submitting information about its chemical weapons, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons announced September 21.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Russian deal, the government of Bashar al-Assad is expected to fully relinquish control of its chemical weapons stockpile by mid-2014. The Syrian government is believed to have about 1,000 tons of mustard gas, VX and sarin in its stockpiles. Syria is currently in the third year of a bloody civil war that has killed an estimated 100,000 people.

The Obama administration has threatened to launch military strikes against Syria if it decides the Syrians have not complied with the agreement. Speaking on *Democracy Now*, Noam Chomsky, a longtime critic of U.S. foreign policy, said a chemical weapons ban should have been extended to all of the Middle East, including Israel, which violated international law by using white phosphorous in heavily populated areas during its 2008-2009 assault on Gaza.

"Chemical weapons should be eliminated everywhere, but certainly in that region," Chomsky said.

—Independent Staff

# Humanitarian Hypocrisy

BY ANNA POLONYI

PARIS — A young man climbs the stairs and enters the waiting room: he's wearing a leather jacket, with his long hair smoothed back into a ponytail. His eyes are bright green, and they jot about the room. He smiles a lot, as if to excuse his presence here.

Even all the way in Damascus, people have heard of office 112E, 6 Place Gambetta in Paris. On the first floor, there is a waiting room with steel chairs lining the walls. Its door is left ajar. A white sheet of paper has been taped up as a makeshift sign, and the letters on it have been drawn multiple times with pencil. They read, in Arabic and in English: Syria.

Ami is an army deserter. His name is not really Ami; he distrusts journalists very much. He has been living in Paris for a couple of months now, and just last week, he received his political refugee status. "But I'm not a rebel," Ami insists. Like many Syrian refugees in France, he hadn't meant to come here. He was planning on going to the U.K. after he fled the army, but he was caught by border control at the Parisian Gare du Nord, just as he was about to board the London-bound train. He's 22 and doesn't know what he's going to do with his life.

Like the others sitting in the waiting room, he has come to see Sabreen Al-Rassace, who manages the walk-in office set up for Syrian refugees here in one of Paris' municipal buildings. Al-Rassace is an NGO worker who guides asylum-seekers along the labyrinthine administrative process of obtaining refugee status in France. It's one of the few places in the country where you don't need an appointment. Today, she has already met with Rula, a Christian woman who fled Islamist rebels in Maaloula, her village in Syria. Rula wanted to know how she could help her family get out. There's not much she can do, and Rula will be going back to Syria.

In September, the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, announced that the number of Syrians that had fled the country since the beginning of the conflict in 2011 had topped two million. The agency called on Western states to create exceptional humanitarian aid programs to respond to the growing tide of refugees, which have also left Syria's border regions overwhelmed. For its part, the United States responded to UNHCR by agreeing to allow 2,000 Syrians onto its soil, a major shift compared to the 90 or so refugees it accepted since the conflict broke out. Protection will be granted over the next four months.

The European Union has until now failed to draw up a common program for dealing with Syrians seeking refuge at its door. In 2012, Europe took in 25,000 Syrian refugees. In response to UNHCR's call, Germany agreed to allow an additional 5,000 asylum-seekers into the country, while Austria pledged to welcome an additional 500 refugees, doubling its quota. The United Kingdom offered more aid without offering more visas, and France remained silent.

When pressed, the French government claimed its asylum system was already "saturated." This year, 700 Syrians have sought

asylum in the country. Meanwhile, just next door, Germany took in ten times that number in 2012.

France is near the bottom rung of the European ladder in terms of welcoming Syrian refugees. "When people ask, I tell them: go to Sweden. Go to Scandinavia. France is one of the worst places you can come to," Al-Rassace says. The procedure in France is also notoriously long. Asylum-seekers may occasionally have to wait up to six months or a year to receive a response from immigration.

Even after receiving papers, they continue to face considerable challenges. "They are left entirely on their own again," Al-Rassace explains. "The language barrier continues, and the social rights related to their new status are difficult to really access. Some people are entirely desperate. It's not just because they have been granted papers that they systematically are able to find accommodation or financial resources."

French president François Hollande has been supportive of solving the humanitarian crisis with humanitarian bombs. In the wake of chemical attacks that killed hundreds of

civilians on the outskirts of Damascus on August 21, Hollande called for strong punitive measures. And even after the United Kingdom backtracked on military action, Hollande continued to back the United States' call for strikes by stating, "France will be part of it. France is ready."

Pressured by refugee rights NGOs to respond to UNHCR's call, Hollande instead defended his position on humanitarian intervention. "It would be a paradox to let [the Syrian government] do as they please while having to host more and more refugees," he said. Needless to say, it is also a paradox to call for action and yet remain inactive when faced with the misery of those fleeing the crisis one has been called on to resolve.

The U.S.-Russian deal reached in Geneva and backed by the UN Security Council does not include military action. As the United States and Russia patch things up in the Security Council, and the military option fades nearly as quickly as it flared up, it is clear that the 'humanitarian' part of 'humanitarian intervention' was never what gave it urgency in the first place.

As Chris Bickerton, international relations professor at Cambridge University points out, "when people talk about humanitarian intervention, they think it's about humanitarian conditions. The prompt is humanitarian conditions, but the deciding factor comes when states feel like they have to prove things to each other."

In other words, Hollande was suffering a slight case of FOMO, or Fear Of Missing Out. According to the French daily *Le Monde*, Syria would have been the fifth military operation France launches since 2001. French ambitions to remain a "Great Power" on the world stage



**NOWHERE ELSE TO GO:** More than 120,000 Syrians are estimated to be living in the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

have been indulged by its involvement in Libya under the former French president Nicolas Sarkozy, as well as Hollande's own North African intervention in Mali this year. In January 2013, Hollande launched Opération Serval, sending in 3,000 French troops to regain control over Islamist-held northern Mali. The pullout date, initially scheduled for the end of 2013, has been postponed an additional two months and some French troops are set to remain on the ground indefinitely.

France also has significant historical ties with Syria, as it was under a French colonial mandate until the end of the Second World War. The French oil company Total still had a highly lucrative presence in the area until its withdrawal in 2011. And early that same year,

France actively recognized the Syrian opposition and began cultivating a partnership to prepare for a post-Assad Syria.

When British Prime Minister David Cameron and Obama both began to waver in their determination for military action, Hollande was described by the French national daily *Le Canard Enchaîné* as "a kid whose buddies have pushed him forward to join a fight and now that he's there, do not follow him." Today, along with the others in the international community, Hollande is more like the boy who called wolf. And as Bickerton points out, "Just because intervention is off the agenda doesn't mean that humanitarian conditions in Syria are any better."

**FRANCE HAS BEEN MORE INTERESTED IN BOMBING SYRIA THAN IN HELPING ITS REFUGEES.**



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THE INDEPENDENT September 23–October 21, 2013 17



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## IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES



**STREET HEAT:** Small business owners, street vendors and local residents voice their concerns about a proposed Jackson Heights-Corona Business Improvement District during a Sept. 8 rally in front of Councilmember Julissa Ferreras' district office.

## Queens

*Continued from page 7*

Make the Road's stance has helped legitimize the Jackson Heights-Corona BID as being representative of the interests of the community even though it has been unpopular with members of Small Business United, a project established by Make the Road “to elevate the voices of small business owners from New York's vibrant immigrant neighborhoods.”

“In two meetings the members of Small Business United were unanimously opposed to the Jackson Heights-Corona BID and the main concern was the rent increase and the standardization of some of the most diverse neighborhoods in the world,” says Castiblanco, a member of Small Business United.

When asked how Make the Road could succeed in their stated goal of creating a more inclusive BID given that the majority of directors will be property owners, Coates seemed vague about the details, saying, “I am not totally sure what the full composition of the board is.”

RACA activists and supporters have vowed to continue to oppose the BID, insisting that

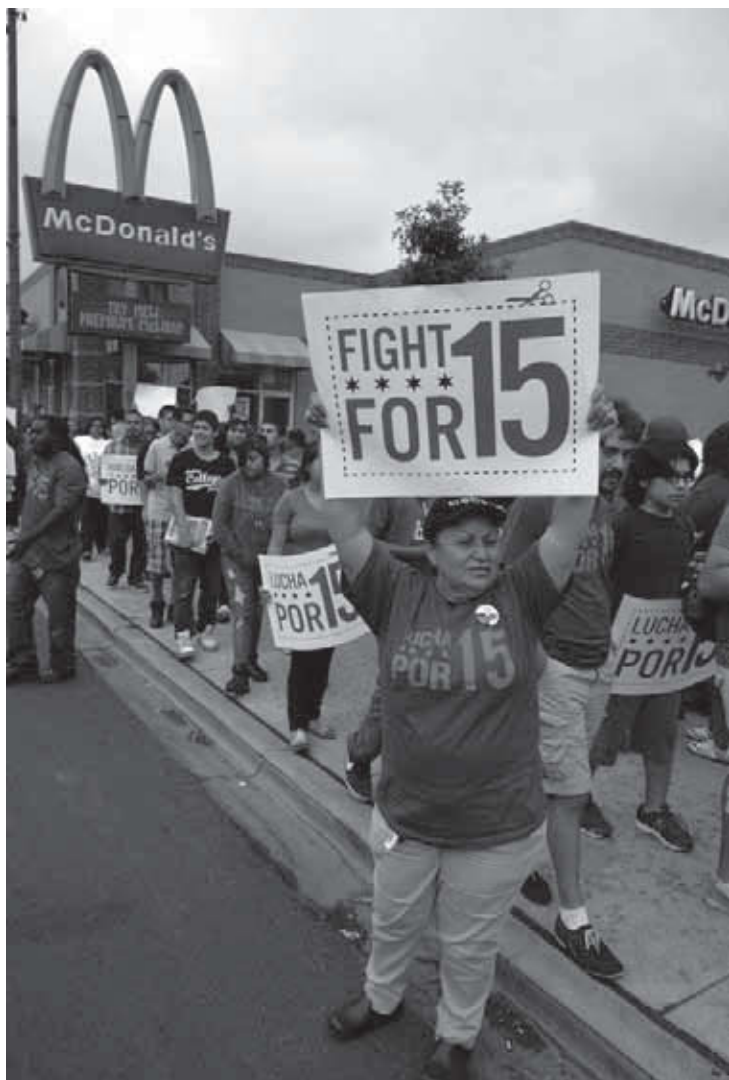
the affected neighborhoods already have more than enough resources to develop the community in a way that does not displace small businesses or local residents.

“The economic situation now is very critical, with high real estate taxes and high unemployment. The rent for the businesses and residents is extremely out of hand, so how can a BID operate under those conditions? Peña asked.

Meanwhile, even supporters of the BID remain uncertain, saying that many business and property owners in the affected area are still uninformed about the BID.

“I'll be honest with you,” says John Ferreira, President of the Junction Boulevard Merchants Association, and currently a member on the BID's steering committee. “On Junction Boulevard as much as we've gone to the stores and given them information, I still think there are a lot store owners and a lot of landlords that are not up to snuff on the meaning of the BID ... or how the BID is going to work.”

*Marty Kirchner is a community and labor organizer in Queens. He is a member of the Roosevelt Avenue Community Alliance.*



STEVE RHODES

**CAN'T GET BY ON \$7.25:** Striking fast-food workers in Chicago demand a living wage and union representation during a July 31 walkout. A larger wave of strikes followed on Aug. 29.

## Fast Food Strikes

*Continued from page 15*

and approximately 100 other fast-food workers joined the national strike, holding rallies, pickets and speak-outs at numerous Houston restaurants.

The new escalation from fast-food workers comes at a time of soaring inequality in America. A recent review of data from the Internal Revenue Service by researchers at the University of California, Oxford and the Paris School of Economics finds earnings for those in the top 1 percent of the U.S. economy increased by nearly 20 percent last year. The study further finds that 95 percent of wealth gains made since the 2008 recession went to America's richest individuals. Meanwhile, ordinary Americans are working longer hours for less pay. Mid-wage jobs constituted 60 percent of jobs lost in the recession while low-wage jobs accounted for 58 percent of those recovered, according to the National Employment Law Project.

The \$170-billion-a-year fast-food industry exemplifies what workers seeking to lift themselves and their families out of poverty are up against. Despite its high rate of profitability, workers in the industry earn wages that hover at or just above the legal minimum.

The National Restaurant Association, acting as a mouthpiece for America's leading fast-food giants, has pushed back, saying that \$15 an hour is an unreasonable expectation and that price hikes and layoffs would ensue should the demands of striking workers be met. Other detractors have claimed that

employees could be replaced by iPads.

But iPads can't wipe down tables or fry french fries. In Australia, the minimum wage is \$15.96 and the cost of a Big Mac remains relatively the same as in the United States. If the industry is looking to cut costs, campaigners contend, they can start with salaries at the top: The average fast-food executive makes \$25,000 a day, more than what a fast-food restaurant employee takes home in a year.

For his part, President Obama proposed raising the federal minimum wage to \$9 an hour last spring, but the measure has stalled in Congress, where lawmakers are instead debating cuts to food stamps that millions of low-wage workers depend on. Even if

Obama's proposed wage increase were to pass, the slight bump would do little to raise those employed in minimum-wage industries out of poverty.

### BANDING TOGETHER

Impatient, fast-food workers are banding together and seeking to force change from below. The union drive has been underwritten largely by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which has provided funding for localized community groups like the Texas Organizing Project and New York Communities for Change to mobilize on the ground. Some critics have speculated that the strikes have more to do with the SEIU flexing its political muscles and creating a media spectacle than achieving the campaign's stated objectives. However, workers again and again say they decided to join the campaign because they felt that they had little to lose.

Kareem Sparks, a 30-year-old Brooklyn McDonald's worker, joined the union drive in the run-up to a previous round of walkouts, which took place on July 31. Once his employer got wind of it, he was offered a promotion. "They wanted to make me a manager," he said. "I turned them down, since that would mean I couldn't organize, I couldn't speak out."

Since the union drive got underway in New York City and began spreading nationwide, there have been numerous instances of higher-ups firing workers and using other forms of retaliation, such as slashing their hours to prevent them from unionizing. In response, workers have mobilized in each other's defense, in some instances shutting down res-

taurants and negotiating with management to rehire laid-off employees. Other cases are being handled through courts by lawyers retained by the local campaigns.

When Sparks talks to fellow workers, he reminds them that they have rights on the job. "Supervisors and general managers automatically assume that they can intimidate workers and make us feel like we don't have the right to organize, when we do," he said.

Often, these conversations happen at fast-food restaurants, where, when he can afford it, Sparks takes his children for dinner.

"People in this country like to eat fast food," he explained. "I indulge in it myself. When I get a chance to go out and spend a little money on fast food, I try to acknowledge the workers. I try to educate them on the situation. I show them clips on my cell phone of me talking to the press, being on TV. I basically encourage them to join in because we need as many people with us as possible."

### BROADER VICTORIES

Analysts agree that the odds are stacked against the fast-food campaign winning collective bargaining rights or what would amount to a near doubling of wages. The union drive, however, could have broader effects on the living standards of millions of people across the country.

Nelson Lichtenstein, the director of the Center for the Study of Work, Labor and Democracy at the University of California-Santa Barbara, doubts the campaign will achieve its immediate demands. Instead, he argues that the struggle could lead to broader victories if it keeps the discussion of wages front and center in the national dialogue.

"If your goal is a collective bargaining agreement at the 42nd Street McDonald's, you might get it actually. But it won't do you any good," said Lichtenstein, explaining that the majority of the nation's fast-food outlets are run by individual franchise owners and organized by regions. This structure enables mega-chains like McDonald's to divert responsibility for abusive labor practices while generating super-size profits. Such a victory, however, could set off a larger wave of concessions from the industry in major metropolitan areas — compromises that likely wouldn't include contracts but would most certainly feature a bump in pay.

More significantly, Lichtenstein explained that the strikes could energize the political campaign challenging lawmakers to raise the minimum wage. They also bring the subject of inequality and the stagnation of wages to the forefront of the policy agenda.

Naquasia LeGrand, who took part in the first one-day strike last November in New York, was more optimistic. The August 29 job actions multiplied her sense of what is possible. She expects that, as more and more workers see their counterparts joining in the union drive, it will have a snowball effect and their numbers will continue to increase. "Who knows?" she said. "The whole world could stand up."

*Peter Rugh is a freelance reporter and activist based in Brooklyn, New York. Sections of this article are drawn from earlier journalism that appeared at WagingNonviolence.org.*

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ANARCHY



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CULTURE OF CONSENSUS: OWS members signal agreement at a General Assembly meeting in the fall of 2011 by holding up their hands and twinkling their fingers.

## Radical Reflections

*Thank You, Anarchy: Notes From the Occupy Apocalypse*

BY NATHAN SCHNEIDER  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS,  
2013

*The Democracy Project: A History, A Crisis, A Movement*

BY DAVID GRAEBER  
SPIEGEL & GRAU, 2013

Social movements expand or they die. The spark of Zucotti Park caught like a prairie fire, going from a single poorly planned occupation to a nationwide movement in a few scant months before sputtering out just as quickly. Some of the energies harnessed by this exuberant phase of expansion have resurfaced in attempts to mobilize debt resistance (Strike Debt!), reclaim foreclosed properties (Occupy Our Homes), challenge entrenched racial disparities (Occupy the Hood), or rebuild in the wake of disaster (Occupy Sandy). But on the whole, attempts to restart Occupy Wall Street (OWS) have failed to catch alight and most participants have turned to other ventures.

In two recently published books, scholar and activist David Graeber and journalist-participant Nathan Schneider try to recapture the energies of OWS. Graeber takes a more synoptic approach, situating Occupy in its historical and international context as the heir to a long string of attempts by people to collectively control the conditions of their lives. Schneider, on the other hand, offers a series of dispatches cum mediations on the Occupy movement and moment.

While *Democracy Project* sometimes tends toward didacticism, *Thank You, Anarchy* occasionally

verges on prose poetry. Much of this stems from the differing motivations of the authors. Graeber seems focused on disseminating the ideas underpinning and embodied in OWS to a broader audience — he even published *Democracy Project* with an imprint of Random House — although he is careful to note that he is speaking in an individual capacity and not as a spokesperson or representative of the movement. Schneider seems more interested in reaching those who were at least sympathetic to Occupy, if not necessarily stalwarts of the movement, and thereby stimulating a process of reflection.

The two books raise a common question: where do we go from here? Both authors harbor optimism that Occupy Wall Street and its offshoots in other cities and towns were only the opening phase in a larger project of societal transformation, the ultimate evolution and effects of which are yet to be seen. But they're vague on the details.

It's hard to fault Graeber and Schneider for not giving clear answers. Both would likely defend the choice

of Occupiers not to direct their energies into forming a radical political party, or — probably more plausibly — get sucked into the maw of Democratic Party-aligned reformist politics. And rightly so.

But what's left? Given the almost universal disillusionment with the 20th century project of assembling the energies of the left into a

revolutionary party capable of becoming the state, it's unclear how we can address the endemic problems of global capitalism, including vast inequality, environmental depredation and the lack of accountability in politics. Getting some debt forgiven, clipping the locks on a foreclosed house and letting people make it a home again, or providing relief for people displaced by Hurricane Sandy are certainly worthy endeavors. But they're hardly synonymous with larger societal transformation or with making the 1% quake in their Gucci loafers or Louboutin stilettos.

The balance sheet of OWS is clearly positive. It put the issue of ever-increasing inequality on the national agenda while introducing a new generation to radical and prefigurative politics. Moreover, its rapid-fire expansion showed that the mounting debts and decreasing life opportunities that have accompanied the upwards redistribution of wealth in neoliberal America has rendered the American Dream a nightmare for many of the 99%. It's hard to tell, however, what the long-term import of all this might be.

Occupy may soon be considered a mere interlude interrupting the flow of "normal" politics, not even of the significance of the 1960s or the global justice movement. Or it may be the opening phase of an ongoing movement to challenge the citadels of power, as Graeber and Schneider hope, as stray sparks spread by its initial expansion catch. Schneider claims, "Sparks like this won't be long in coming. They're flashing all the time. They can't be planned for, but it's for us to lay the kindling, it's for us to be ready to catch fire — or others will be ready in our place."

As Chinese Communist Party leader Zhou Enlai apocryphally said when asked what the significance of the French Revolution was, it's too soon to tell. Let's hope that Occupy represents the irruption of a real alternative into the field of politics as usual, rather than merely a "morbid symptom" of an interregnum during which the old forms of left politics have died and the new have not yet been born.

—MATTHEW WASSERMAN

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TIMOTHY KRAUSE

DELIVERING A MESSAGE: Protesting in Midtown during fall 2011.

## COIN of the Realm: Sprawling Police State Brings the Wars Home

*Life During Wartime: Resisting Counterinsurgency*

EDITED BY KRISTIAN WILLIAMS,  
WILLIAM MUNGER AND  
LARA MESSERSMITH-GLAVIN  
AK PRESS, 2013

*Enemies Within: Inside the NYPD's Secret Spying Unit and Bin Laden's Final Plot Against America*

BY MATT APUZZO & ADAM GOLDMAN  
TOUCHSTONE/SIMON & SCHUSTER, 2013

Anyone who spent 10 minutes at an Occupy encampment knows that the police response was intense, invasive, unconstitutional and bordered on the deadly. In New York, Oakland, Boston and in hundreds of other locales nationwide, the police were not there to serve and protect nonviolent protesters, let alone the general public. To quote Chicago Mayor Richard Daley's infamous words during a week-long police riot against anti-war protesters at the 1968 Democratic National Convention, his cops were there "not to create disorder but to preserve disorder." Who can improve on Daley? *Life During Wartime* tries. I think it fails, though the trying is well worth the effort.

A ponderous book that's impossible to read in one sitting, or even 10, it's filled with much-needed information on counterinsurgency efforts at home and abroad. It chronicles mainstream institutions such as the media that serve to legitimize the existing social order and cool out, co-opt or crush dissent. It examines everything from state violence to an Orwellian manipulation of language. It also speaks to the capacity of social movements to act smarter in response. The breadth of its examples and the understanding of its 15 contributors of the depth of manipulation alone makes the book necessary reading. That's where it succeeds.

Where it fails is in its broader thesis, which asserts that every element of the social order is implicated not only in reproducing conformity and compliance and in legitimating its own power but in naming counterinsurgency (or, COIN) as its principal method of social control.

Co-editor Kristian Williams writes that Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz's famous maxim, "War is the continuation of politics



Boston, April 2013.

by other means," can usefully be reversed to read that politics *is* war — in the present case counterinsurgency — by other means. At the end of this book counterinsurgency is not only treated as political but the preferred and dominant form of class maintenance in the United States.

That's a correction to the standard Disney-like understanding of bourgeois democracy, where all would be right with the democratic system if only more citizen activists and excluded groups engaged in electoral politics. But everyday social controls don't constitute counterinsurgency and dissident work or community cultures absent organization don't in themselves constitute resistance. Using "counterinsurgency" as a circus tent covering every aspect of class rule explains little about the actual nature of the state, the multiple choices an elite has in tactics, the sometimes feral differences elites have among themselves or the numerous ways oppressed groups can fight back.

Using counterinsurgency as the definition of class politics flattens the possibilities not only for a ruling class but for its subalterns, too. Still, given how much material the authors marshal, reading this book is worth the slog. Even if the contributors don't present a seamlessly persuasive master plan, it's better to know what's lurking in the dark.

A book that succeeds, if only because its is so much more theoretically circumscribed, is *Enemies Within*. There's no master narrative offered by the authors, both Associated Press reporters. And while this book could use one, it manages to tell the necessary story about just how stupidly and thuggishly the New York Police Department operated in its mission creep to ferret out potential terrorists in the years following 9/11.

The villains are clear: Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Police Commissioner Ray Kelly and Deputy Commissioner for Intelligence David Cohen. If there are any "good guys" in this story (and in any other context they would not be mine), they are the FBI agents and state police officers who did not surveil whole communities, including New York's some 700,000 Muslims (a process Cohen called "zone defense").

The FBI's relative restraint did not rub off on the cowboys at the NYPD who routinely treated constitutionally protected speech, whether publicly expressed, written or in casual conversation as a precursor to terrorism.

Despite its aggressive surveillance

and a soaring counter terrorism budget, the NYPD failed to net a single legitimate terrorism suspect in the post-9/11 decade. And when the single most dangerous terrorist plot to take shape in that time did crop up, New York's Finest were caught unawares.

This conspiracy — hatched by one Najibullah Zazi, a young Queens resident of Afghani descent who sought to bomb subways in New York in 2009 — is at the center of *Enemies Within* and gives the book its mystery novel quality.

Zazi received explosives training in Pakistan from al-Qaeda and later recruited a pair of former high school friends from Flushing to join him in carrying out his intended "martyrdom operation." Zazi's plans were uncovered by the FBI, which had put him under surveillance. The NYPD's contribution was to come charging into the case at the last minute and unwittingly give away the investigation to an informant at Zazi's mosque in Queens, who they grilled and who in turn alerted Zazi that he was being watched. Zazi fled New York and was subsequently nabbed by the Feds.

In the authors' retelling of this tale, the NYPD emerges as a mendacious band of Keystone Cops. To this day, Bloomberg and Kelly continue to insist that the NYPD remain free of any external oversight lest New York become "a more dangerous place to live." Meanwhile, the Intelligence Division operates with 600 officers on a \$60 million budget, and Muslim residents, even those once favorably disposed to helping the police, are — as one rights attorney said — living in fear. For them, New York is less safe, thanks to the NYPD.

While *Enemies Within* makes clear that the NYPD has and is continuing to pursue its own private "war on terror," the book's narrow scope leaves out what movement activists and civil libertarians already know from experience: the New York police force is not only monitoring Muslim communities but proactively harassing a wide array of left-wing activists in the city, too. If neither book offers a synthetic explanation of the complex relationship between police or military practices and the needs of the capitalist state and the corporate class, their capacity for telling useful stories that contribute to developing that synthesis is invaluable.

—MICHAEL HIRSCH

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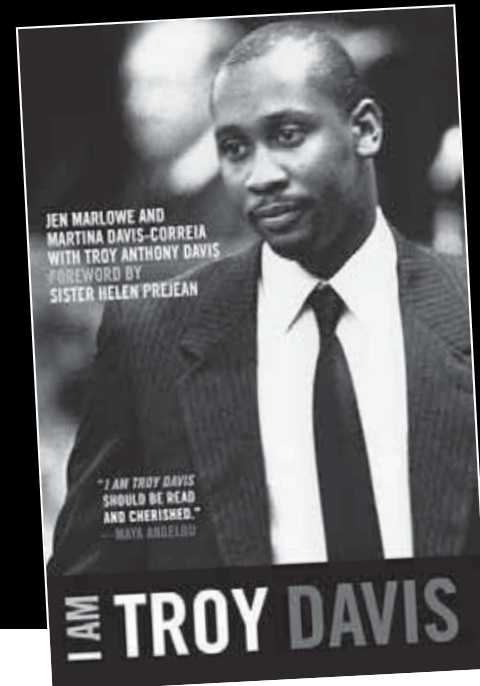
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—Amy Goodman



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# Between Two Worlds

INTERVIEW BY DAVID MEADOW

**A** disenchanting anti-war movement splinters into squabbling factions. Bombs go off. A liberal presidential candidate is felled. U.S. society is left reeling. Echoes of the late 1960s? Perhaps ... For Lauren Ferebee, this is the setting for *Somewhere Safer*, her play that explores the inner lives of nine people from across the contemporary worlds of politics, media and activism who are affected by an act of political violence. Well-received during August's New York International Fringe Festival, the play also offers competing understandings of the individual's responsibility to society without taking sides.

"When you get to a place where you feel like you know the answer, and you're just putting your solution onstage, there's nothing interesting there," said the Texas-born, Brooklyn-based playwright. Ferebee recently spoke with *The Independent* about the thinking that went into *Somewhere Safer*, what she's working on next and the competing influences of art and activism in her life.

**DAVID MEADOW:** What were some elements you drew on to create the world and characters of *Somewhere Safer*?

**LAUREN FEREBEE:** After the debt-ceiling crisis [of 2011], which kind of sparked the whole play, I was just really, really angry, I would say. I thought, 'We have a country that is in crisis, and they're getting paid to not do their jobs — and we elected them.' At that moment, I thought, 'This is a watershed moment in government, where we now have definitive proof that our government does not represent our best

interests.'

Then there was the Occupy movement. I was very inspired by a lot of the people that I met and practices like the human microphone, which was empowering for people, no matter what they were saying, to know that whether other participants agreed with them or not, that they were listening and cared about what the speaker was saying.

The third thing that influenced the play was a feature article I read in *Time* online about 20-somethings in the Obama administration. The article played into a kind of liberal glamorization of young, very privileged kids who have become entrenched in the Washington political system and are able to party until late at night and wake up at four in the morning to start working from their Blackberries. There's an unreality of being able to live that life, because there's an extreme privilege at work there — wanting to project an image that you are superhuman, that you can do anything.

**DM:** *The unthinking acceptance of privilege can take its toll on progressive social movements as well.*

**LF:** It doesn't work for someone who already has a tremendous amount of privilege, to decide that they are the mouthpiece for people that have less privilege — that don't have a voice in society. Just as it doesn't work for me to sit here and be the voice of all women everywhere — because I'm not, and I don't know what a lot of women go through, and I have a certain level of privilege myself being white and having gone to a liberal arts college.

monologue that's alternately hilarious and terrifying, we glimpse the true nature of worship, authority and humanity's tragic urge to obey. His heartbroken friend, our narrator, leads us down a twisted path to uncover the mystery of what really happened.

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DIRECTED BY MEGHAN FINN  
VIDEO DESIGN BY JARED MEZZOCHI  
PRESENTED BY TEETH OF TOOTH ATELIER  
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Oct. 15–Nov. 16  
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**ART & POLITICS:** Lauren Ferebee, playwright of *Somewhere Safer*, tackles big themes with gusto in her work.

**DM:** *When you produce a work of art that embraces political themes, how do you avoid making it feel preachy or didactic?*

**LF:** The thing that I try most to do is make sure that I'm not just representing one side of any issue. In *Somewhere Safer*, it was really important to me that it wasn't just a bunch of liberal people who were really intelligent, and no one else. For example, *The Newsroom* comes across as being really preachy and didactic to me, because it's essentially someone — Aaron Sorkin — saying, "This is what I would have done if I were in the position to do something about this." When you get to a place where you feel like you know the answer, and you're just putting your solution onstage, there's nothing interesting there.

**DM:** *What advice do you have for those on the Left who want to examine right-wing media and keep it interesting?*

**LF:** Don't limit yourself to just what's mainstream. If you just watch Jon Stewart, and your un-

derstanding of right-wing media is the clips that he's pulling from Fox, you're never going to understand why right-wing people believe what they believe. I would say to really educate yourself — not just with people now, but with the history of what conservatism is — on what the right wing has been. Actually, "Up, Simba!" which is an essay by David Foster Wallace about McCain's primary campaign in 2000, is a fascinating look into how conservatives think. McCain was super, super conservative — he still is — but a lot of us forget that conservatives were much more excited about him in 2000.

**DM:** *I once saw an interview with Noam Chomsky where he expressed fascination with the people who call in to Rush Limbaugh and say, "I've done everything right. I've played by the rules, I've worked hard, and my life is going to shit." He said the message is very consistent.*

**LF:** Yeah, a lot of people feel that way, and they're not all right-wing people. I was just reading in *The New York Times* this morn-

ing that something like 6 percent of normal people feel like, economically, the country's gotten better since 2008 while 40 percent of people in the top 1 percent of wealth believe things have improved.

**DM:** *How do you balance purely political work with art?*

**LF:** When you have urgent situations like fracking, and income inequality, and cities going bankrupt, I question myself about whether art is an efficient or effective way of dealing with any of those situations. Still, I would definitely say I am more of an artist than an activist.

In theater, you can enter into a world with someone and sympathize with them in a way that if someone talked to you about that person from a political perspective, you might not ever engage with them. When I walk into a play, I'm ready to sit there and sympathize with people on stage, whether they're foreign to me, or whether I know them as characters very well. Art has the ability

*Continued on next page*

## SEPTEMBER/ OCTOBER THEATER LISTINGS

### **SOMETHING SOMETHING ÜBER ALLES (DAS JACKPOT)**

WRITTEN BY ASSURBANIPAL BABILLA  
DIRECTED BY DAVID COTE  
PERFORMED BY ROBERT HONEYWELL  
PRESENTED BY  
HORSE TRADE THEATER GROUP  
A man who bears an uncanny resemblance to Adolf Hitler finds himself idolized by an orgiastic, underground, Führer-worshipping cult. In a

## A Dream Lives On

¡CHILE VIVE!, *Historical Posters from the Popular Unity Government (1970-73)*

EL TALLER LATINO AMERICANO  
Through November 2

And just like that, a whole museum disappeared. Facing a dearth of international media coverage, Chile's leftist Popular Unity government — led by President Salvador Allende during its short life in the early 1970s — invited artists and intellectuals to come and show their support. Many did: unveiled in 1972, the Museo de la Solidaridad Chile featured work by hundreds of artists from around the world, including heavyweights like Joan Miró, Victor Vasarely and Lygia Clark. Then, after 1973, the art was boxed up and hidden away.

Allende's electoral win in September 1970 represented a victory

for peaceful, democratic and constitutional socialism: an existential threat to the “domino theory” mindset of the United States, and to the common, Cold War aphorism that leftist governments could only ever be born out of violence. In other words, Allende had enemies. On September 11, 1973, a military-led (and U.S.-backed) coup d'état put General Augusto Pinochet in charge, inaugurating a right-wing dictatorship that lasted 17 years. Dissidents were “disappeared,” leftist political parties were outlawed, books were burned and, yes, art was destroyed. Under Pinochet, not only were revolutionary murals and monuments demolished, but even the smaller things, the printed ephemera — posters and publications from the Allende years — became something illicit. Those bright, eye-pleasing graphics were too dangerous to be caught with.

Indeed, the posters on view in “¡CHILE VIVE!, Historical Posters from the Popular Unity Government (1970-73)” probably wouldn't have survived in Pinochet's Chile. Co-curator Carol Smith, who lived in Chile in the early 1970s, mailed the posters out of the country before the coup took place, and has held on to them for over 40 years as commemoration of an important historical moment (and an important time in her own life, too). As an historical record, the show gives just a glimpse — but a revealing one, at that — of something huge: a culture-wide movement.

There's a poster for the Museo de la Solidaridad

Chile, with a lovely Miró painting, and a poster featuring a catchy, simple woodcut illustration of birds perched above bold, pink type: “Graphics of the Residents of the Granja District.” The Popular Unity government organized neighborhood cultural centers where locals were encouraged to create visual and performance art, and publications; this poster was promoting an exhibit of such work at a major Chilean museum.

On another poster, a dramatically-posed, heavily-shadowed dance troupe appears beneath crimson block letters: “Art is Born from the People.” The poster was made for the occasion of a major performance of Luis Advis Vitaglich's *Santa María de Iquique, cantata popular* — a musical piece concerning an infamous 1907 massacre of Chilean miners. Such performances were meant to be accessible to ordinary people: they weren't just about copper miners, but for them, too. These works reflect the importance of artistic and cultural participation in the Allende era. In her book *Marketing Democracy: Power and Social Movements in Post-Dictatorship Chile*, Julia Paley quotes a community activist who came of age during the Popular Unity period: “There was a different sense of participation that we lived [then]. It was what we thought, what the neighbors thought, what the child thought, everyone was important in this process.”

The imagery in this exhibit hints at some of the broader trends in the graphic arts of the time. Some of this work has the sort of hard-edged, ink-stained brazenness often associated with protest imagery (a raised fist, a red star, that photo of Che), but some of it is also just really *cute*. A poster promoting voluntary work brigades



Artist unknown.

shows two adorable, brightly-colored birds building a nest together. A poster to celebrate the nationalization of the country's copper mines shows a wide-eyed, smiling cartoon kid waving a Chilean flag. These posters, presumably, were not just out to appeal to scrappy activists and idealists — they were meant to communicate the merits of socialist policy to a dubious middle class.

Quoted recently by the Associated Press, director of Chile's Museum of Memory and Human Rights Ricardo Brodsky said that “to Chilean society today, the greatest legacy of Pinochet remains the human rights violations, the disappeared and the dead.” And while those killed under Pinochet can't be brought back to life, since the end of the military dictatorship there's been an effort to reverse, at the least, cultural disappearances. In 1991, the contents of the Museo de la Solidaridad were taken out

of the basement of the Museum of Contemporary Art at the University of Chile, where they had been in storage for years, and put again on public display. In 2008, restoration was completed on a pro-Allende mural that the dictatorship had tried to destroy with 16 coats of paint, Roberto Matta's *The First Goal of the Chilean People*. And in the last few years, Chile has seen huge waves of protest, with tens of thousands of students demanding a more equitable educational system and many young demonstrators holding signs that read “Salvador Allende.”

Walls get smashed and governments topple, but — as this exhibit attests to — art, ideas and culture have tricky ways of surviving their own destruction, so long as they persist in some sort of collective memory, so long as they're not forgotten.

—MIKE NEWTON



*Cobre Chileno (Chilean Copper)*. Vicente and Antonio Larrea, 1971.

## Lauren Ferebee

Continued from previous page

to change people's minds in a way that politics — just — doesn't.

DM: What are you working on now?

LF: I'm working on a play called *Blood Quantum*. It's a reference to the minimum amount of ancestry required to qualify as

a member of the Cherokee nation. According to a story in our family, we have ancestry among some of the Cherokee who live in East Texas. I'm going to be going there soon for research, to talk to the local people and see how we might create something with the goal of putting on a production there.

DM: Tell me more about the process you're going through now as

you write your next play.

LF: I keep journals and stuff — research journals — when I'm working on things, and a lot of times, when I start doing something I don't know why. I like to work with clues and hints at what will turn out, like a mystery novel, because it's more interesting to me. I enter a generative phase where I collect photographs and images, go see exhibits, talk to

people, read books, and then I'll write something and then I'll go back to doing that generative phase again. It's hard, because sometimes you feel like you're getting off-course. And you're like, “I should be sitting down to write!”

DM: I take it that when you have this profound nagging in you to pursue a particular direction, you kind of have to trust that.

LF: Yeah, it leads you sometimes to strange places. You'll put something in a play and just be, like, “I don't know — I just think that that belongs in there” — and then it'll take a while to connect the dots and understand it. But then, in the end, it all seems to work out somehow.

For more, see [laurenferebee.com](http://laurenferebee.com).

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It's  
**COMMUNITIES!**

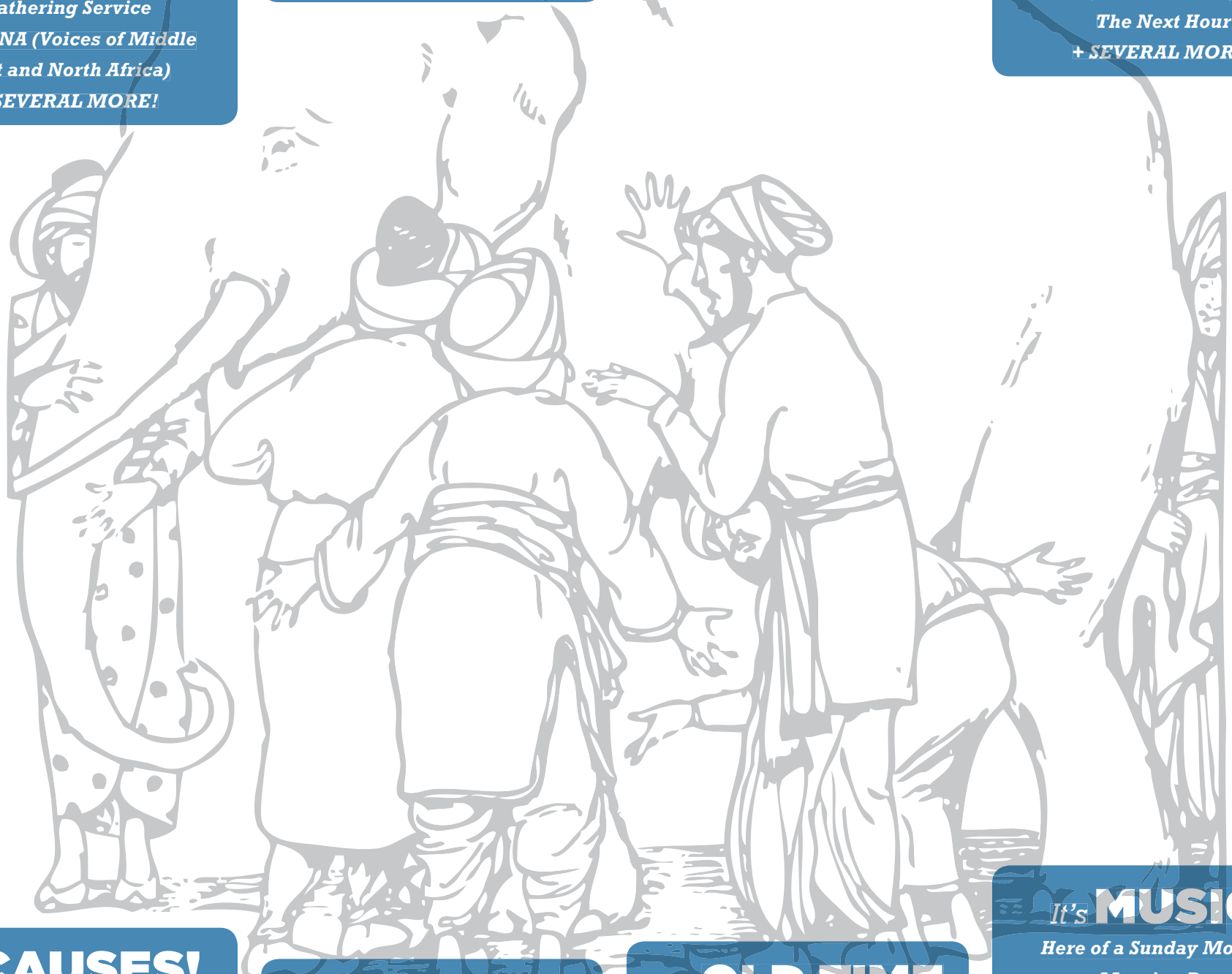
*Asia Pacific Forum*  
*Muslim State of Mind*  
*First Voices Indigenous Radio*  
*AfroBeat Radio*

It's **GEEKS!**

*Explorations (Michio Kaku)*  
*Off the Hook*  
*(2600 phone hackers)*  
*Personal Computer Show*

It's **ARTS & LITERATURE!**

*Nonfiction (Harry Allen)*  
*Cat Radio Cafe*  
*Hour of the Wolf*  
*(science fiction)*  
*The Next Hour*  
**+ SEVERAL MORE!**



It's **CAUSES!**

*Guns & Butter*  
*Sojourner Truth*  
*Against the Grain*  
*On the Count (Prison Report)*

It's **"OTHER"!**

*Radio Unnameable (Bob Fass)*  
*Carrier Wave*  
*Back of the Book*

It's **OLD TIME RADIO!**

*Everything Old is New Again*  
*Golden Age of Radio*

It's **MUSIC!**

*Here of a Sunday Morning*  
*Morning Dew*  
*And You Don't Stop!*  
*Morning Irsay*  
*Through the Opera Glass*  
**+ SEVERAL MORE!**

**Go to [WBAI.org](http://WBAI.org) for descriptions and complete listings.**

**WBAI 99.5 FM** in NYC and nearby, streaming online to Middle America and Outer Mongolia at [wbai.org](http://wbai.org).

NOTE: This not an official WBAI ad. It was created and placed by a Listener/Member acting on his own initiative.