

## An Open Letter To The OCCUPY! Movement

Greetings Sisters and Brothers,

It can be heard throughout the land, a great sucking sound. The sound of the wealth of the land being sucked up by the greedy parasites on top. We are now suffering because of a great power and wealth acquisition by a few at the expense of the many. A power and wealth grab of historic proportions. We are told that the federal and states budgets and the budgets of many countries must be cut because of high unemployment. Their answer to unemployment is to keep tax cuts for the rich and increase the problem by laying off many more workers. We are told that all the money going to the rich will create jobs, just like we were told that the so-call free trade agreements and the WTO would increase good jobs. Where are all those jobs? They are nowhere to be found. We are being lied to. It is as simple as this, the rich keep getting richer and the rest of us keep getting poorer. There is no doubt about that.

An editorial in the local mainstream paper proclaims that "Occupy can't win with utopian impossibilities". Yes, the rich would like us to believe that it is not possible for them, the rich, to have less so that everyone else must not suffer as we are, because this is an "utopian impossibility". Another paper proclaims that to speak out against the rich is unAmerican. That is only true if America is only the rich and powerful. But is not a country also its people, all of its people? And to cause great harm to the vast majority of the people of America, should that not be viewed as truly unAmerican? It is the rich who have committed treason against the people of America and not those that speak out against the crimes against humanity being committed daily by those who want it all.

OCCUPY! It is a great thing that we all are doing. It makes this old man glad to still be alive to see it. No matter how hard they try to beat us, gas us, pepper spray us and even taser us, as they did to a few in Olympia, they cannot suppress our voice and spirit. No matter how many have been arrested, all that happened was that the jails got occupied too. And still the movement grows world wide.

There has been some evidence that attacks upon the OCCUPY! Movement have been coordinated and this is very possible, for those in power have done such things before. It also seems like the media are all working from the same script. First they ignore the movement and hope it will go away. Then they play it as some quaint rebellion of a few. Then they seek to discredit the movement by saying that it has no goals. They spread the justification for raiding the OCCUPY! Camps that the camps are unsanitary and unsafe. If these deceivers are so concerned with living conditions why don't they report on the living conditions of millions of the poor? But that might upset the slumlords. So to insure the safe conditions of the occupiers, they beat us, gas us and arrest us for our own good.

Enduring all that the state has used so far to shut us up, the OCCUPY! Movement has stood strong and continues to grow. As the old Civil Rights song once proclaimed: "Ain't going to let nobody turn us around!" In that the OCCUPY Movement has shown to the world its true meaning. A loud voice of the dispossessed demanding an end to the massive accumulation of the wealth of society into the possession of a few human leeches who feed upon the host body of humanity, while we suffer and do without.

Though it has been shown that the powers of the rich can't beat, gas or arrest the OCCUPY! Movement out of existence, the movement does face another threat. That is the sideline, holier than thou, types that do little more than gripe about the movement because it is not correct enough for them. Often that means they are angry that they are not in command. Beware Sisters and Brothers, movements have been talked to death by such people. They create a culture of excuses why such a

movement should not continue and excuses can become contagious. I saw this happen with the Anti-Vietnam War Movement where it became cool to say that marches did no good. But it is interesting to note that the government, then as now, did all that they could to suppress the movement and did nothing to those that were cool and gave up.

We call this a struggle because it ain't easy. I truly wish we could achieve our goals without struggle and hardship. But as we face the clubs, gas and jails, please remember one thing, they would not try to suppress us if they did not fear us. The greedy who take so much from us and leave us without, are like a little kid hoarding candy saying "you can't have any". They may kick and scream, beat us, gas us, and jail us, but this is what we must go through to reach the other side where social change is found. In other words their temper tantrums are only showing us that we are affecting them and they don't like that one bit.

The OCCUPY! Movement, like all grassroots movements, starts off at some point and progresses. How far it can go depends upon how long it can stay strong and learn. I have been a social activist/organizer since the 1960s and I will be the first to say, I don't know everything. A Native Elder once said to me that the first step to wisdom was understanding that you don't now or ever will, know everything. Life is a learning experience that starts when you come into this world all the way to the moment you pass on from this world. If you stop learning you stop living.

I have read some writers state that the origins of the OCCUPY! Movement comes from one place or another. While it maybe true that what they point out could be an influence, it is just one of many. The culture of the rulers likes to show us history as single events, that way they can call all of our efforts failures, but the truth is that the struggle of the people against those that hoard most of the wealth has been one long journey. It shows itself in different ways, but it is all connected. And as each generation adds to that struggle, it will continue until we are able to right the great wrong in our society.

The origins can be clearly seen in the worker occupations of their workplaces. In the Wobbly Free Speech Fights, as the boat of Wobblies was coming into port at Everett, the Sheriff called out "Who are your leaders?" The Wobblies responded "We are all leaders." It can be seen in the Bonus Army encampment in Washington D.C. It can be seen in the Hooverville camps during the depression. It can be seen in the sit-ins of the Civil Rights Movement, Student occupations, environmental occupations, the Arab Spring and workers in Wisconsin and other places last spring, just to name a few.. Without going into the long history of Native folks, it can be seen in their occupy movement that included occupations at Alcatraz, Fort Lawton, the BIA Office in D.C., Wounded Knee, Gresham, Cascadia (here in Tacoma), and a number of other locations. There are many such movements that can be pointed to, but the true origin of the OCCUPY! Movement is in the long history of struggles by the people.

The diversity of humans is a great thing. A thing to be respected. For how would we like a world where everyone looked the same, acted the same and thought the same? All people are not oppressed and exploited in the same ways, but all oppression and exploitation should be resisted. When some resist and organize based upon how they are oppressed, this bothers some folks. They like to call that "Identity Politics", a racist term. I believe that by that they mean that all should follow the agenda of a few and to deal with what oppresses you directly, is in their small minds, divisive. It is also used to justify not dealing with the oppressions of others. It is telling people to get to the back of the bus and wait, maybe we will get to you at some future point. Maybe we will assign a committee to look into your problems someday. Shall we be like the rich who gain at the expense of others? No Separate Peace! Freedom and well-being for all.

Humanity is like fingers on a hand. Each finger is different, but each finger is connected. We are all connected in what keeps us in want is the greedy accumulation of wealth by a few at the expense of the many. And as Sitting Bull once said "As individual fingers we can easily be broken, but all together we make a mighty fist." That means we must come together, and that means we must include everyone. Let there be no one left sitting at the back of the bus. I have seen how many in the OCCUPY! Movement have begun to do this, and that is very good thing.

Now I wish to speak to you about Leonard Peltier. Leonard Peltier (of the Anishinabe, Dakota, and Lakota Nations), long time Native Activist and member of the American Indian Movement. Leonard Peltier, an innocent man who was convicted for the 1975 fire on the Pine Ridge Lakota Reservation in which one AIM member and two FBI agents died. AIM had been asked by Elders for help after over 60 traditional people had been murdered. The FBI attacked that camp in order to divert attention away from the illegal signing away of Lakota land for Uranium. U.S. prosecutors have repeatedly admitted that they did not and cannot prove Peltier's guilt, and the appellate courts have cited numerous instances of investigative and prosecutorial misconduct in this case. As late as November 2003, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals acknowledged that "...Much of the government's behavior at the Pine Ridge Reservation and its prosecution of Mr. Peltier is to be condemned. The government withheld evidence. It intimidated witnesses. These facts are not disputed." The trial of the first two AIM members in this case found them not guilty for reason of self-defense. Leonard has been in prison for over 36 years. We are asking for Clemency for Leonard Peltier.

Leonard represents how far the government will go to suppress an activist that stands in the way of the greed of a few. He has been in prison for 36 years for us and we need to act for him. We do not ask that people stop the struggles they are involved in just to work for Leonard's freedom. That can not happen because the struggles of the people must continue or else the repression will have won. Rather what we ask is that you include Leonard in the struggles you are involved with.

We need your help! Leonard will only be freed if the people demand it. On February 4, 2012 will be the INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SOLIDARITY WITH LEONARD PELTIER, marches and rallies at the Federal Courthouse or Federal Building in the U.S. and at U.S. embassies and consulates world wide, where ever Leonard Peltier supporters may live. We, with the greatest of respect, request the OCCUPY! Movement to join us on that day. Please help us organize a powerful message upon that day. If you can help or organize, please contact: Leonard Peltier Defense Offense Committee, PO Box 7488, Fargo, ND 58106. Phone: 701/235-2206. E-mail: [contact@whoisleonardpeltier.info](mailto:contact@whoisleonardpeltier.info).  
[www.whoisleonardpeltier.info](http://www.whoisleonardpeltier.info)

For those of you who live in the northwest of the U.S.:

INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SOLIDARITY WITH LEONARD PELTIER  
NW REGIONAL MARCH AND RALLY FOR CLEMENCY FOR LEONARD PELTIER

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY, 4, 2012, TACOMA, WA.

12:00 NOON: MARCH FOR JUSTICE Portland Ave. Park (on Portland Ave. between E. 35<sup>th</sup> & E. Fairbanks. Take Portland Ave. exit off I-5 and head east)  
1:00 PM: RALLY FOR JUSTICE U.S. Federal Court House, 1717-Pacific Ave.

SPEAKERS:

Co-MCs: Matilaja: Yu'Pik Eskimo from Mountain Village Alaska. Member of N.W. AIM since 1973, Friend of Leonard Peltier for 38 odd years and member of Tacoma Chapter LPDOC

Steve Hapy: Long time Leonard Peltier and Native struggles activist, Tacoma Chapter LPDOC  
Drum: Albert Combs and Coastal Hand Drum Singers  
Welcoming: Deeahop Conway, Puyallup Tribal member, Tacoma Chapter LPDOC  
Leonard's case and up-date: Arthur J. Miller: Northwest Regional Organizer LPDOC, Tacoma Chapter LPDOC, long time union member and human rights activist  
Keynote Speaker: Ramona Bennett: Puyallup Tribal Elder, Life long friend of Leonard Peltier, Grand Mother, Great Grand Mother  
Chester Earl: Puyallup Tribal member  
Zoltan Grossman: Evergreen State College faculty in Geography and Native Studies, in Olympia. former board member of Midwest Treaty Network in Wisconsin.  
Closing words: David Duenas: Puyallup Tribal Member

CAR POOLS: OLYMPIA: There will be a carpool leaving from the parking lot at Harrison and Division at 10:15 am. PORTLAND, meet up outside of KBOO Radio Station (20 SE 8<sup>th</sup>, Portland, OR 97124) before embarking to Tacoma between 9:00-9:30am. SEATTLE CAR POOL: Meet at the Red Apple parking lot at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Jackson by the bus stop. Will be leaving at 10:30 am

The links below has a lot of information for you on the northwest regional march for clemency for Leonard Peltier.

I wish to thank all of you for your involvement in the grand struggle of the OCCUPY! Movement.  
In Solidarity  
Arthur J. Miller  
Northwest Regional Organizer, Leonard Peltier Defense Offense Committee  
A Wobbly and just an old shipyard worker

## LINKS

Join Tacoma Chapter LPDOC on facebook at: <http://facebook.com/tacoma.lpdoc>

Subscribe to: Northwest Peltier Support at: [nwpeltiersupport-subscribe@lists.riseup.net](mailto:nwpeltiersupport-subscribe@lists.riseup.net)

For more information: [www.whoisleonardpeltier.info](http://www.whoisleonardpeltier.info)

March web site; <http://leonardpeltiermarch.wordpress.com/>

On the web

<http://zinelibrary.info/international-day-solidarity-leonard-peltier-feb-4-2011-fliers-and-info>

Two page flier for NW Regional March: [http://zinelibrary.info/files/Peltier\\_March\\_2011.pdf](http://zinelibrary.info/files/Peltier_March_2011.pdf)

One page flier for NW Regional March: [http://zinelibrary.info/files/Peltier\\_March\\_2001\\_info.pdf](http://zinelibrary.info/files/Peltier_March_2001_info.pdf)

Portland flier for NW Regional March: [http://zinelibrary.info/files/Portland\\_Peltier\\_Flier.pdf](http://zinelibrary.info/files/Portland_Peltier_Flier.pdf)

March statements and flier: [http://zinelibrary.info/files/Peltier\\_March\\_2001\\_info.pdf](http://zinelibrary.info/files/Peltier_March_2001_info.pdf)

Back ground article on Leonard

[http://zinelibrary.info/files/2012\\_case\\_of\\_leonard\\_peltier.pdf](http://zinelibrary.info/files/2012_case_of_leonard_peltier.pdf)

Video: LPDOC NW Regional Organizer Arthur J. Miller speaking about the case history of political prisoner Leonard Peltier: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_pvxqgIVRlo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_pvxqgIVRlo)

LPDOC: Constitutional Violations in the Peltier Case:

<http://www.whoisleonardpeltier.info/violations.htm>

youtube video of Ramona Bennett from last May rally

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yP-NnxB4RU>

Audio recording of The May rally in Tacoma:

[http://www.indybay.org/uploads/2011/05/26/peltier\\_march\\_2011.mp3](http://www.indybay.org/uploads/2011/05/26/peltier_march_2011.mp3)