LAWCHA
The Labor and Working-Class History Association

"Occupy" Protests

Posted on October 21, 2011 by Rosemary Feurer

In September, 2011 a small group of protesters gathered on Wall Street to protest growing inequality in the United States. It has since become a national and international movement. LAWCHA members have written about and been involved in various aspects of the American Autumn.

General Op Eds

- Asmaa Elkeurti, "IC Occupiers: social media vital for movement," *The Daily Iowan*, (November 10)
- Peter Cole, "Bay Area's History of General Strikes," *SFGate* (November 2)
- Peter Cole, "Oakland's Second General Strike," *counterpunch* (November 2)
- Peter Cole, "Occupy Wall Street," *The Western Courier* (Western Illinois University, October 21)
- Michael Kazin, "How Occupy Wall Street Offers a Promising New Model for the Left," *The New Republic* (October 20)
- Kim Phillips-Fein, "In Bleak '70s, Salvo of Protest," *New York Times* (October 19)
- Shelton Stromquist, "Occupiers provide a glimpse of what democracy looks like," *Press-Citizen.com* (October 14)
- Michael Kazin, "Is It Effective to Occupy Wall Street? – Change the Public's Thinking," *New York Times* (October 7)

Other Media and Information

LAWCHA member Michael Merrill sent us a video of a Dateline Australia segment describing the movement. Featured within are Burt Neuborne, professor of law and civil rights author at New York University, and Moshe Adler, economics instructor the Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies at SUNY Empire State College.

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From New York to Greece, this video is essential for understanding the movement in its multifaceted global, historical, and contemporary dimensions.

From Around the Country

Occupy Springfield, Illinois

February 26, Justin Law once against provides information about Occupy Springfield, Illinois (OSI):

OSI has continued to organize, educate, and participate in direct action throughout the winter. In what can only be characterized as surreal, two members were cited for vandalism for writing political messages in chalk outside of Congressman Aaron Schock's office. The Illinois House voted on a Resolution of Support for the Occupy movement (voted down 37-58). Other branches throughout the Midwest have been busy as well. There has been a call issued for a Midwest Regional Conference on March 15, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. at the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, where the first meeting of the Midwest General Assembly will take place. The Conference is scheduled to last three days. Spread the word.

- "Occupy the Midwest Regional Conference," *InterOccupy.com*
- "Follow-up File: Occupy Springfield," *State Journal Register*
- "CHALK TALK," *Illinois Times*
- "Two cited outside congressman's office for writing on sidewalk," *State Journal Register (Springfield)*
- "Illinois House Votes Against Supporting 'Occupy,' Suburban Rep Calls Protests 'Un-American'," *Huffington Post*

Justin Law sends us some information about the Occupy Springfield movement:

In the hopes of developing a better understanding of the scope and geography of the OWS movement, I've linked some articles relating to the Springfield, IL OWS movement, and urge other LAWCHA members to do the same for their own localities. I've also attached the link to the OSI webpage. I hope Illinois LAWCHA members will note the gathering at the State Capital scheduled for **November 29th** at 3:00 p.m. mentioned on webpage.

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Down the road, when the history of the OWS movement is being written, it will be important to develop the idea that this movement is widespread, organic, local, with important commonalities-participatory democracy (the GA's), the utilization of direct action, and the desire for meaningful structural change. To emphasize that idea, and to present the fullest picture possible, we'll need access to some primary sources. Let's get that archive started, get a discussion going on the local movements of LAWCHA members and how these local movements relate to the larger movement, and discuss the historical precedents for OWS. If we can practice our trade, and help out with the framing of the historical precedents for OWS, while participating in the making of history now-and in the future-we'll all be the better for it, as will the history of OWS.

- http://www.sj-r.com/breaking/x1461798677/Occupy-Springfield-IL-meets-in-front-of-local-bank
- http://www.sj-r.com/top-stories/x661608451/Occupy-Springfield-rally-draws-more-than-300
- http://www.sj-r.com/breaking/x780395088/Local-Occupy-Wall-Street-chapter-targets-lobbyists
- http://www.illinoistimes.com/Springfield/article-9273-occupy-springfield-survives-a-scare.html
- http://www.occupyspringfieldil.org/

Occupy Iowa City

LAWCHA Vice President Shelton Stromquist recently participated in a public forum regarding the historical placement of the Occupy Movement. *The Daily Iowan* published a news article on the public forum, entitled, "IC Occupiers: Social Media Vital for Movement." You can see our very own Shelton Stromquist in action in the below video:

Occupy Duke

In late October, a group of Duke students joined together to protest outside of the iconic Duke University Chapel in solidarity with the national Occupy Movement. They not only encourage lively debate (both in person and through their articles in the university paper, *The Chronicle*). Faculty members have shown solidarity,

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sending literature and OpEds to be distributed. Several have even volunteered time to sit with them, discussing the issues and demonstrating their support for the movement.

Below are several photos in which LAWCHA member Bob Korstad and Duke History Professor Jocelyn Olcott discuss the Occupy Movement with students. Also pictured are the provocative banners protesters placed to spark discussion.

How to Contribute

Have something to add? We are delighted to add Op-Eds or updates from the front, especially from LAWCHA members. Send all information to Ryan Poe (rmp23@duke.ed).

Author

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  Rosemary Feurer is Professor of History at Northern Illinois University. She is the author of *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900-1950,* among other books and essays. She is working on The Illinois Mine Wars, 1860-1940 and a new biography of Mary Harris "Mother" Jones.

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