

OccupationMN: We Love You!

By Polly Mann

Last summer, prior to the Occupy movement, the WAMM Troupe was performing street theater on the Nicollet Mall, drawing attention to wealth inequality. They report that after Occupy began people became more receptive to their messages.

What does it stand for? Where is its mission statement? Where did it come from? None of this matters. What does matter is that the occupiers are asking the right questions. Their signs express their dissatisfaction at the inequities existing in this country where 1% of the population owns 40% of the property; where 400 families possess the same amount of wealth among them as the entire bottom 150 million families possess among them. They are a testimony to the fact that human needs are secondary to military wants with \$3 billion allocated to the military every single day while people cannot afford basic medical care and homeless shelters are unable to meet demands.

In order to solve a problem, it has first to be enunciated. The problem is enormous and it is being addressed through the presence of these groups all across the country. The groups' method of organizing could be comparable to that of Women Against Military Madness (WAMM). When a small group of Twin Cities women began meeting thirty years ago, disturbed at the growing militarism of the United States—especially at the manufacture and stockpiling of nuclear weapons—there was no model, no organization addressing the issue. After a year of monthly meetings the women decided to act and WAMM was born. Step by step the organization grew to be the one we know today.

OccupationMN had called on supporters to brave the weather and pitch “99 tents for the 99%” as part of a cold weather camp-out to address homelessness, the foreclosure crisis, and free speech.

The Occupation movement has been born and is taking its first steps. How else could it happen but spontaneously? WAMM members have responded. Some WAMM members have been down to the site every day; mittens, caps, batteries, blankets, and bedrolls have been donated; hot food has been delivered and members have spent the night on the Government Center lawn. At least one member has been faithfully attending the daily general assembly meetings.

The Occupation is a classless group. There are homeless or about to be homeless people with mortgages that are being foreclosed. As a result there have been actions attempting to stop foreclosures. They are joined by college graduates faced with enormous tuition debts, as well as many others who can no longer abide the

injustice of our current condition. Politicians cannot ignore this movement. It is not just a “sign”— it is an embodiment of hope.

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