

Editorial: What Next?

Last month we asked, just as it was getting off the ground, where would the Occupy Movement end. Would it fizzle out? Would it go lamely reformist? Would it perhaps achieve some worthwhile reform? Would it even trigger a genuine anti-capitalist movement?

It didn't fizzle out and it didn't achieve any reform. But it did do two things. First, it raised consciousness that capitalism does not benefit "the 99 percent". And, second, it provided public places where political debate about this and other issues could take place - and did. Both worthwhile. There were two other pluses. It was a world-wide movement that understood that any solution had to be global. And it tried to organise itself democratically and without leaders.

All right, there wasn't always clarity as to what exactly was the capitalism they said they were "anti". Some saw the occupations as a protest against "corporate greed" as if the behaviour of those in charge of capitalist corporations is a personal fault or choice rather than something imposed on them by the nature of capitalism as a system of production for sale with a view to profit. Others blamed "the bankers" and all sorts of funny money theories flourished. But that was what the spaces for debate they had provided were all about. They need to continue.

In the end the police moved in to clear the occupations (though the one in London has been given a stay of execution till after Christmas). Now that the inevitable has happened the Occupy Movement will have to consider its next move. Clearly, the high-profile tactic of occupying public parks and town squares has only a limited shelf-life, since the authorities can always cite concerns over health and sanitation.

The question now is whether activists will go home satisfied that they've made their point, in effect consigning the issues once again to oblivion, or work out new ways to press home their anti-capitalist message. In particular they will need to find ways to counter the predictable establishment criticisms that they are nothing but a diversion from attempts by practical politicians to find solutions to the global economic crisis and that they have no viable alternative economic system to propose.

Well, of course, the ruling class would say that, wouldn't they? Their opinions aren't going to change. The criticisms Occupy have to worry about are those coming from the ninety-nine percent, who don't at present believe that capitalism can be abolished or that any alternative would be viable.

So it's a question of getting the message out there, and getting it right. We are doing our bit.
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