The Center for Popular Economics stands in solidarity with the Occupy Wall Street movement. Our members have been busy working with, and supporting the movement in whatever ways that we can, including these educational and resource development projects:

**Economics for the 99% Zine/Booklet**

A team of CPE members has been hard at work to produce a zine/booklet that is aimed at helping OWS activists deepen their understanding of the economy. This booklet offers clear, easy-to-understand explanations of the severe economic problems highlighted by the Occupy movement, showing how they arose from the working of the economic system. It includes figures and cartoons illustrating the analysis in the booklet. The 16 short segments that make up the booklet can be copied and used separately as handouts. The initial print run will be distributed free of charge to Occupy activists, and the electronic version will be available for free downloading from the CPE website.

**Topics include:**

- Introduction: Economics for the 99%
- The Inequality Society: Why Are the 1% So Rich and Powerful?
- How We Got Here: A Brief History of 20th Century Capitalism in the United States
- What Caused the Financial and Economic Disaster?
- The Great Austerity War Waged by the Top 1% Against the Rest of Us
- A Brief History of the Federal Reserve
- A Plan for Financial Reform
- Housing and Economic Crisis
- Unemployment
- Job Creation
- Environmental Policy for the 99%
- Health Care for People or for Profit?

**Visions of Economic Alternatives:**

- Progressive Reforms: A Starting Point
- Solidarity Economy: Building an Economy for People and Planet
- A Democratic Economy Producing for Need, Not for Profit
- Pull-out Economic Timeline

(cont’d, page 4)
Workshops & Events

March-August: Western Mass. Jobs with Justice Workshop Series, Springfield, MA – CPE will facilitate a series of six workshops for the WMass JwJ coalition of labor, community and student groups. The topics, which were developed through a series of meetings with Neighbor to Neighbor, WMass American Friends Service Committee, Mass Senior Action, Arise, Pioneer Valley Project and the International Socialist Organization, include:

- Roots of the crisis: finance, housing, inequality
- Jobs, workers
- The Rigged game: power of corporate and financial elites
- Budgets, taxes, deficits and debt (two parts)
- Healthcare

The workshops are held at the SEIU office, 1199, Springfield, MA from 5:30-7:30 pm on the 4th Wednesday of the month: March 28, April 25, May 23, June 27, July 25, August 22. Mark Silverman and Kiaran Honderich will teach the first workshop on The Roots of the Crisis. A further outcome of this workshop series is to develop a curriculum on these topics that can be used by other organizations.

February 11: Occupy Wall St. - Radical Economics 101, Occupy Town Square, St. Paul's Church, NYC – Maliha Safri and Suresh Naidu co-facilitated a workshop for Occupy activists and others with an interest in the topic. CPE is in the process of arranging a regular workshop slot for Popular Economics (for more, see CPE and Occupy Wall St., page 4).

March 18: Left Forum, Pace University, NYC – a number of CPE members participated in panels or workshops at the Left Forum on a wide array of issues including: financial reform, money monoculture, cooperatives and community economy development, the crisis, and the solidarity economy.

March 27: Smith Association of Class Activists, Northampton, MA – Mark Silverman and Mihnea Tudoreanu co-facilitated a workshop at Smith College on class, the growing divide and strategies to counter it.

April 10: Practical Visionaries Workshop, Tufts University – Emily Kawano and Fred Rose (co-organizer of the Wellspring Project) will lead a discussion about Wellspring and the solidarity economy with a group of community activists and graduate students.

April 25-26: Building a Solidarity Economy for People and Planet: A View From Brazil – Daniel Tygel, former Executive Secretary of the Brazilian Forum on the Solidarity Economy will give two talks: April 25, GreenWork Forum, 12:00-1:30, 640 Page Boulevard, Springfield and April 26, 2:00-4:00, Gordon Hall, UMass.

July 9: Forum on Inequality, Windsor, VT – Jerry Friedman will talk about the roots of the Great Recession, inequality, and popular response, such as the Occupy Wall St. movement

Upcoming

June 23: Women’s Institute for Leadership Development, Amherst, MA – We have done many workshops at WILD and it is one of our favorite events. We look forward to a great program for union and women activists, with good company and lots of fun. CPE will do a basic Intro to the Economy workshop with a focus on labor-community issues.

July 23-27: Summer Institute - Economics for the 99% – For more information, see page 4.

July 28-August 2: Northeast Regional Summer School for Union Women, Amherst, MA – CPE will do two workshops as part of this week-long program that includes trainings on union organizing and bargaining as well as issues such as the economy.
Take Back the Land Spring Action

CPE has endorsed *Take Back the Land’s Spring Action* which calls for sustained community actions around issues of land and housing. This campaign seeks to secure community or collective control of land and housing. They are very interested in alternative structures of ownership and property rights including home and land take-overs, Community Land Trusts, cooperatives, the commons approach, and the solidarity economy framework in general. The campaign has developed an introductory powerpoint on "Third Way" proposals and is building up an e-support network to help try to direct resources - including technical assistance to Local Action Groups, and development of materials and OpEds on "community control" models, human rights, and economic democracy.

Wellspring Initiative – Building New Models of Community Economy Development

by Emily Kawano

CPE’s Wellspring Initiative, in Springfield, MA, one of the poorest, most racially segregated and economically disadvantaged cities in the state, is a collaborative effort that seeks to revitalize some of Springfield’s most hard-hit neighborhoods by building new models of economic development, grounded in economic democracy. Wellspring’s goals are to create worker-owned businesses that provide stable jobs with a living wage. These cooperatives will enable worker-owners to build up their personal assets, which in turn contributes to community wealth.

Building on the Evergreen Cooperative model, in Cleveland, these businesses will leverage the joint purchasing power of locally-based institutions, such as the hospitals and colleges. We are working with the ICA, a social business consultant group, on a food hub feasibility study. The food hub would fit into regional efforts to rebuild the local food infrastructure that has been wiped out by big agribusiness. Research includes a survey of local farmers as well as into food hubs throughout the country. ICA will also advise on a feasibility study/business plan for a multi-skilled construction coop to fill a niche with the hospitals.

We are planning to bring 18 people from the Wellspring partnership to visit the Evergreen Cooperatives in early May. We’re working with folks from the Democracy Collaborative and the Cleveland Foundation to arrange meetings with key leaders, stakeholders, workers and community groups. We are very excited to see this model up close and in action.

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CPE and Occupy Wall St. (cont’d from page 1)

Workshops and Presentations

CPE members have been very active in doing workshops and teach-ins as part of the Occupy movement. With the coming of winter and the aggressive shut down of Occupations throughout the country by police, things were pretty quiet over the last few months.

With spring, there has been a resurgence of OWS activity including teach-ins and workshops. Maliha Safri and Suresh Naidu did their first ‘spring’ Radical Economics workshop in mid-February at the Occupy Town Square, St. Paul’s Church.

People were particularly interested in foreclosures and the robo-signing on mortgage paperwork scandal. Others were interested in the global/local debates and the need to organize a mass movement—one that includes workers and addresses labor issues.

This is the first of a series of regular OWS workshops in NYC. The timing is still being worked out with the OWS Open University. We’ll post more information on our website and our CPE community listserv.

Save the date! CPE’s Dinner & People Before Profits Awards Ceremony

Join us in Western Massachusetts on Thursday, September 27, for an entertaining evening filled with lively discussions, a delicious dinner, inspirational speakers, and a chance to mingle with old and new friends. This celebration and fundraiser will spotlight CPE’s work and recognize leaders of the economic justice movement at our first annual dinner and awards ceremony.

While still in the preliminary planning stages, we’re pleased to announce that Noam Chomsky has agreed to accept the inaugural People Before Profits Award and give a keynote address. A long-time CPE supporter and one of the greatest spokespersons and writers promoting equality in our times, Professor Chomsky’s talk promises to enlighten and spark dialogue. Other award recipients will be announced later in the summer.

We’ll give you an update about our Summer Institute—Economics for the 99% which we’ll hold in New York City, ground-zero of the Occupy

2012 Summer Institute – Economics for the 99% in NYC!

We are at a crossroads. The economic crisis has created new openings to build alternative economic pathways that sustain people and planet. Growing inequality and unemployment, stagnant wages, diminished opportunities for young people, the greed and excess of the political and corporate elite—these hallmarks of neoliberal capitalism are the fuel for the protests from the Arab Spring, to Wisconsin, to the Occupy uprisings in the U.S. and throughout the world.

We are excited to hold our 2012 Summer Institute – Economics for the 99% at Columbia University in NYC. We wanted to be close to the epicenter of the Occupy movement in order to make our Institute as accessible as possible in terms of location as well as cost.

We can choose to build a different economy—an economy for the 99%. Our Summer Institute will give participants the tools to understand the systemic roots of the crisis and explore pathways to a just and sustainable world. ❖
CPE’s 2012 Summer Institute

**Economics for the 99%**

July 23-27

Columbia University, New York

A week-long teach-in about how the economy got so screwed up and what to do about it.

For more information visit our website: [http://www.populareconomics.org](http://www.populareconomics.org)

Wall Street movement. Other presentations will include updates on our on current and upcoming programs, including CPE’s innovative Wellspring Initiative in Springfield, MA (see p. 3).

We’re looking for sponsorships from socially responsible businesses as well as individuals. If you have ideas for businesses or people to approach or if you’re interested in being a sponsor yourself, please contact Lynn Martin at Ldmartin.cgc@gmail.com or call 617-513-9247.
At the 2005 World Social Forum, Hugo Chavez announced his support for a “socialism of the 21st century” in Venezuela. This new socialism, according to Chavez, would be “based in solidarity, in fraternity, in love, in justice, in liberty, and in equality.” These values are certainly an uplifting starting point for imagining a new economy, but what, we wondered, does 21st century socialism look like in practice? Hoping to find out for ourselves, we traveled to Venezuela in July as part of a “food sovereignty and social change” tour group.

One of our first activities involved riding cable cars from Caracas to the neighboring hillsides, where many of the cities’ poorest residents live. The trip once took hours, but with the introduction of cable cars in 2009, transit time has been reduced to 20 minutes. While riding the cable cars, our guide pointed out new public housing that was being built for hundreds of hillside residents who had lost their houses to floods earlier in the year.

These developments exemplify Venezuela’s broader commitment to meeting the basic needs of every citizen. In addition to more accessible transportation and housing, state supermarkets provide food at below-market prices, a basic education program has essentially ended illiteracy, and clinics provide health care to residents in remote villages. Much of this progress has been made within the last decade.

Achieving food sovereignty—the right of people to define and control their own food and agriculture systems—is a more recent goal in Venezuela. Despite its year-long growing season and millions of acres of arable land, the country’s oil wealth has allowed it to import the vast majority of its food for many years. Given the uncertainty of world food prices and hostile relations with many food-exporting countries, however, Venezuela has committed to growing a much larger share of their own food. Importantly, the government also views sustainable agriculture as a rural development strategy. Since the beginning of 2011, the government has provided about $4 billion in low-interest credit to farmers producing for domestic consumption.

To see for ourselves how Venezuela’s new policies are changing the food landscape, we talked with farmers, fishers, and workers at socialist food production factories, and people involved in agricultural education and policy.

Rene Aponte, a 27-year-old farmer at a 6,000 acre farm, described how the land had been seized by the state in 2009 under a law which allows for redistribution of large private estates to peasant farmers. Aponte was passionate about his role in feeding people, rather than profits, and talked excitedly about the power he and the other farm workers had over deciding how to do their jobs. A poster with the words “Hecho en Socialismo” (“made in socialism”) became a familiar fixture on the walls of every facility we visited. When asked what the red heart meant, one (cont’d next page)
worker smiled and replied, Con amor.” (i.e., “made with love”).

To be sure, Venezuela still has a long way to go in achieving food sovereignty. The initiatives we studied were in their early stages of development, and data collection was either non-existent or scant. It remains to be seen what particular shape the socialist future will take.

However, one key question that our group asked itself at the end of the trip was whether the “socialist revolution” was real, and the answer was, unanimously, “yes.” Hearing Aponte describe himself and his compatriots as Gramsci-style “organic intellectuals” dedicated to living, working, and studying Marxist ideas is only one example of our encounters with Venezuelans for whom the alignment of belief and action showed prominently in their work and in their eyes. While the initiatives are small, their potential is great.

“Hecho en Socialismo” (“made in socialism”) became a familiar fixture on the walls of every facility we visited. When asked what the red heart meant, one worker smiled and replied, “Con amor.” (“made with love”).”


Legacy Giving

Elaine McCrate, an Associate Professor of Economics and Women’s Studies at the University of Vermont, is one CPE staff economist who has included us in her estate planning. Elaine teaches courses on women in the U.S. economy, African Americans in the U.S. economy, and labor-management relations. Most of her research concerns low-income women.

Here’s why Elaine supports CPE.

“I joined CPE in 1980 while I was a grad student in the UMass Economics Department. Being able to train activists who could actually use economics for progressive causes was a dream come true. Besides, the Summer Institute was always fun! Since those days, CPE has developed a truly global following. I remain convinced that popular economics education will play a critical role in empowering social justice movements in the U.S. and throughout the world. A bequest is a simple and painless way to support CPE’s work for the long haul.”

For more information about estate planning please contact Lynn Martin at Ldmar-tin.cpe@gmail.com or call 617-513-9247.
Now into our third decade, CPE has an impressive track record in supporting the struggle for a just and sustainable economy. We’re in this fight for the long haul, and we need your help to build an organization that stands on firm financial footing to do all the work that needs to be done.

We depend on the generous contributions of individual donors and foundations. Here are just some of the ways that you can channel some support into the fight for economic justice and a better world.

Of course, we greatly appreciate contributions at any level, but higher-level gifts will help us to do so much more in this Occupy moment and beyond.

☐ $100 Will pay for books and materials for five Summer Institute participants.

☐ $200 Will pay for the Graduation Celebration and Party

☐ $300 Will pay for speaker travel for the Summer Institute

☐ $400 Will cover the tuition fee for one Summer Institute participant.

☐ $500 Will pay for a short video about CPE’s work.

☐ $1,000 Will underwrite the cost of a full-day workshop.

☐ $3,000 Will pay for Summer Institute teachers.

☐ $10,000 Will fund a second printing of our OWS publication, *Economics for the 99%* so that we can distribute over 3,000 copies free of charge to activists on the ground.

Please watch for our annual spring fundraising letter in April and give as generously as you can. Or, if you feel inspired to give now, you can give an online donation on our website [http://www.populareconomics.org/support-us/](http://www.populareconomics.org/support-us/) or through Network for Good. We greatly appreciate your support!