Indians Counter Occupy Wall Street Movement With Decolonize Wall Street

By ICTMN Staff October 6, 2011

Indians Counter Occupy Wall Street Movement With Decolonize Wall Street

The Occupy Wall Street movement has taken root across the nation. Organizers say protestors are drawing attention to the 1% of the population who have destroyed the country and its values through greed.

While many people in Indian Country can sympathize with the protestors’ claims, there is also some growing criticism for the idea behind its name, which overlooks the first occupants of the Wall Street area. This has given rise to the response from Native bloggers and activists to not Occupy Wall Street but Decolonize Wall Street.

“The OCCUPY WALL STREET slogan has gone viral and international now. From the protests on the streets of WALL STREET in the name of ‘ending capitalism’—organizers, protestors, and activists have been encouraged to ‘occupy’ different places that symbolize greed and power. There’s just one problem: THE UNITED STATES IS ALREADY BEING OCCUPIED. THIS IS INDIGENOUS LAND. And it’s been occupied for quite some time now,” stated Jessica Yee (Mohawk), the executive director for The Native Youth Sexual Health Network, in a blog post originally posted on Racialicious.

Still, Yee clarifies that she supports the mission and integrity of Occupy Wall Street. “I’m not against ending capitalism and I’m not against people organizing to hold big corporations accountable for the extreme damage they are causing,” Yee wrote. “Yes, we need to end globalization. What I am saying is that I have all kinds of problems when to get to ‘ending capitalism’ we step on other people’s rights—and in this case erode Indigenous rights—to make the point.”

Yee goes on to excerpt a blog post from “An Open Letter to the Occupy Wall Street Activist” published by JohnPaul Montano in Unsettling America: Decolonization in Theory & Practice. Montano describes himself on his Twitter account as a “Nishnaabe-language acquirer naïvely believing that multilingualism, JavaScript and respect for indigenous sovereignty lead to less crabbiness and more peace.”

I hope you would make mention of the fact that the very land upon which you are protesting does not belong to you – that you are guests upon that stolen indigenous land. I had hoped mention would be made of the indigenous nation whose land that is. I had hoped that you would address the centuries-long history that we indigenous peoples of this continent have endured being subject to the countless ‘isms’ of do-gooders claiming to be building a “more just society,” a “better world,” a “land of freedom” on top of our indigenous societies, on our indigenous lands, while destroying and/or ignoring our ways of life. I had hoped that you would acknowledge that, since you are settlers on indigenous land, you need and want our indigenous consent to your building anything on our land—never mind an entire society.

The blog People of Color details the history of the occupation of Wall Street, in which enslaved African peoples constructed the wall “that barricaded the land white men had seized from native peoples.”
Indians Counter Occupy Wall Street Movement With Decolonize Wall Street

Thursday, October 13, 2011
You must be logged in to post a comment.
Indians Counter Occupy Wall Street Movement With Decolonize Wall Street - ICTMN.com

October 13, 2011
**Are You a Native American Student Interested in Business Journalism?**
By ICTMN Staff
If you’re a Native American student interested in business journalism, this could be the opportunity for you. The Donald W. Reynolds National Center for Business Journalism is offering...  
[Read More]

Comments (0)

October 13, 2011
**New and Improved: NIGC’s Inclusive Approach Wins Approval**
By Gale Courey Toensing
It’s been years since the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC) received a hearty round of applause from an audience of tribes...  
[Read More]

Comments (0)

October 13, 2011
**Grants Totaling $2 Million Awarded to 30 Tribes**
By ICTMN Staff
Forty-six projects by 30 tribes received news that they would be receiving funding grants from the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED) on October 10. The funds totaling $...  
[Read More]

Comments (0)

October 12, 2011
**California Tribes Launch Online Poker Rooms**
By ICTMN Staff
The California Online Poker Association, a coalition of card rooms in the sunshine state led by the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, recently launched CalShark.Com, an online free-play poker...  
[Read More]

Comments (1)

October 12, 2011
**W. Ron Allen Named Indian Gaming Advocate of the Year**
By Gale Courey Toensing
Allen honored at G2E by National Indian Gaming Association’s Ernie Stevens One of the strongest voices for tribal sovereignty and self-determination in Indian county has been named Indian...  
[Read More]

October 12, 2011
**Comanche With a Cause: LaDonna Harris Receives Spirit of the Heard Award**
By Lee Allen
Since her Depression-era childhood in an Oklahoma dust bowl farm town, LaDonna Harris has been a crusader devoting her life to building coalitions that create change. “My life’s work has...  
[Read More]

October 11, 2011
**NFL Selects Arizona to Host 2015 Super Bowl**
By ICTMN Staff
The National Football League has announced that Arizona has bested stiff competition from Tampa to land the 2015 Super Bowl. This will be the state’s third Super Bowl, after hosting...  
[Read More]

October 11, 2011
**G2E Carcieri Panel Debates Bad U.S. Supreme Court Ruling**
By Gale Courey Toensing
Three speakers on a Carcieri panel at the Global Gaming Expo presented different perspectives and approaches to the U.S. Supreme Court land into trust decision that has roiled Indian country...  
[Read More]

October 11, 2011
**Florida Senator Envisions State as the ‘Disney of Gaming’**
By ICTMN Staff
A few Florida lawmakers want to make casinos a tourist magnet like the Magic Kingdom. “Basically, we could become the Disney of gaming,” said Florida Senator Ellyn Bogdanoff, a F...  
[Read More]

See All