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It's official: Top 1% doubled their share of nation's income

By John Wojcik

The Congressional Budget Office said in a new report this week what the labor movement and its allies have been saying all along: The top 1 percent have more than doubled their share of the nation's income over the last 30 years.

The report, requested several years ago, comes as the Occupy Wall Street movement spreads across the country with protesters and allies in the labor movement and elsewhere condemning the growing gap in America between rich and poor.

The budget office found that from 1979 to 2007, average inflation-adjusted after-tax income grew by 275 percent for the 1 percent of the population with the highest income. For others in the top 20 percent of the population, average real after-tax household income grew by 65 percent.

The findings are consistent with numerous studies over the last two years by labor economists. But since these findings come from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, they could, when coupled with the popular uprising, have a major impact on debates by congressional lawmakers.

The latest New York Times/CBS News poll shows two thirds of the public saying wealth should be more evenly distributed. Seven in 10 Americans say the policies of congressional Republicans favor the rich. Two thirds oppose tax cuts for corpo-



rations and two thirds support increasing income taxes on millionaires and billionaires.

The poll also shows that eighty-nine percent of Americans say they distrust government to do the right thing and 84 percent disapprove of Congress.

Interestingly, the approval rating for President Obama rose to 46 percent from significantly lower ratings last month. The poll found substantial support of the individual components of the president's jobs bill.

The poll results also underline how completely each of the GOP presidential candidates are out of sync with public attitudes on major economic

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questions.

Mitt Romney's tax plan includes a \$6.6 trillion giveaway to corporations and the richest

Herman Cain's 9-9-9 plan would slash taxes for millionaires by an average of \$487,000 each.

Americans. Romney's Medicaid cuts are even more draconian than the ones proposed last year by Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Minn.

Rick Perry's 20 percent flat tax plan would not only lower income taxes on the wealthy, but would completely eliminate taxes on capital gains and dividends, currently taxed at 15 percent. The Perry plan amounts to expansion of a loophole that already allows billionaires to pay a lower tax rate than middle class taxpayers.

Perry's response, when asked this week by reporters to explain the giveaway was, "I don't care about that."

Herman Cain's 9-9-9 plan would slash taxes for millionaires by an average of \$487,000 each, according to an Oct. 25 report by ThinkProgress.

The latest Times/CBS poll does not look good at all for Republicans.

Seventy-one percent say the GOP does not have a clear plan for creating jobs.

Only 25 percent said that lowering taxes on large corporations or repealing the entire health

care reform law was a good idea. Almost all GOP lawmakers and all of their party's presidential candidates have said they favor repeal of the health care law.

Disapproval of Congress has risen 22 percent in the poll, since Republicans took control of Congress.

The number of people saying Occupy Wall Street reflects the views of the majority of Americans far exceeds the numbers who once voiced support for the tea party.

In February, a CBS News poll found that 27 percent of the public said the views of the Tea Party reflected the sentiment of most Americans. In the current poll, 46 percent said the same of the Occupy Wall Street movement.



John Wojcik is the People's World labor editor.

Occupy Wall Street is too big to jail

By PW Editorial Board

Painfully, the nation has watched as police departments in use excessive force against peaceful demonstrators.

The disturbing scenes of women, children, seniors and even disabled people running under clouds of tear gas and being hit by flash grenades and rubber bullets are reminiscent of attacks in the middle of the last century against civil rights and antiwar demonstrators. The scenes are hard to stomach, also, because they look too much like what is happening today in the streets of Damascus, Syria.

The crackdowns are an assault on democracy and they endanger the public safety. In Atlanta and Oakland both many of the demonstrators who were attacked are people who have lost their homes, their jobs or the vital services they require just to keep going every day.

We applaud statements by the leadership of the AFL-CIO and by unions and their allies all over the country that have condemned these attacks. We urge the elected officials in the cities involved to call a halt to the violation of the democratic rights of their people.

Our best wishes and prayers go out to Iraq War veteran Scott Olsen who was critically injured in Oakland after being hit by a police projectile at the rally in that city on Oct. 25.

In addition to violating democratic rights, repression by city governments serves to take the focus off the main culprit here: the banks and big corporations of Wall Street.

When a mayor in Oakland, Atlanta, Chicago or elsewhere orders police to break up a peaceful demonstration the focus is shifted from people vs. Wall Street to people vs. the police.

Occupy Wall Street became powerful and continues to grow because it fights for the rights of hundreds of thousands who have lost their homes to live inside a warm comfortable house. Opponents of the movement would like nothing more than to reduce Occupy Wall Street to a fight between the police and several hundred who want to spend the night out on the streets.

If history is any guide, the "1 percent" will attempt to dampen this movement of the 99 percent. The methods of the 1 percent will include ordering police to break up peaceful demonstrators. The methods of the 1 percent include the sending-in of provocateurs to trigger violence.

The encouraging thing, however, is that Occupy Wall Street, against all the original, "official" expectations, has spread around the world and continues to grow.

It is not the Wall Street banks, but rather the 99 percent, that are too big to fail.

Repression by city governments serves to take the focus off the main culprit here: the banks and big corporations of Wall Street.

Occupy movement can win with nonviolence

By Juan Lopez

Wisconsin state police earlier this year escorted protestors into the state capitol so they could sit-in and sleep-in, in an act of non-violent civil disobedience. Police could just as easily have blocked demonstrators from entering, by any means necessary.

Why this course of action by state police in Wisconsin? After all, it could easily be argued that police and firefighters, whom Republican Governor Scott Walker had exempted from his attack on public employees, had no immediate incentive to cooperate with demonstrators. But they did.

They understood that in broad unity lay the secret to victory for all: "An injury to one is an injury to all." They understood they would be next on the chopping block.

Now, obviously no such gesture can be expected from the Oakland Police Department, which has an ugly history of use of excessive force in African American, Latino, Asian American and Native American communities in Oakland.

The latest tragedy inflicted on Iraq veteran Scott Olsen, a peaceful man, by Oakland cops is becoming a galvanizing moment to root out right-wing and racist elements long embedded in the city's police department.

We can expect no less from public officials and even from forces within the police department itself who recognize they are part of the "99 percent," as filmmaker Michael Moore so aptly pointed out recently at Occupy Oakland.

But in order to win this battle, we - Occupy Oakland - must remain strictly nonviolent in our acts of civil disobedience.

To be sure, the Occupy Oakland movement has conducted itself in the spirit of non-violent civil disobedience of two American legendary giants, the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Cesar Chavez.



Any effort by a tiny minority to break the unity of action of our movement must be repelled.

Anything short of strict nonviolence will play into the hands of the right-wingers in the police department, and into the hands of Wall Street.

There is nothing Wall Street and right-wingers at all levels of government would love more than to have today's public anger against them turn into its very opposite.

When engaging in civil disobedience, let's employ non-violent tactics that will galvanize broad unity with the people of Oakland and nation.

Tactics that will win over even misguided working people and students influenced by Fox television and other media outlets at the service of Wall Street and the far right.

To the extent we succeed in isolating Wall Street and the right wing from the masses of the people of Oakland and the nation, to that extent victory will be ours, the "99 percent."

Occupy Oakland, let's not squander this moment.

Let's keep our eyes on the prize.

When engaging in civil disobedience, let's employ non-violent tactics that will galvanize broad unity with the people.

Detroit: End foreclosures now!

By John Rummel

Detroiters get it. They know banks received a \$700 billion, taxpayer supported bailout but defiantly continue to force people out of their homes. Thus it was not surprising when Occupy Detroit issued a call to march to the offices of Bank of America (BOA) last Friday to demand they immediately implement a moratorium on foreclosures, hundreds enthusiastically responded.

It may have been one of Detroit's more spirited marches in recent memory and those spirits rose even higher when marchers arrived at the bank's headquarters. A large group, including many union members was already there, waiting to greet them.

United Auto Workers member Lee Schleicher came to show solidarity with those who are losing their homes. It irks her that the money given to banks never filtered down to the community. "They just held onto it; they are not taking care of people," she said.

For Tanya Sharon of West Bloomfield the issue hit close to home. Her brother's house was foreclosed when the bank refused his efforts to renegotiate the loan. "We paid taxpayer money to have them negotiate for better mortgages and they are not," she charged.

Barb Carter from Ferndale has been in the Occupy Detroit encampment since it started a week ago. She said the dismal future facing many of her generation is what drives them. "We are young and we are having everything taken away from us. We have little more to lose. We have no chance to get anything," she said.

Housing activist and Attorney Vanessa Fluker addressed the crowd on why the housing crisis cannot be solved solely through the courts. Fluker said, "I'm in court every day. Even if I won every case, you'd still have tens of thousands of people thrown out in the streets."

Nueva fuerza política cobra forma en Colombia

Por Alberto Coronoa, Prensa Latina

Una nueva fuerza política cobra hoy forma en Colombia, luego que el exguerrillero y exsenador Gustavo Petro ganara los comicios a la alcaldía mayor de Bogotá, el segundo cargo de elección popular más importante del país.

Con apenas cuatro meses de existencia, Progresistas, el movimiento independiente que creó Petro y respaldó su campaña, escaló un importante peldaño en el escenario político, aunque su epicentro por el momento se restringe a la capital.

Sin embargo, la victoria de Petro sobre los partidos tradicionales para algunos analistas supone la vigencia de la centroizquierda como proyecto político, e incluso con pretensiones de largo aliento y alcance.

Es una construcción colectiva de cuatro meses que ha mostrado su vitalidad, se trata del primer movimiento del siglo XXI en Bogotá, una red de nuevas ciudadanías en el país, afirmó el electo alcalde en un emotivo discurso de celebración ante sus seguidores.

Para Petro, una de las grandes consecuencias del resultado de su triunfo es que "Progresistas se transformará en un movimiento nacional para construir una Colombia mucho más democrática".

Con ello Petro lanzó públicamente un proyecto con el cual quiere ir más allá de la capital de los colombianos, aunque es consciente que esa pretensión pasa por los resultados que logre en Bogotá durante su mandato.

Para ello deberá cambiar la imagen de una ciudad, donde los escándalos de corrupción, movilidad, los problemas de pobreza y sanidad, entre otros, se suceden continuamente.

Petro nació en Ciénaga de Oro,

departamento de Córdoba, el 19 de abril de 1960 y proviene de una familia de fuerte tradición campesina.

Es economista egresado de la Universidad Externado de Colombia con varias especialidades y un doctorado en Administración de Empresas de la Universidad de Salamanca.

Desde muy joven se vinculó al insurgente Movimiento 19 de Abril (M-19) y estuvo dos años en prisión tras ser condenado por un tribunal militar.

También fue cofundador del partido Alianza Democrática M-19, desde el cual ayudó a redactar la Constitución de 1991.

En 2006 fue elegido senador de la República por el opositor Polo Democrático Alternativo, alcanzando la segunda votación más alta del país, al tiempo que en 2010 fue el candidato presidencial de esa colectividad.

Sin embargo, meses después abandona al Polo por diferencias internas y funda el Movimiento Progresistas, bajo el cual se presenta a la alcaldía de Bogotá a través de la recolección de firmas.

La víspera más de 30 millones de personas quedaron habilitadas para escoger a mil 102 alcaldes, 32 gobernadores, 418 diputados departamentales, 12 mil 63 concejales municipales y cuatro 627 ediles, cargos a los que se presentaron 100 mil 177 aspirantes.

Para ello el Gobierno desplegó a más de 330 mil efectivos de las fuerzas públicas, quienes cubrieron el 99,4 por ciento de los 10 mil 207 puestos de votación en todo el país.

Las mesas abrieron a las 08:00 hora local y cerraron a las 16:00, una jornada que se caracterizó por una baja concurrencia de electores y denuncias de algunas irregularidades.

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