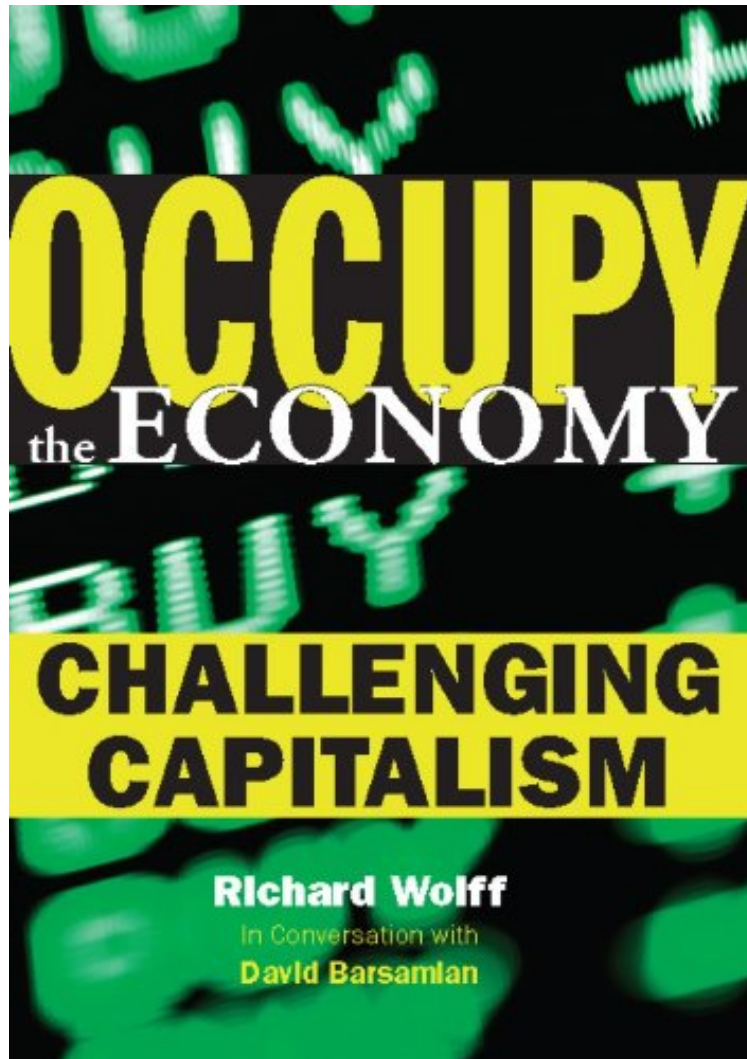


[Read download] Occupy the Economy: Challenging Capitalism (City Lights Open Media)

## Occupy the Economy: Challenging Capitalism (City Lights Open Media)

*Richard D. Wolff, David Barsamian*  
DOC | \*audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub



#641658 in eBooks 2012-05-08 2012-05-08 File Name: B007W1MC4W | File size: 35.Mb

**Richard D. Wolff, David Barsamian : Occupy the Economy: Challenging Capitalism (City Lights Open Media)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Occupy the Economy: Challenging Capitalism (City Lights Open Media):

84 of 91 people found the following review helpful. Excellent, Eye-Opening  
By P. Schumacher  
This is a book of long interviews with Richard D. Wolff by David Barsamian. The answers and discussions are long, but the book is short. Better yet, it is amazingly comprehensive and clear. Wolff goes beyond Keynesianism--though he is perfectly familiar with it. He makes plain that FDR saved capitalism in the U.S. by (a) enacting legislation to rein in the unchecked destructiveness of capitalism, (b) enacting legislation to soften the hardships the Depression had wrought--Social

Security and Unemployment Compensation, (c) forcing the 1% to pay for all this with tax hikes on wealth and corporations--he threatened the rich that if they didn't pay for this, the Unions, communists, and socialists (then very strong) would take it anyway and given them a much worse deal, and, most important, (d) direct government job-creation, since the "market" wasn't doing it. He recommends the last two (c and d) again--only this time directing direct government hiring toward green energy, weatherizing homes and offices, daycare and eldercare. But he goes way beyond this. Wolff says that it is in the nature of capitalists, since they are out to maximize profits at all costs, to fight tenaciously against any regulation or any softening of workers' plights. They have largely been successful in this, particularly in the last 30 years--lowering taxes markedly on the wealthy and on corporations, throwing out Glass-Steagall and other regulations, offshoring, union-busting, and so on--all of which have essentially brought us to the Great Recession we are in now. To combat this, he says, we not only need direct government employment to re-start demand, but we need an entire change away from the capitalist structure of business. Corporations are controlled by 15-20 people who have complete say over what everyone is paid, what will be produced, how it will be produced, where it will be done. This gives them incentives to trash workers, the environment, regulations, and even their own companies just before bailing out with golden parachutes. What is needed instead, says Wolff, is complete worker-control. Instead of a board that is detached from all production and consequences, every worker should be enlisted into the structure and control of companies. As he puts it, you go to work Mon.-Thurs. and do your job, then on Friday, you and every other worker meet in council and decide how the business shall be run. This way, an elite group does not dominate, and those who actually work and actually have to live with consequences make the decisions. In short: economic democracy. Wolff is terrific on explaining the current (crazy) tax structure, the current (woefully inadequate) minimum wage and unemployment arrangements, the wastefulness of military spending, and much else. He says that the so-called socialism of the U.S.S.R. and Mao's China were really just state capitalism, and did not allow worker control, and so replicated the same problems as capitalism. He also says--what is transparently true--that political democracy without economic democracy will fail, because economic power will buy elections. He is heartened by the Occupy Movement because it places the economy, and capitalism (a sacred cow), on the table for discussion, and because it is experimenting with actual democracy, as opposed to the sham democracy we have with bought elections. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A PROGRESSIVE ECONOMIST ADDRESSES THE CURRENT ECONOMIC ISSUES By Steven H Propp Author and economist Richard Wolff wrote in the Introduction to this 2012 book, "The importance of the Occupy movement was and is positioning its challenge to capitalism front and center among its concerns and passions. No oppositional mass movement of the last fifty years... has been similarly daring in going beyond single-issue focus to make economic injustice for the 99 percent AND the ruling economic system central, defining issues." (Pg. 8) He observes, "One of the reasons why today's crisis is so severe, long-lasting and defies the efforts of the U.S. government to cope is because it isn't a typical business cycle. This is the culmination of a thirty-year postponement of what it means when 150 years of wage increases comes to an end." (Pg. 18) He notes, "Thirty years ago the U.S. was one of the least unequal societies in terms of the disparity between rich and poor. Now we are THE MOST UNEQUAL of all the advanced industrial countries." (Pg. 30) He argues, "the next time someone says to me, 'Why are these Occupy Wall Street folks protesting?' [I will] have a really clear, straightforward answer. What kind of country is it that would consent to 1 percent of the people living in untold luxury and wild excess of consumption while condemning 100 million of their fellow citizens to a harsh life of austerity, insecurity, with minimal access to health care, education, and the other things that a civilized society ought to give to its people? Of course there should be a movement." (Pg. 64) He concludes, "We are living through capitalism's crisis since 2007 because capitalists, having been quite successful in holding down wages and changing tax codes in their own favor, discovered that the mass of people can't afford to borrow much more and can not therefore afford to buy the way they used to, can't afford to service their own debt, and that's bringing the system down. But the grave injustice for the 99 percent is that despite the crisis, the 1 percent are so much better off than everybody else that they can still weather the crisis in plush luxury." (Pg. 169) Not so much about the Occupy movement as about the current economic climate, this book will be of considerable interest to anyone wanting an outspoken, progressive view on the economy. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good info needs editing By Catherine MI'm OK with reading an interview style, but please correct spelling and sentence structure. Otherwise I'd rather watch it on internet. The material is what matters most, though. Wolff is telling us what we need to hear about an institution, capitalism, that needs a big overhaul. It has stopped working for us - if it ever did - and is hurting most of us. When profit is at the center of our overall values, a great deal of damage is done. Greed is not good. I like his thoughtful treatment of the subject.

Today's economic crisis is capitalism's worst since the Great Depression. Millions have lost jobs, homes, and healthcare. Many with jobs watch pensions, benefits, and job security decline. While most live with increasing uncertainty, the system makes the very wealthy even richer. In eye-opening interviews with prominent economist Richard Wolff, David Barsamian probes the root causes of the current crisis, its unjust social costs, and what can and should be done to turn things around. While others blame corrupt bankers and unregulated speculators or the

government or even the poor who borrowed, the authors show that the causes of the crisis run much deeper. They reach back to the 1970s when the capitalist system itself shifted, ending the century-old pattern of rising wages for Americans and thereby enabling the top 1% to become ultra-rich at the expense of the 99%. Since then, economic injustice has become chronic and further corrupted politics. Occupy's indignation with the whole system mobilizes a diverse range of Americans who seek basic change. Occupying the Economy not only clarifies and analyzes the crisis in US capitalism today, it also points toward solutions that can shape a far better future for all. Richard Wolff is professor of economics at U. Mass, and visiting professor at the New School in New York City. He hosts a program on WBAI and is author of the hit book *Capitalism Hits the Fan*. David Barsamian is director of Alternative Radio and author of many interview books, including *What We Say Goes* with Noam Chomsky.

"Richard Wolff and David Barsamian truly understand, at the deepest levels, both the need for political, social, and economic change in this nation, and the ways such change can happen. This is an essential read for everybody concerned with the future of the world, from academics to concerned citizens, it's also a brilliant and thoughtful manual that every activist must own." — Thom Hartmann, internationally syndicated radio/TV host, and author of *The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight*

"Occupy activists everywhere are heatedly debating the question, 'What's next for our movement?' In his collected interviews with David Barsamian, radical economist Richard Wolff lays out a compelling framework for further anti-corporate organizing that focuses on the root of the problem: capitalism and its never-ending assault on the 99%. Occupiers (past, present, and future) now have an intellectual guide to a different kind of economy—one that's equitable, sustainable, and, let's hope, politically achievable, sooner rather than later. Wolff's deep but conversational synthesis of recent practice and older theory couldn't be more timely, persuasive, and readable. This book should be required reading for all labor and community organizers newly inspired by Occupy Wall Street!" — Steve Early, labor activist, journalist, and author of *The Civil Wars in U.S. Labor*

"We blame corrupt bankers, their industry, and the government who refused to properly regulate it for the financial crisis, but we need to look further back, to a time when the capitalist system itself shifted. Author David Barsamian devotes his entire book to interviews with renowned economist Richard Wolff, during which the two seek to understand the root causes of the current economic crisis, and what concerted efforts by individuals can do to bring about meaningful change." — SF Weekly

"Like the writings of Karl Marx himself, Wolff's *Occupy the Economy: Challenging Capitalism* (2012, City Lights Books) gives a far more detailed analysis of the current systemic crisis than of how to build an alternative, democratic economy. The book does end, however, with a "Manifesto for Economic Democracy and Ecological Sanity," signed by seven activist intellectuals, which gives strong acknowledgment to the role of co-ops as training grounds for worker democracy. 'The change we propose... as a new and major addition to the agenda for social change,' says the Manifesto, '... is to occur inside production... the workers must become collectively their own bosses, their own board of directors...'" — Jewish Currents

"Wolff, a Marxist economist, gives a deeper analysis of capitalism, so that the 'mysteries' of wealth accumulation become clear in all their exploitative nature. By reading "Occupy the Economy," the reader will unknowingly receive an excellent introductory lesson into Marx's greatest literary achievement, *Capital*." — Smirking Chimp