

OWS Boston: Members Only

by Con Chapman

Occupy Wall Street protestors in Boston complained that homeless people had taken coats, blankets and food donated to the fight against income inequality. "They don't bring anything to the table," said a spokesman at the information tent. "It gets really frustrating."

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As we approached the Edmund Pettus Bridge we all knew we were on the verge of making history. We'd walked fifty miles from Selma along the Jefferson Davis Highway in the hot sun, risking beatings and shootings. Now, leaders of the movement huddled together as we planned what we would do if state troopers stopped us from crossing over to the other side on our way to Montgomery, the state capital.

It was decided that we would obey the federal court order and, if we met with resistance, we'd hold a short prayer session and simply turn around, consistent with our policy of peaceful and non-violent protest.

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“Everybody ready?” Dr. King asked and, after murmurs of assent were heard all around, we began to line up in formation for our final and fateful meeting with destiny.

“Wait a minute,” one of the white marchers asked. “Shouldn't the blacks go to the back?”

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I surveyed the luminaries who had assembled at Carnegie Hall for the Rally to Stop the Spread of Nuclear Weapons and felt as if I had stumbled upon a Disarmament All-Star Game. There was Dr. Linus Pauling, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Lewis Mumford, W.E.B. DuBois—what a peacenik Dream Team!

But then I spotted him—Bertrand Russell. God, how that guy frosts my ass. Ever since he called my seminal work *Prefatory Remarks Towards a Prolegomena to Any Future Study of the Philosophy of Philosophy* a “jejune and meretricious farrago composed of equal parts nonsense, self-contradiction, okra and cumin,” I'd had it in for the guy.



“Hey Russell,” I shouted, as I started to take off my jacket. “You want a piece of me?”

The man who had gone to prison for his pacifism during World War I turned and, after recognizing me, sneered.

“You’re threatening *me*? A Nobel Prize winner?” he asked with an uplifted eyebrow of scorn. “I could kick your sorry butt clear into next week, punk.”

“You feel froggy, just leap,” I snarled. “Ain’t no fence around my ass.”

We squared off and the assembled pacifists drew back, creating an impromptu ring in which we could go at it. Up went the playground chant familiar to every schoolboy: “Fight, fight, fight, fight!”

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It was a cold and rainy day that had been chosen for the vote on the Equal Rights Amendment, but I wasn’t going to let that stop me. I was going to man—sorry, person—the polls with my hand-made cardboard “Equal Rights for Women Now!” sign from the moment they opened until they closed—that’s how dedicated I was to the cause of ending sexism forever.

As I took my position outside the Susan B. Anthony Middle School and peeled back the plastic lid on my cup of coffee I

spotted her; a brunette, well-turned ankles, in a stylish trench coat. I was transfixed by her big brown eyes and—I'm not above self-criticism—her gorgeous figure.



She gave me a smile as she approached and it was all I could do to gulp out an Alan Alda-like non-threatening “Hi.”

“Do you mind if I stand with you?” she asked in a voice that recalled the purring of a particularly contented tabby cat.

“Not at all beautiful,” I said. “Is it just me, or are you hot all of a sudden?”

