

Occupy Wall Street: PRO

The long overdue middle finger to the financial elite

by Matt Campbell
Voice Staff Writer

The Founding Fathers had it right.

"Banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies," Thomas Jefferson believed. He said "The issuing power of money should be taken away from the banks and restored to the people to whom it properly belongs."

James Madison noted "history records that the money changers have used every form of abuse, intrigue, deceit, and violent means possible to maintain control over governments by controlling money and its issuance."

On Sept. 17, the Canadian-based activist group, Adbusters Media Foundation, gathered in Liberty Square in Manhattan's Financial District to protest the growing disparity in wealth and income, as well as corporate influence in democracy. Currently the movement has spread to approximately 1,500 cities around the world.

Contrary to what you might hear on some news networks, the movement's grievances are clearly communicated. You'd have to be consciously turning a blind eye to not understand, which is sadly exactly what I've seen some "journalists" do (I'm looking at you Bill O'Reilly). These "journalists" would like to paint the protesters as nothing more than far-left anti-capitalists.

True, there are some small factions within the movement protesting capitalism, but they do not represent the majority. More than 70 percent of respondents identified themselves as politically independent, according to a survey conducted by the unofficial website OccupyWallStreet.org, who had Dr. Hector R. Cordero-Guzman, sociologist of the City

University of New York, analyzed the results, with findings strongly reinforcing that Occupy Wall Street as a post-political movement that transcending party politics.

How can you not be mad at the fact that Wall Street knowingly wrecked the economy three years ago, and there are more protesters in jail than bankers or CEOs, or how about the fact that Wall Street has control over the economic policies of our country. We should be incensed that the Republican Party is basically the lapdog for corporate America, and the Democrats cater to them.

As former U.S. Rep. Alan Grayson so eloquently put it on "Real Time with Bill Maher," "24 million people in this country can't find a full-time job, 50 million can't see a doctor when they're sick, 47 million people need help to feed themselves, and 15 million families owe more than the value of their home."

According to an article in USA Today by Dennis Cauchon, student loan debt will exceed \$1 trillion for the first time this year. "Students are borrowing twice what they did a decade ago after adjusting for inflation."

Bank of America announced it will charge \$5 a month for debit card usage, this after they laid off 30,000 employees and had record profits. My own bank, BB&T, is now charging \$10 a month if its clients have less than \$1,500 in their checking account.

By occupying Wall Street, the protesters are performing their civic duty and exercising their 1st Amendment Right, bypassing our do-nothing Congress that is clearly bought and paid for, and blaming on the true culprits of our current economic recession. They represent what Matt Taibbi of Rolling Stone

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Protesters march against police brutality on Day 14.

photos, courtesy of David Shankbone

Occupy Wall Street: CON

No clear plan of action or purpose

by L Asia Brown
Contributing writer

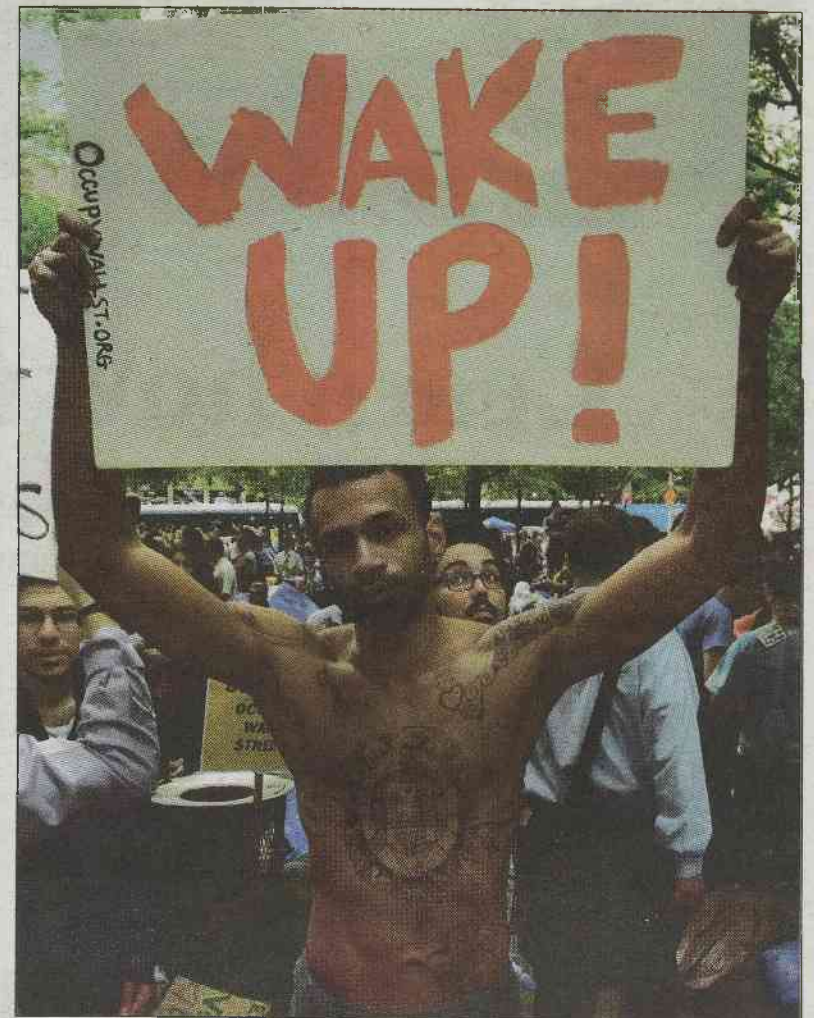
The stories behind the movement have invoked global anger, disgust, and camaraderie amongst sympathizers and observers. Police brutalizing peaceful marchers, participants braving inclement weather, and citizen journalists partnering with mainstream outlets to narrate the scenes, the "Occupy Wall Street" movement has become the United States' watered down, less mammoth Arab Spring. Or at least the protesters would like to believe that.

Unfortunately, the movement most likely won't oust any Wall Street big wigs, or push any political leaders to seek exile in another country, as was the case over the past few months in Arab nations. If the protest doesn't find some sort of direction or define clear goals, and soon, it will probably fizzle out.

Occupy Wall Street lacks several elements formerly found in some of the United States most historical and effective protests, and it accomplishes nothing for its participants. Power shifts in the last couple of decades have allowed the super wealthy to enjoy freedoms and privileges like never before, and whether we want to admit it or not, large groups of angry people loudly expressing their emotions in front of their office buildings are not nearly enough to frighten them into listening, changing, or even caring because it does not affect policies which allowed them to claim the throne as kings of America's wealth.

Occupy Wall Street was born out of dissatisfaction with the top 1 percent, the 400 wealthiest Americans and their alleged practices of greed and financial corruption. These practices led to the recession of 2008,

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A protester from the camp in Zuccotti Park, in New York City, holds up his sign during the march against police brutality, in the midst of the Occupy Wall Street movement last month.