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magazine calls a “long-overdue middle finger to the financial elite.”

Dylan Ratigan, host of MSNBC’s “The Dylan Ratigan Show,” has made it his personal mission to expose the “unholy alliance of big business and government.” He has started an online petition titled “Get Money Out” to fight against the influence of corporate money in our government. The petition is

not an empty pipedream, either. It’s complete with a draft of a Constitutional amendment, and so far has gained 224,222 signatures, including my own.

Bought politicians are not the only thing Mr. Ratigan rails against. Bailouts, war, and unemployment are all things that get him angry. These issues are also what Occupy Wall Street is protesting against.

Occupy Wall Street represents you. It represents me. We are the 99 percent. I always

say you can tell if a political movement is honest and relevant by its ability to unite. Occupy Wall Street does just that. It unites like the Tea Party can’t. As much as I hate to say it, the Tea Party is part of the 99 percent, even if they don’t realize it. The resistance includes people of many colors, religions and political persuasions. Within the movement exists a plethora of ideologies and beliefs that ultimately harks back to one theme: corporate greed. Instead of trying to reduce our fellow

citizens to hippies huddled in a drum circle looking for a handout, we should embrace the protest and become more politically active, ourselves. This is what democracy looks like.

□The Dylan Ratigan Show □airs weekdays at 4 p.m. on MSNBC. You can sign his petition at GetMoneyOut.com. To see Mr. Ratigan’s now infamous rant, go to <http://bit.ly/o1BrIk>.

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the collapse of the housing market, and the increasing financial strains many of the remaining 99% of Americans are facing as the middle class slowly becomes the poor, and the rich just become richer. On the official Occupy Wall Street web page, the following is listed as the movement’s main purpose:

Occupy Wall Street is a leaderless resistance movement with people of many colors, genders and political persuasions. The one thing we all have in common is that We Are The 99% that will no longer tolerate the greed and corruption of the 1%. We are using the revolutionary Arab Spring tactic to achieve our ends and encourage the use of nonviolence to maximize the safety of all participants.

In addition to the definition, the web page

also includes a “Modest Call to Action” that incorporates several themes into the movement’s purpose, including ‘freedom for all,’ election reform, and the removal of such heavy financial influence from politics.

This is evident in this statement, “In truth, we say, money has always been part of the capitalist political system. A system based on the existence of have and have nots, where inequality is inherent to the system, will inevitably lead to a situation where the haves find a way to rule, whether by the sword or by the dollar.”

While these fluffy words sound ideal and would probably smell like flowers if we could materialize them, they are as empty as the movement itself.

If a protester gets his or her morning coffee from Starbucks, lunch from Burger King, and dinner from Applebee’s, then runs to Target for a new pair of jeans and WalMart for

laundry detergent, he or she just funded the very “corrupt” and greedy capitalistic system being protested. What the movement lacks is real, cut-throat sacrifice and action. Are the protesters getting their hands dirty by refusing to purchase the products or use the services that finance corruption and capitalistic politics? If not, all will be lost in the face of contradiction and lack of understanding.

The recent mass transference of accounts from banks to credit unions is what will give relevance and effectiveness to the Occupy Wall Street movement. This action directly affects the cushions of the wealthy, by lessening the power of banks. Though lots and lots of accounts would need to be closed to make a significant impact, it is still a start (investment, insurance, and business services account for the most profitable of bank services).

The protest is not a total lost cause. Any

movement by common folks is admirable simply in the fact that they’re attempting to take on perceived injustices, but 2011 is here, 2012 will soon arrive, and protests can no longer expect results using old-school tactics. A new era, one that boasts more billionaires than ever, calls for more drastic measures, measures that will interrupt cash-flow and disturb the foundation of wealth that allows the 1 percent to turn a blind eye to movements such as Occupy Wall Street.

Soon, Black Friday and Cyber Monday will be here.

We’ll see just how fed up with corporatism, consumerism and greed Americans really are. If they hop in line at Best Buy and Target prepared to spend hundreds, instead of scouring small businesses for gifts and goodies, then it’s obvious no one truly understands what it means to really protest.



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