



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on October 3, 2011

Police Brutality, Mass Arrests Draw Attention to Occupy Wall Street

Before the events officially got underway on September 17, organizations affiliated with the movement insisted the so-called “occupation” and “Day of Rage” would be nonviolent. At the same time, however, organizers were [disseminating](#) instructions on how to engage in civil disobedience, resist arrest, and even disrupt court proceedings.

While the protests — far smaller than the 20,000 hoped for by activists — began relatively unnoticed in terms of media coverage, that is quickly changing. Recent police actions have helped garner unprecedented publicity and even some sympathy for the largely anti-capitalist agitators.



Over the weekend, for example, hundreds of protesters were arrested and released after repeatedly disobeying orders not to block traffic across the Brooklyn Bridge. Dozens more were handcuffed and taken away on buses. And the press dutifully descended upon the scene.

"Over 700 summonses and desk appearance tickets have been issued in connection with a demonstration on the Brooklyn Bridge late this afternoon after multiple warnings by police were given to protesters to stay on the pedestrian walkway," Deputy Commissioner Paul J. Browne of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) was [quoted as saying](#) in media outlets worldwide.

The activists, he added, were warned beforehand that they would be arrested for marching on the public road. "Some complied and took the walkway without being arrested," Browne noted. Hundreds more decided to march in the road anyway, blocking traffic for several hours as police worked to re-open the key bridge.

News of the mass arrests quickly went "[viral](#)," grabbing countless headlines for the anti-Wall Street protests in media outlets from France to Pakistan and everywhere in between. International news wires such as Reuters picked up the story, too.

Even before the Brooklyn Bridge incident, confrontations with law enforcement were drawing serious attention to the demonstrations. In fact, the relatively minor scuffles attracted swarms of reporters and a barrage of media coverage — exactly what the protesters were hoping for.

Last week, a series of videos showing alleged police brutality provided a key spark for the anti-Wall Street efforts. The incidents catapulted the small group of demonstrators to prominence in the national and international media — and attracted many new supporters to the as-of-yet ill-defined “cause.”

The most alarming clips posted on YouTube and subsequently broadcast on television featured a group



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of young women being pepper-sprayed by an officer as they were penned inside an orange police corral. Several [official investigations](#) of the apparently excessive use of force are currently underway.

The now-notorious incident happened as a contingent of marchers headed for Union Square. According to police and media reports, the protesters were blocking traffic and generally causing a ruckus. The U.K. *Guardian* [said](#) the march brought “chaos” to the area and forced authorities to close some busy streets.

In all, some 80 people were arrested during that march on charges ranging from disorderly conduct to resisting arrest. At least one suspect was also charged with assaulting a police officer, who reportedly suffered a shoulder injury from the alleged attack.

But countless other videos have also emerged from the confrontations showing police using what critics described as wildly disproportionate levels of force to subdue unruly protesters. The so-called “mainstream media” — which was [criticized](#) by communist propaganda organs such as the *China Daily* for failing to provide sufficient coverage — jumped all over it.

“This weekend, a few troublemakers turned a peaceful protest against Wall Street greed into a violent burst of chaos,” [charged](#) MSNBC personality Lawrence O'Donnell. “The troublemakers carried pepper spray, and guns, and were wearing badges.”

O'Donnell, who has been [caught red-handed manipulating facts before](#), then proceeded to show a series of videos showing heavy-handed police tactics being used against protesters. “You won't find anyone doing anything that is legal grounds for arrest,” he said, noting that all of the clips would be posted online.

Hundreds of amateur videos of sometimes-tough police responses have also been posted all over the web. In one, a high-ranking officer is shown slamming a man headfirst into a parked car, [reportedly](#) for videotaping police. Another clip [shows](#) a man being dragged by his feet across the sidewalk with his hands cuffed behind his back.

Critics from across the political spectrum have blasted the NYPD for its alleged brutality. And [unconfirmed reports](#) suggest a group of current and former U.S. Marines might even be planning to “protect” the protesters from more potential police abuses.

More than a few critics were [warning of violence, Marxist revolution, and riots](#) before the campaign even got underway last month. But as tensions and global news coverage escalate quickly, the “occupation” and its solidarity protests across America and the globe — as well as the potential implications of the broader movement — have some analysts very concerned.

While the “demands” of the Wall Street occupiers and their supporters remain purposefully murky, the rhetoric so far has mostly focused on ending “greed” and the free-speech rights of corporations and organizations. Banks and businessmen alleged to have caused the economic crisis are also in the crosshairs.

Most media outlets are portraying the movement as a “leaderless” and “grassroots” campaign. But critics say the truth is far more sinister. Several reports and analysts have linked the growing demonstrations to an anti-capitalist plot led by union bosses widely labeled “[economic terrorism](#)” when it was first publicly revealed.

The complex scheme to kill what remains of the free market was [inadvertently exposed earlier this year by community organizer Stephen Lerner](#) of the SEIU, a regular White House guest. The secret got out



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after Lerner was [caught on video](#) discussing a plan to “bring down the stock market” and “destabilize” the nation using massive anti-banker protests — all with the [stated goal of “redistributing wealth.”](#)

And Lerner was reportedly not acting alone. Another alleged conspirator said to be pulling the strings behind the scenes is [disgraced ACORN](#) founder and union boss Wade Rathke. He, too, was calling for massive “Day of Rage” protests targeting bankers and business earlier this year.

And like Lerner, Rathke is also closely tied to President Obama (who ironically, is intimately linked to the big banks which financed his campaign). Even before Obama’s political career, the connections are well documented. In fact, the President actually used to work for Rathke’s “community organizing” outfit ACORN, which was recently exposed [engaging in widespread criminal activity even as it received millions in federal tax dollars](#).

Most of the big unions and socialist groups kept their distance from the movement publicly — in the beginning. But in recent days and weeks, [an avalanche of supporters have jumped on the bandwagon](#), including prominent unions tied to the AFL-CIO and the SEIU, powerful Big-Labor front groups such as the Strong Economy for All Coalition, and numerous openly socialist and communist organizations and political parties.

Notorious anti-capitalist agitators such as “documentary” maker Michael Moore and “African-American studies” Professor Cornel West are [now backing the movement, too](#) — among many others. And more big-wig supporters and well-financed organizations are expected to officially announce their support soon.

Even some constitutionalists and sound-money advocates had started expressing support for the movement early on, especially because of some mild criticism of the Federal Reserve and the [“bankster bailouts”](#) expressed by organizers. But as the communist and socialist bent of the campaign becomes increasingly obvious, conservative and liberty-minded activists are [sounding the alarm](#).

More “occupations” are being planned in major U.S. and [European](#) cities. Some have already taken place and will supposedly continue until the movement’s “demands” are met. Meanwhile, plans to “Occupy D.C.” on October 6 are still moving ahead as scheduled. And some supporters are even [calling the campaign a “revolution”](#).

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