



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on October 17, 2011

“Occupy Wall Street” Goes Global as Violence Erupts in Rome

STOCKHOLM — As the growing “Occupy Wall Street” protests prepare to enter their second month after spreading across the United States, “solidarity” demonstrations were held over the weekend in hundreds of cities in dozens of countries around the world.

South America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Africa all had protests of varying sizes. Most of the demonstrations were supposedly targeting bankers, greed, capitalism, bailouts, governments, central banking, and a wide range of other perceived ills.



Some European capitals saw tens of thousands of people peacefully gather to express their anger over the assorted themes. Demonstrations in Spain, which have been ongoing for over five months, were reportedly among the largest.

While most of the protests were peaceful, some turned ugly. Rome, one of the worst-hit cities, saw hundreds of masked marauders causing chaos and destruction estimated in the millions of dollars. Dozens of police officers were also injured in clashes and street fights.

According to [news reports](#), shop windows and statues were smashed, churches were covered in graffiti, police cars and the Interior Ministry were set ablaze, and terror reigned supreme. Violent battles between law enforcement and hordes of “Black Bloc” thugs — often using pipes, homemade explosives, knives, and other weapons — lasted for hours.

“It’s been completely hijacked by these violent factions, and the police are nervous, and the situation is very tense,” a reporter on the scene for *Newsweek* [told](#) the media. “I myself saw at least — I would say — a dozen people who probably needed some hospitalization or some care — some stitches certainly.”

Government officials from numerous parties condemned the violence and publicly wondered why police had not done more to prevent the chaos. Dozens of violent criminals were indeed arrested, but precise figures were not available by October 16.

One of the groups working to organize the worldwide protests, United for Global Change, specifically called for non-violent demonstrations. And the violent groups in Rome reportedly represented only a small minority of the protesters.

United for Global Change also listed some grievances on its website, [15october.net](#), referred to by the press as the central organizing site. “The ruling powers work for the benefit of just a few, ignoring the will of the vast majority and the human and environmental price we all have to pay,” the group noted.

Claiming that there were protests in 951 cities in 82 countries, the organizers said people were rising up to “claim their rights and demand a true democracy” while initiating global change. “United in one voice, we will let politicians, and the financial elites they serve, know it is up to us, the people, to decide



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our future,” it stated. “We are not goods in the hands of politicians and bankers who do not represent us. ... It’s time for us to unite. It’s time for them to listen.”

“Corporate greed” and free markets were among the main targets. But similar to American protests spreading to cities and towns nationwide — where [“occupations” targeting the privately owned Federal Reserve are still growing](#) — central banks around the world did not escape the protesters’ wrath.

In Frankfurt, for example, thousands of activists converged on the European Central Bank. The Reserve Bank of Australia in Sydney was also targeted by thousands of angry protesters who camped outside, various media outlets reported.

At the Swedish Central Bank in Stockholm, known as Riksbanken, hundreds of “occupiers” showed up with all sorts of different signs. Some were calling for an end to the banking system as it currently exists. Others demanded more socialism. Several speakers also promoted the “global revolution” they said was still in its early stages.

Anti-war protesters, gay activists, communists, libertarians, and even some supporters of radio host Alex Jones were all advancing their own causes, too. The most frequently visible signs read: “We are the 99%.”

Other demonstrators in Stockholm were campaigning for the immediate re-unification of the Johansson family, which was [brutally torn apart by Swedish authorities two years ago over homeschooling](#). At least one young man blasted the “Illuminati,” [Bilderberg conference attendees](#), and the “global elite.”

Dozens of police were supervising the “Occupy Stockholm” protest, chatting with demonstrators and smiling. One officer told *The New American* that no arrests connected to the protest had been made in Stockholm that he knew of, and that the activists had been “peaceful” and well behaved. Several other Swedish cities also held smaller demonstrations.

Nearly every major European city had “occupy” protests as well, some of which featured celebrity speeches and were much larger than Stockholm’s. In London, for instance, WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange spoke to thousands of protesters.

“From Cairo to London, individuals are uniting against the greedy and corrupt system,” Assange [told](#) the assembled activists, who were prevented by police from “occupying” the London Stock Exchange as originally planned. “The aim here is not to take down law, but to build it.”

In East Asia, Hong Kong and Tokyo both saw large demonstrations — especially in the Japanese capital, where many protesters were also upset about nuclear energy. Outside of the U.S. embassy in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, angry protesters blasted the “American regime” and called for its “system of imperialism” to be destroyed, [according](#) to CNN.

Some analysts blamed rising unemployment and economic malaise for the demonstrations. Others point to the “Arab Spring” uprisings as the inspiration, along with the new-found organizational power offered by social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter. But as *The New American* has reported, there are other forces at work behind the scenes as well.

[Money from billionaire financier George Soros, for example, has been linked to “Occupy Wall Street”](#) from the very beginning. Even the Canadian magazine which first called for the occupation, *AdBusters*, is partly funded by Soros. And [several union bosses — some tied to the Obama administration — have also been implicated](#) in the protests.

While the exact message and motivation of the protesters is impossible to discern, various interests are



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attempting to use its momentum for widely varying causes. In the United States, radio host Alex Jones called for [“Occupy the Fed” demonstrations](#) in Dallas and other cities to target the [corrupt central banking system](#). But communist and socialist groups are openly hoping to use the movement to eventually smash “capitalism.”

Big Labor, meanwhile, is aiming to use the protests to advance union interests. More than a few analysts have [linked the movement to a conspiracy unwittingly revealed by the SEIU’s Stephen Lerner to bring down capitalism and “redistribute the wealth.”](#)

Several political groups funded by Soros — MoveOn.org and the “Rebuild the Dream” movement led by former Obama czar and self-described communist Van Jones, for example — are seeking to build pressure for higher taxes on the middle class. Astute observers noted that this is the same agenda being advanced by President Obama, who publicly expressed sympathy for the demonstrators.

Supporters and critics of the movement were [warning](#) that it would have profound implications well before the occupation of Wall Street officially got underway on September 17. Organizers insisted it would be a peaceful expression of rage for demanding an end to the influence of money in politics.

More pessimistic conservative analysts, meanwhile, were [forecasting violence, attempted Marxist revolution](#), and possibly the end to what little remains of the free market. But where it goes from here remains to be seen.

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Photo: In this picture taken Saturday, Oct. 15, 2011, protesters clash with police in downtown Rome: AP Images



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