

THE OCCUPIED WALL STREET JOURNAL



**NEW YORK
UNITES!
WEDNESDAY
OCT. 5**
Student Walkouts
Union Marches
occupywallst.org
nystudentsrising.org

THIS IS WHAT AN OCCUPATION LOOKS LIKE: Music and mass democracy break out at Liberty Square, just north of the New York Stock Exchange. Working groups for media, arts & culture, food, childcare, direct action and the democratic General Assembly meet each day to strategize the next moves forward. *Photo: Jed Brandt*

Learning from the World

We arrived in Greece this summer just as street-fighting broke over Athens. For days the police rained tear gas on the people who occupied the capital's main Syntagma Square. People would disperse and reform right on the steps of the parliament. The subways were turned into medical centers for the wounded.

There is a worldwide movement of rebellion and resistance building. What started in Tunisia and Egypt has shaken and overthrown governments, then jumped to Spain to Greece to England—and now to New York City and across the United States.

In Greece a generation is waking up. They call themselves the Indignant. They reject old politics and the old parties. They refuse to accept the cutbacks and austerity measures imposed by the global banks and the European Union. They are determined, angry and righteous.

They had challenges in Greece. Right-wing ultra-nationalists tried to infiltrate the movement. Police attacked. Some tired left parties condemned the movement saying it's not focused on elections or minor reforms.

One popular symbol is the helicopter: the people want the Greek government to leave, resign, fly into exile. Or just get the hell out.

And why not here? If the people of Egypt can run out Mubarak, why can't we run out the American politicians who serve the banks and brutalize us?

The banks are global. They have globalized their sweatshops and

THE MESSAGE FROM EGYPT, SYRIA, TUNISIA, SPAIN AND ENGLAND IS SIMPLE: JOIN IN! RISE UP! OUR ANSWER TO THEM HAS TO BE YES. AND IT HAS TO BE YES TO EACH OTHER.

cutbacks. We are globalizing the rebellion.

A young woman who is active in this Greek movement of the squares told us:

"I didn't involve myself with politics directly until 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos was killed by police three years ago. An hour after the murder, riots started

everywhere—if you were young and a bit active, you couldn't help but participate.

"This murder was just the beginning for people who were oppressed by the system. After the 1980s the factories were closing, and the youth of Greece found it had nothing. In 2008 unemployment reached a critical point."

Crisis, unemployment, cutbacks and police murder. Isn't this what we face here too?

In Greece, we were asked repeatedly: What is happening in the United States? Will you join us? What are you doing?

Now we can answer: We are moving here too. We are learning. We are reaching out.

We don't have to accept the world imposed on us by banks, politicians and police. We are the future.

BY ERIC RIBELLARSI AND JIM WEILL



ECONOMIC SHOCK, SOCIAL CRISIS: Tens of thousands challenge the Greek government and European bankers at the Thessaloniki Expo, Sept. 10. Police deployed military-grade tear gas against the largely peaceful protesters.

THE REVOLUTION BEGINS AT HOME

Wall Street Protests Enter Third Week

What is occurring on Wall Street right now is remarkable. For over two weeks, in the great cathedral of capitalism, the dispossessed have liberated territory from the financial overlords and their police army.

They have created a unique opportunity to peacefully shift the tides of history like the sit-down strikes of the 1930s, the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the democratic uprisings across the Arab world and Europe today.

Our system is broken. More than 25 million Americans are unemployed. More than 50 million live without health insurance. Perhaps 100 million live in poverty. Yet the fat cats are showered with billions in tax breaks while politicians compete to turn the screws on the rest of us.

The Wall Street occupation can force those in power to offer concessions as happened this year in Spain, Greece and Egypt. No one can say how many people it will take or how things will change exactly, but if we unite there is a potential to transform a corrupt political process and realize a society based on human needs, not hedge fund profits.

After all, who would have imagined a year ago that Tunisians and Egyptians would oust their dictators?

At Liberty Plaza in Lower Manhattan, thousands gather every day to debate, discuss and organize what to do about our failed system that has allowed the 400 Americans at the top to hoard more wealth than the 180 million Americans at the bottom.

It's astonishing that this festival of democracy has sprouted on this turf: where the masters of the universe play the tune that both political parties and the media dance to. The New York Police Department, which has deployed hundreds of officers to surround and intimidate protesters 24/7, could arrest everyone in minutes. But they haven't, which is also astonishing.

That's because assaulting peaceful crowds in a public square demanding real democracy – economic and not just political – would remind the world of the brittle autocrats who brutalized their people demanding justice, before they collapsed in the Arab Spring. And the violence has already backfired. After police attacked a march last Saturday that started from Liberty Plaza, the crowds only got bigger and media interest grew.

The Wall Street occupation has succeeded in revealing how corporations, politicians, media and police have failed us as institutions offering something positive to humanity. Our current leaders tell us they will spread the financial pain by imposing the "Buffett Rule," a tax increase that asks the wealthy to sacrifice the equivalent of a tin of caviar per year.



Daily marches around Wall Street have launched a movement. *Graphic: Adbusters*

Meanwhile, the rest of us will have to sacrifice healthcare, food, education, housing, jobs and perhaps our lives to feed the ferocious appetite of capital.

That's why more and more people are joining the Wall Street occupation. They can tell you about their homes being foreclosed, months of grinding unemployment or minimum-wage dead-end jobs, staggering student debt loads, or trying to live without decent healthcare. They represent a generation of Americans who are told to believe in a system

fully formed movement is not going to spring from the ground. It has to be created. That is why it's called grassroots.

Protestors are presenting plenty of sophisticated ideas: end corporate personhood; tax stock trading; nationalize the banks; socialize medicine; fund government jobs with a *real* stimulus; lift restrictions on labor organizing; allow cities to turn abandoned homes into public housing; build a green economy.

But how can we get broad agreement on any of these? If the protest-

HOW MANY TIMES IN LIFE DO YOU GET A CHANCE TO WATCH HISTORY UNFOLD

that only offers them "Dancing With the Stars" and pepper spray to the face.

Yet against every description of this generation derided as narcissistic, apathetic and hopeless, they are staking out a claim for all of us – and that's why we all need to join in: to support this nucleus of a revolt that could shake America's power structure as much as the Arab world was upended.

Tens of thousands of people need to be protesting the Wall Street elite, who are out driving Bentleys and drinking thousand-dollar champagne with the money they looted from the financial crisis and bailouts as Americans literally die on the streets.

True, the scene in Liberty Plaza may seem messy and chaotic but it's also a laboratory of possibility, creating a diversity of ideas, expression and art.

Many people say they support the occupation, yet hesitate to join. It's clear that the biggest obstacles to building a powerful movement aren't the police or corporate powers – but our own cynicism and despair.

The views of some were colored by The New York Times saying protestors were "Gunning for Wall Street with faulty aim." Many of the criticisms boil down to "a lack of clear messaging."

But what's wrong with that? A

ers came with a ready-made set of demands it would have only limited their potential. They would have either been dismissed as pie in the sky – like socialized medicine or nationalized banks – or something weak such as the Buffet Rule, to be co-opted by a failed political system that would only undermine the movement.

Rather, it is only through common struggle, debate and popular democracy that we will create genuine solutions which have legitimacy. And that is what is occurring down at Wall Street.

How many times in life do you get a chance to not only watch history unfold, but to come together with multitudes of people who believe in genuine democracy as a reality and not a fantasy, and to actively participate in building a better society?

If we focus on the possibilities and shed our despair, our hesitancy and our cynicism, and if we collectively come to Wall Street with critical thinking, ideas and solidarity, we can change the world.

For too long our minds have been chained by fear, by division, by impotence. The one thing that most terrifies the elite is a great awakening. That day is here. Together, let us seize it.

BY ARUN GUPTA



NYC — Occupy Together

In just over ten days, over 40 cities have emerged to join the Occupy Wall Street effort. Erupting in an astonishing way, this movement is bringing together diverse backgrounds and skills to work together to address excessive corporate influence in government. Browsing through Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, the depth of participation and excitement is right there. Contrasted to the excruciating politicking of Congress, in which solutions, if they are decided upon, do not go into affect for a year or two, many are feeling the hope that real change can emerge from this leaderless movement in which people are leaving their homes to occupy thier communities.

In New York, we have been witness to the generosity of many anonymous people dropping by Liberty Square with donations of food, medical supplies, tents, tarps and sleeping bags. Helping the campers is not unique to NYC. In Chicago, protesters reported the same solidarity in the occupation developing outside the Chicago Federal Reserve.

Meetings are being held almost daily to start a nationwide Occupy effort in October; already the list of cities that have signed on is jaw-dropping, and surprising. Birmingham. San Diego. Las Vegas. Omaha. Boston. Lexington. San Francisco. Philadelphia. Kansas City. Washington. Tampa. Denver. Pittsburgh. Buffalo. Charlotte. Richmond. Austin. Salt Lake City. Asheville. Miami. With new occupations popping up every day.

If occupiers cannot get answers and solutions from government through the ballot, they will do it through the power of their presence in an "inconvenient space."

We are at the beginning of a monumental change in this country, and the world. The system won't change itself. It's up to us: our bodies in the street, our talents put to work, our passion given life. Systemic change requires more than "protesters" and "activists." You. Your family. Your friends. Your neighbors. All of us. Now.

BY MICHAEL LEVITIN, GRIM & JED BRANDT



WE'RE ALL IN THIS: The occupation has spread beyond its first days to include an increasing number of families, local union workers, teachers and students from across the five boroughs.

PUSHED OUT OF OUR HOMES AND INTO THE STREET

I am a 27-year-old journalist living in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Journalists, as a rule, do not readily identify themselves with organizations or movements. We're supposed to strive for objectivity. Get the whole story. Look at things from all sides. We don't want to have our work undermined by any affiliations. We don't want to advocate. That's a job for PR reps. Advocacy, to us, is the Dark Side.

But I am announcing my solidarity with the Occupy Wall Street movement.

On the morning of Wednesday, Sept. 28, I left for Brussels, Wisconsin. It's your average Midwestern small town: population of a few hundred, one gas station, a couple of churches and a few too many bars. That's where my mom and stepdad live. I flew out there to help them move out of their home.

Well, technically, it is no longer their home. The new owner is Freddie Mac, which along with Bank of America is kicking my mom and stepdad out of their home.

That house has been in my stepdad's family for over 100 years. He and my mom remodeled the place about 10 years back. My mom had made sure there were enough bedrooms for when my sisters and I came back home with grandchildren for her to spoil. That's not going to happen there, now.

It is difficult for me to grasp this. I don't think I fully will until I am finished clearing rooms and lugging boxes.

It's hard, and it doesn't feel right. Didn't Bank of America get more than \$100 billion in bailouts? Didn't they receive a tax refund of \$1.9 billion from the IRS, alongside the \$4.4 billion in 2010 profits? Why do they get saved by the government after handing out countless high-risk loans, and then again get a safety net from government-sponsored enterprises like Freddie Mac when recipients of those loans have to default? How is this okay?

I moved to New York in January of 2010 and landed an internship at Thomson Reuters in spite of the festering financial crisis. It was originally supposed to be an unpaid internship, but I convinced them to change it to an hourly wage. It was also supposed to be 20 hours a week, but over time I pushed them to make it full-time. By the summer they decided to turn my position into a salaried gig. I was ecstatic.

But I wasn't happy with the work. First of all, it wasn't journalism. I wrote an internal newsletter. If you were not a Thomson Reuters employee or a programming guy at a bank I can guarantee that you never read my newsletter. Second, it didn't feel like I was doing good work. I wrote a monthly newsletter for the company's global stock network – a complex system that shoots trade information from stock markets all over the world to banks and brokers and billionaires.

Our clients were among the most powerful people in the world.

Comfort the afflicted. Afflict the comfortable. That's what a journalist strives to do. Me? I was comforting the comfortable.

Economist Edward Wolff's work has shown that, as late as 2007, the top 1% of American households held 34.6% of all privately held wealth in the United States. Within this affluent contingent, Wolff notes, the wealth distribution is again hyper-concentrated to the top .1%. The vast majority of the households in this bracket include players in the finance and banking industries.

This bothered me. A lot. My work went against a lot of my principles, and this affected my well-being. I grew depressed. I started eating less. My sleep cycle started going haywire. I doubled down on my drinking habits.

Finally, last August, I quit. Since then, I've been freelancing. It's been great. I'm broke, yeah. But it's been great.

I used to cover border issues in Arizona, and I did some immigration work in southern Mexico. Here in New York, I've been gravitating towards the police beat. Never did I think about covering finance or national politics. Never did I want to write about our nation's financial crisis.

But then Freddie Mac and Bank of America pushed my mom out of her home.

So here I am. Committed. To the dialogue. To the movement. To what some of my fellow young men and women camped out in Liberty Plaza are calling 'The Revolution.

My friends have already told me that I'm crazy. That Occupy Wall Street is nothing more than a bunch of dirty, jobless kids who have no idea what they're fighting, who are merely beating drums and barking at cops. But that's not what I've seen.

The movement knows precisely what it is fighting. It is fighting the astoundingly unfair distribution of wealth in our country while 46 million Americans live in poverty – and that is by federal guidelines that says a mom and two kids are no longer poor if they make \$19,000 a year. It is fighting the reality that Wall Street and Capitol Hill are one in the same. It is fighting, tooth and nail, the disintegration of the American middle class. Simply put, it is fighting greed.

I can also tell you that it's new. That structure isn't yet in place the way some might want it to be. That demands have not yet been fully sculpted and articulated.

But the Occupation is only in its second week, and it is gaining more momentum than anyone had dreamed. Numbers continue to grow in that small square. Makeshift beds pepper the western end. Protest signs line the north. Someone has set up a library to the east.

Beyond that, the rest of the world has begun to pay attention. Food, supplies and donations are streaming



in from well-wishers who cannot occupy the square themselves. Doctors are manning the medical station. Lawyers are consulting the recently arrested. Elected officials, musicians and other public figures have come by to count themselves among the Occupation's ranks. Things are moving.

If you are a New Yorker, and you haven't yet stopped by Liberty Plaza – do it. It's astounding. The excitement. The empathy. The absolute fortitude of these folks. It almost moves me to tears to stand among them. They are there because so many among us continue to struggle. They are there because bad things are happening to good people. They are there for my mother.

And when I return to New York this week, I will be there too.

BY DAVID KEMPA

WE OCCUPY BECAUSE

corporate tax dodgers who we bailed out are bankrupting our economy again. @usuncut

my daughter deserves a better future. @jstillon

the world is on the cusp of great change and I plan to help tip the scales in favor of all that is good.

I trust people who sleep on the street more than I trust bankers, traders, or politicians. @critmaspanic

when I hear "Grandma, where were you during the American Rising?" I can say "On the first day I stood and said ENOUGH!" @Timcast

the \$1 in my pocket is more than GE, BP and ExxonMobil paid in taxes last year. @usuncut

the "American Dream" is a slogan created to make people work themselves to death. @yarazza

I can't find a good job even though I am willing to work hard. @madmike711

democracy is built, not granted. @reverendmanny

I'm sick of my faith being used to justify oppression, injustice, greed, and war. @protestchaplain

it's time they feel how fed up we are. We don't buy your facade of a democracy. @sir_younis

NYC schoolchildren deserve better then hedge-fund sponsored lotteries to get into a good school. @ourschoolsnyc

"Every generation needs a new Revolution" (Thomas Jefferson). @ash_anderson



GREECE & SPAIN
Tens of thousands of protestors gather in Athens after plans were announced to cut public spending and raise taxes in exchange for a 110 billion euro bailout. Three weeks later, more than 1,000 *indignados* camp in Puerta del Sol, Madrid's central square. 30,000 supporters gather for a series of mass assemblies that put forward popular demands, including a greater say in the political process and an end to austerity measures enacted by the Spanish government.

LONDON
500,000 protestors take to London's streets in the March for the Alternative, a movement coordinated by the Trades Union Congress. Teachers and public sector workers hold massive strikes in support of the movement.

WISCONSIN

More than 20,000 Wisconsinites protest Gov. Scott Walker's (R) austerity budget and his attack on collective bargaining. Hundreds of students are arrested. A protest in Columbus, Ohio against similar attacks on the public sector draws nearly 4,000 protesters. Demonstrators at both rallies carry Egyptian flags and signs drawing a parallel between their struggles.



EGYPT

Using canvassing, social networking and citizen-made media, organizers launch an 18-day protest in Cairo's Tahrir Square. Violence by the regime's thugs and the blocking of internet traffic inspire hundreds of thousands of Egyptians to join, swinging world opinion against President Hosni Mubarak's dictatorial government which falls on Feb. 11. The dual success inspires an Arab Spring of pro-democracy activism from Yemen to Bahrain to Syria.

TUNISIA

Twenty-six-year old produce vendor Mohammed Bouazizi sets himself on fire in response to years of petty police harassment in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia. His self-immolation sparks a wave of protests against the decades-long autocratic rule of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali. After four weeks, Ben Ali is forced to dissolve parliament and flees to Saudi Arabia.



Declaration of the Occupation

APPROVED BY CONSENSUS ON SEPT. 29, 2011
AT THE NEW YORK CITY GENERAL ASSEMBLY
IN OCCUPIED LIBERTY SQUARE.

As we gather together in solidarity to express a feeling of mass injustice, we must not lose sight of what brought us together. We write so that all people who feel wronged by the corporate forces of the world can know that we are your allies.

As one people, united, we acknowledge the reality: that the future of the human race requires the cooperation of its members; that our system must protect our rights, and upon corruption of that system, it is up to the individuals to protect their own rights, and those of their neighbors; that a democratic government derives its just power from the people, but corporations do not seek consent to extract wealth from the people and the Earth; and that no true democracy is attainable when the process is determined by economic power. We come to you at a time when corporations, which place profit over people, self-interest over justice, and oppression over equality, run our governments. We have peaceably assembled here, as is our right, to let these facts be known.

They have taken our houses through an illegal foreclosure process, despite not having the original mortgage.

They have taken bailouts from taxpayers with impunity, and continue to give Executives exorbitant bonuses.

They have perpetuated inequality and discrimination in the workplace based on age, the color of one's skin, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation.

They have poisoned the food supply through negligence, and undermined the farming system through monopolization.

They have profited off of the torture, confinement, and cruel treatment of countless nonhuman animals, and actively hide these practices.

They have continuously sought to strip employees of the right to negotiate for better pay and safer working conditions.

They have held students hostage with tens of thousands of dollars of debt on education, which is itself a human right.

They have consistently outsourced labor and used that outsourcing as leverage to cut workers' healthcare and pay.

They have influenced the courts to achieve the same rights as people, with none of the culpability or responsibility.

They have spent millions of dollars on legal teams that look for ways to get them out of contracts in regards to health insurance.

They have sold our privacy as a commodity.

They have used the military and police force to prevent freedom of the press.

They have deliberately declined to recall faulty products endangering lives in pursuit of profit.

They determine economic policy, despite the catastrophic failures their policies have produced and continue to produce.

They have donated large sums of money to politicians supposed to be regulating them. They continue to block alternate forms of energy to keep us dependent on oil.

They continue to block generic forms of medicine that could save people's lives in order to protect investments that have already turned a substantial profit.

They have purposely covered up oil spills, accidents, faulty bookkeeping, and inactive ingredients in pursuit of profit.

They purposefully keep people misinformed and fearful through their control of the media.

They have accepted private contracts to murder prisoners even when presented

with serious doubts about their guilt.

They have perpetuated colonialism at home and abroad. They have participated in the torture and murder of innocent civilians overseas.

They continue to create weapons of mass destruction in order to receive government contracts. *

To the people of the world, We, the New York City General Assembly occupying Wall Street in Liberty Square, urge you to assert your power.

Exercise your right to peaceably assemble; occupy public space; create a process to address the problems we face, and generate solutions accessible to everyone.

To all communities that take action and form groups in the spirit of direct democracy, we offer support, documentation, and all of the resources at our disposal.

Join us and make your voices heard!

*These grievances are not all-inclusive.

No excuses left. IT'S NOW OR NEVER

Either you join the revolt taking place on Wall Street and in the financial districts of other cities across the country or you stand on the wrong side of history.

Either you obstruct, in the only form left to us, which is civil disobedience, the plundering by the criminal class on Wall Street and accelerated destruction of the ecosystem that sustains the human species, or become the passive enabler of a monstrous evil. Either you taste, feel and smell the intoxication of freedom and revolt or sink into the miasma of despair and apathy. Either you are a rebel or a slave.

Choose. But choose fast. The state and corporate forces are determined to crush this. They are not going to wait for you. They are terrified this will spread.

They have their long phalanxes of police on motorcycles, their rows of white paddy wagons and their metal barricades set up on every single street leading into the New York financial district where the suits use your money, money they stole from you, to

gamble and speculate and gorge themselves while one in four children outside those barricades depend on food stamps to eat.

Speculation in the 17th century was a crime. Speculators were hanged. Today they run the state and the financial markets. They disseminate the lies that pollute our airwaves. They know, even better than you, how pervasive the corruption and theft have become, how gamed the system is against you, how corporations have cemented into place a thin oligarchic class and an obsequious cadre of politicians, judges and journalists who live in their little gated Versailles while 6 million Americans are thrown out of their homes, a million people a year go bankrupt because they cannot pay their medical bills and 45,000 die from lack of proper care; where real joblessness is spiraling to over 20 percent, where the citizens, including students, spend lives toiling in debt working dead-end jobs, when they have jobs, in a world devoid of hope, a world of masters and serfs.

The only word these corporations know

is more. They are disemboweling every last social service program funded by the taxpayers, from education to Social Security, because they want that money themselves. Let the sick die. Let the poor go hungry. Let families be tossed in the street. Let the unemployed rot. Let children in the inner city or rural wastelands learn nothing and live in misery and fear. Let the students finish school with no jobs and no prospects of jobs. Let the prison system, the largest in the industrial world, expand to swallow up all potential dissenters. Let torture continue. Let teachers, police, firefighters, postal employees and social workers join the ranks of the unemployed. Let the roads, bridges, dams, levees, power grids, rail lines, subways, bus services, schools and libraries crumble or close. Let the rising temperatures of the planet, the freak-weather patterns, the hurricanes, the droughts, the flooding, the tornadoes, the melting polar ice caps, the poisoned water systems, the polluted air increase until the species dies.

If you do not shake off the 1% very, very soon they will kill you. And they will kill



CHOOSE. BUT CHOOSE FAST. THE STATE AND CORPORATE FORCES ARE DETERMINED TO CRUSH THIS.

the ecosystem, dooming your children and your children's children. So either you rise up and dismantle the corporate state for a world of sanity – where we no longer kneel before the absurd idea that the demands of financial markets should govern human behavior – or we are frog-marched toward self-annihilation.

Those on the streets around Wall Street are the physical embodiment of hope. They know that hope has a cost, that it is not easy or comfortable, that it requires self-sacrifice and discomfort and finally faith. They sleep on concrete every night. Their

clothes are soiled. They have tasted fear, been beaten, gone to jail, been blinded by pepper spray, cried, hugged each other, laughed, sung, talked too long in general assemblies, seen their chants drift upward to the office towers above them, wondered if it is worth it, if anyone cares, if they will win. But as long as they remain steadfast they point the way out of the corporate labyrinth. This is what it means to be alive. They are the best among us.

BY CHRIS HEDGES



DAY 13

Members of Occupy Wall Street stage citywide marches, perform guerrilla theater and rally the 99% to take back the streets – and their future!

17 DEC

25 JAN

17 FEB

26 MAR

5 MAY

17 SEP

24 SEP

26 SEP

27 SEP

30 SEP

STOP COMPLAINING ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE

STAND UP FOR EACH OTHER



Occupation for Dummies

How it came about, what it means,
how it works and everything

QUESTION: I hear that Adbusters organized Occupy Wall Street? Or Anonymous? Or US Day of Rage? Just who put this together anyway?

All of the above, and more. Adbusters made the initial call in mid-July, and also produced a sexy poster with a ballerina posed atop the Charging Bull statue and riot police in the background. US Day of Rage, the mainly internet-based creation of IT strategist Alexa O'Brien, got involved too and did a lot of the early legwork and tweeting. Anonymous—in its various and multiform visages—joined in late August. In New York most of the planning was done by people involved in the NYC General Assembly, a collection of activists, artists and students first convened by folks who had been involved in New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts. But no one person or group is running the Wall Street occupation.

So nobody is in charge? How do decisions get made?

The General Assembly has become the de facto decision-making body for the occupation at Liberty Plaza, just a few blocks north of Wall Street. Get ready for jargon: the General Assembly is a horizontal, autonomous, leaderless, modified-consensus-based system with roots in anarchist thought, and it's akin to the assemblies that have been driving recent social movements around the world in places like Argentina, Egypt's Tahrir Square, Madrid's Puerta del Sol and so on. Working toward consensus is really hard, frustrating and slow. But the occupiers are taking their time. When they finally get to consensus on some issue, often after days and days of trying, the feeling is quite incredible. A mighty cheer fills the plaza. It's hard to describe the experience of being among hundreds of passionate, rebellious, creative people who are all in agreement about something.

What are the demands of the protesters?

Ugh, the zillion-dollar question. Again, the original Adbusters call asked, "What is our one demand?" Technically, there isn't one yet. In the weeks leading up to Sept. 17, the NYC General Assembly seemed to be veering away from the language of "demands" in the first place, largely because government institutions are already so shot through with corporate money that making specific demands would be pointless until the movement grew stronger politically.

Instead, to begin with, they opted to make their demand the occupation itself—and the direct democracy taking place there—which in turn may or may not come up with some specific demand. When you think about it, this act is actually a pretty powerful statement against the corruption that Wall Street has come to represent. But since thinking is often too much to ask of the American mass media, the question of demands has turned into a massive PR challenge. The General Assembly is currently in the midst of determining how it will come to consensus about unifying demands. It's a really messy and interesting discussion. But don't hold your breath.

How many people have responded to the Adbusters call? How large is the group? And how large has it ever been?

The original Adbusters call envisioned 20,000 people flooding the Financial District on Sept. 17. A tenth of that probably ended up being there that day. Despite a massive Anonymous-powered online social media blitz, lots of people simply didn't know about it, and traditional progressive organizations like labor unions and peace groups were uncomfortable signing on to so amorphous an action. Over the course of a difficult first week, with arrests happening just about every day, new faces kept coming as others filtered out to take a break. The media coverage after the mass arrests On Saturday, Sept. 24 and alleged police brutality has brought out many more. Now, during the day and into the night, one finds 500 or more people in the plaza, and maybe half that sleeping over. At any given time, several thousand people around the world are watching the occupation's 24/7 livestream online.

What would a "win" look like for the occupation?

Again, that depends on whom you ask. As Sept. 17 approached, the NYC General Assembly really saw its goal, again, not so much as to pass some piece of legislation or start a revolution as to build a new kind of movement. It wanted to foment similar assemblies around the city and around the world, which would be a new basis for political organizing in this country, against the overwhelming influence of corporate money. That is starting to happen, as similar occupations are cropping up in dozens

of other cities. I've heard some people saying, when Liberty Plaza was swamped with TV news cameras, "We've already won!" Others think they've hardly begun. Both, in some sense, are true.

Are there cops all over the square? How bad has the police brutality been?

The police presence is nonstop, and there have been some very scary encounters with them—which also gave occasion for tremendous acts of courage by protesters. The worst incident was last Saturday, of course, but there has been very little trouble since then. A large contingent of protesters has no intention of getting arrested, and almost nobody is interested in taking pointless risks or instigating violence against people or property. The more that ordinary people join the cause—together with celebrity visitors like Susan Sarandon, Cornel West and Michael Moore—the less likely the police will probably be to try to suppress it. As one sign along Broadway says, "Safety in Numbers! Join Us!"

If I can't come to Wall Street, what else can I do?

A lot of people are already taking part in important ways from afar—this is the magic of decentralization. Online, you can watch the livestream, make donations, retweet on Twitter and encourage your friends to get interested. People with relevant skills have been volunteering to help maintain the movement's websites and edit video—coordinating through IRC chat rooms and other social media. Soon, the formal discussions about demands will be happening online as well as in the plaza. Offline, you can join the numerous similar occupations that are starting up around the country or start your own. Check occupytogether.org. Finally, you can always take the advice that has become one of the several mantras of the movement, expressed this way by one woman at Tuesday night's General Assembly meeting: "Occupy your own heart," she said, "not with fear but with love."

By NATHAN SCHNEIDER

A version of this article was originally published on thenation.com

Five Things
You Can Do
Right Now

1. OCCUPY!

Bring instruments, food, blankets, bedding, rain gear, and a sense of justice.

2. Spread the Word

Download, print, display, and share flyers:
nycga.net/resources/media

Twitter: #occupywallstreet #occupytogether
Facebook: OccupyWallSt.

3. Donate

Visit NYCGA.NET/DONATE

Make a tax-deductable donation to the New York City General Assembly.

You can also mail a check or money order to:
Alliance for Global Justice
1247 "E" Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

Please indicate "Occupy Wall Street" in the memo line.
Or CALL at 202-544-9355 to make a telephone donation.

On twitter: #needsoftheoccupiers

If you are in the area come by and drop off:
Prepared food
Non perishable food
Vegan and Gluten Free so anyone can eat it

sweatshirts
sweatpants
socks

You can mail packages to us:
UPS Store 118A
Fulton St. #205
New York, NY 10038

4. Follow the occupation

nycga.net | occupywallst.org
takethesquare.net | occupytogether.org
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5. Educate Yourself

