

# Mayor Bloomberg slanders Wall Street protest

**Bill Van Auken**  
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New York City's billionaire mayor, Michael Bloomberg, renewed his attack on the three-week-old Wall Street protest Friday, claiming that it is aimed at destroying the jobs of New Yorkers.

"What they're trying to do is take the jobs away from people working in this city," Bloomberg said in his weekly appearance on WOR radio. "They're trying to take away the tax base we have. None of this is good for tourism."

He added: "And if you focus for example on driving the banks out of New York City, you know those are our jobs ... You can't have it both ways: If you want jobs you have to assist companies and give them confidence to go and hire people."

Bloomberg, who has accrued a personal fortune of close to \$20 billion off of his connections with Wall Street, has repeatedly attempted to deflect the issues raised by the Occupy Wall Street demonstrators, of social inequality and the vast accumulation of wealth by the top 1 percent, by claiming that their target is not billionaires like himself, but the lowest paid clerical, administrative and support staff in the financial industry.

As for the tax base, the billionaire mayor forcefully opposed an extension of the so-called "millionaires' tax," depriving the state and the city of billions of dollars in revenues by effectively cutting the tax rate for the rich. His administration has also implemented numerous tax giveaways for the financial sector.

The mayor's remarks came amid indications that preparations are being made to force the demonstrators out of their encampment at Zuccotti Park.

The corporate owner of the park, Brookfield Office Properties, issued a statement declaring that sanitation in the park is a "growing concern." It added: "Normally the park is

cleaned and inspected every weeknight ... because the protesters refuse to cooperate ... the park has not been cleaned since Friday, September 16th and as a result, sanitary conditions have reached unacceptable levels."

To eject the demonstrators, Brookfield would have to declare them trespassers and ask the city to force them out. The company's ties to the Bloomberg administration are extremely close. The mayor's domestic partner, Diana Taylor, a managing director at Wolfensohn Fund Management, sits on Brookfield's board of directors.

New York's Police Commissioner Ray Kelly Friday defended the latest round of arrests and police brutality that occurred Wednesday night toward the end of a mass march that saw between 15,000 and 20,000 people pour through the streets of lower Manhattan.

Kelly claimed that the protesters had "attacked the police" when they tried to pass through barricades that blocked them from demonstrating on Wall Street.

"They're going to be met with force when they do that. This is just common sense," Kelly said.

In reality, cops responded with excessive force, pepper-spraying demonstrators and hitting them with police truncheons. Mounted cops were also brought in to intimidate the protesters.

Attorneys representing the protesters are suing over the more than 700 arrests that were made last Saturday when police trapped demonstrators after leading them onto the Brooklyn Bridge. Protesters have charged that they were deliberately lured onto the bridge to provide a pretext for a mass arrest aimed at quelling the movement. The suit seeks to bar the NYPD from employing similar methods in the future and to have the arrests expunged as well unspecified damages from the City.

“The NYPD engaged in a premeditated, planned, scripted and calculated effort to sweep the streets of protesters and disrupt a growing protest movement in New York,” the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund charged.

Friday saw one of the biggest turnouts in Zuccotti Park since the demonstrations began on September 17.

The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to Heath Lenoble, from Binghamton, New York, who had issued his own statement directed to the demonstration.

“I am currently unemployed, and trying to go back to school,” he said. “I am living on the meager amounts of Social Security Income and Disability that the government pays me. The government gives me about \$800 a month. They say that should take care of me, my rent, food and clothing. I am on Medicare because if you are on SSI and disability long enough, you qualify for Medicare. I am too old to be on my father’s health insurance because I am 26 now. I have scoliosis. I’ve had many surgeries on my back.

“We need to actively remove the corporatist influence that owns Congress. The two-party system lends itself to being owned like this.

“We have a right to life as it states in the Declaration of Independence, but it doesn’t say anything about our quality of life. Therefore, if BP, as an example, can use their money to persuade the government that it was cheaper to dump toxic chemicals in the waterways, then this is the pinnacle of freedom. There is no law that stops them.

“There are more rights that we need to establish and protect. Health care should be a right, not a privilege. Education should be a right, not a privilege. The reason education has gotten as bad as it has is because the rich are taking money out. They don’t want to pay taxes for education, health care and welfare programs they don’t need. We as a society must prepare people for a job with training.”

Jacques told the WSWS, “I’ve been here mostly since the beginning. I was pretty surprised and amazed with the turnout for the demonstration Wednesday. I think there were tens of thousands, and I’m sure the bird’s eye cameras would show that. I think the spread of these demonstrations all over the country and into Canada is awesome. I would like to know who and how many came out to demonstrate in these cities and towns, but even if it is a little town in Idaho,

it means we are getting through. And this is important because we need a discussion on a lot of things.

“The revolution in America didn’t start with just one thing. There were indignant people under British rule who wanted to have discussions on the social and economic system. They wanted to discuss who we are culturally and philosophically. I think this is also a discussion that precedes a revolution. This is mostly mental at this point. I don’t think it can be like the old revolutions because of the great mismatch of forces. Yes, Egypt was a physical revolution, but there was a mental aspect to it. The people had to change their minds. Once the police force and the military begins to understand that they have more in common with regular people that is when revolution will take place.

“The police were doing the arrests Wednesday night and before as a terror tactic to try to keep people away. They want you to think that if you come down here you will be arrested. This is an attempt to stop the growth of the movement.

“I think it is important for everyone to come to the demonstrations—freelancers, workers, unemployed, everybody. We have white-collar people coming down here like the manager from a stock market company who came over to bring us pizza.

“The political system is broken. I believe in a resource-based economy and that human beings are moving toward a system not ruled by politicians. Engineers should decide to build bridges. Scientists should decide on space projects. The first step is to move beyond the Democrats and Republicans. You have to have more parties.”



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