

Plans for anti-Wall Street protests spread across US and globally

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Anti-Wall Street protests continued to spread yesterday to cities across the US. According to the web site Occupy Together, as of Friday evening “Meetups” to plan protests had been established in more than 900 cities.

The Occupy Wall Street movement, which began last month in New York, has expanded now to dozens of towns, including Tampa, Florida; Norfolk, Virginia; Washington, DC; Boston; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Chicago; St. Louis, Missouri; Minneapolis; Houston, San Antonio and Austin, Texas; Nashville; Portland, Oregon; Anchorage, Alaska; and a number of California cities.

The demonstrations—fueled by anger over social inequality, unemployment and a vast decline in living standards for the overwhelming majority—are also gaining international support. There are calls on Facebook for a global demonstration on October 15 in cities in more than 15 countries, from Dublin to Madrid, Buenos Aires to Hong Kong.

“Occupy Melbourne” in Australia is planning an October 15 protest in City Square, and similar calls are being organized on Facebook for protests in Sydney, Brisbane and Perth. The “Occupy the London Stock Exchange” Facebook page has more than 6,000 followers, and has announced plans to occupy Paternoster Square beginning October 15.

The spontaneous outburst of anger at the banks and big business, which has struck a chord with wide layers of the population, has been met with arrests and police harassment and brutality in a number of areas. It has also come under attack from sections of the political

establishment, and has been given generally short shrift in the mainstream media.

In comments to the *Wall Street Journal* on Thursday, Republican presidential contender Herman Cain denounced the protesters as “anti-capitalism,” and added, “Don’t blame Wall Street. Don’t blame the big banks. If you don’t have a job, and you’re not rich, blame yourself.”

His sentiments were echoed on Friday by US House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, Republican of Virginia. Speaking at a “Values Voter Summit” in Washington, he decried “the growing mobs occupying Wall Street and the other cities across the country.”

Cantor’s remarks followed President Obama’s comments the day before, in which he claimed to “feel the pain” of the protesters, but defended the \$750 billion TARP bailout of the banks, and affirmed his support for “a strong, effective financial sector in order for us to grow.” He stated that the actions of the banks and speculators were not “necessarily illegal” and that it wasn’t his job to prosecute them.

In New York City where the Occupy Wall Street protest began, Mayor Michael Bloomberg lashed out at the protesters in comments on his weekly radio address Friday. He claimed, “The protesters are protesting against people who make \$40,000-\$50,000 a year and are struggling to make ends meet.”

Presumably the mayor was referring to service workers, not the corporate billionaires who have earned the wrath of the thousands of people mobilized in the anti-Wall Street protests. He also made the fantastic

claim that “we all” shared the blame for the economic meltdown and recessionary crisis by taking on too much risk.

Bloomberg defended the violence that has been meted out against the protesters by New York City Police Department, stating, “The one thing I can tell you for sure is if anybody in the city breaks the law, we will arrest them and turn them over to the district attorneys.”

New York’s Occupy Wall Street has been met with excessive police force since the protest began last month. Just last Saturday, some 700 demonstrators were arrested after they had been led into a trap by police on the Brooklyn bridge.

The author recommends:

Occupy Wall Street and the Democratic Party
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