



# Occupy Wall Street (OWS) and « The Arab Spring »: Who's Funding the Protest Movement? Who's Behind it?

Potent News Interview with Michel Chossudovsky

Par [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

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## Author's Note

*This interview was first published in November 2011.*

*Who is behind the protest movements in the US?*

*Who is behind the « colored revolutions » in The Middle East and Latin America?*

*The Occupy Wall Street Movement (OWS) was launched by Adbusters, a Vancouver based NGO.*

*Adbusters is funded by the Tides Foundation. The latter is in turn funded by a large number of corporate foundations and charities, including the Ford Foundation, Gates Foundation and the Open Society Institute. Ford is known to have links to US intelligence.*

While Tides makes its name by facilitating large pass-through grants to outside groups, many of Tides' grantees are essentially activist startups. Part of Tides' overall plan is to provide day-to-day assistance to the younger groups that it "incubates.

(<https://www.activistfacts.com/organizations/225-tides-foundation-tides-center/>)

*Wall Street foundations support the protest movement against Wall Street? How convenient.*

*We are dealing with a network of corporate funding of so-called « progressive » organizations including protest movements. This networking of funding dissent is a powerful instrument. It constitutes the basis whereby the economic elites retain control over the protest movement.*

Michel Chossudovsky, May 1st 2016

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*[Michel Chossudovsky] Well, I'm encouraged by the fact that people across the United States and Canada are rising up against an economic and political agenda. And they are the victims of the neo-liberal agenda. I'm not encouraged by the way this Occupy Wall Street movement is proceeding, because it was initiated by a couple of organizations: Adbusters, which is a magazine in Vancouver, and the other one was Anonymous, a social media hactivist website, which does not reveal its identity in any way.*

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fLDkilPSEs>

PART I

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtgM7eLdRRI&feature=related>

PART II

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z63jeEusOsU&feature=related>

FULL TRANSCRIPT

Transcribed from the videos by Tara Carreon, American Buddha Online Librarian

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« Leaderless Movement »: Occupy Wall Street WS Confronts « Organized Wall Street »

Now what's coming out of the Movement is, « We don't need leaders; we are the leaders. » But in effect, any organization that challenges Wall Street, and wants to yield some form of concrete results, has to have a very solid organizational structure. You don't go and fight against Wall Street, because Wall Street is organized. Wall Street is a whole structure: institutions, banks, insurance companies, linked up to intelligence, and then linked up to the U.S. government. So if you want to change the tide, you have to organize, and you have to organize in a very solid way. You have to have a program.



Unseat the Leaders Who are Supporting Wall Street

You can't just have a program that says, « Please Mr. Bush, or Mr. Obama, or whoever happens to be in power, could you be more gentle, have less wars, could you tax the rich? » You don't demand of a system which is in crisis, and should be replaced and reformed, you don't ask the leaders to act on your behalf. That's rule no. 1.

Those leaders have to be unseated because they are the problem. They are not the solution. And it's no use presenting a shopping list of demands, and then submitting it to the U.S. government, or to Wall Street, or to Warren Buffett.

Wall Street Supports Occupy Wall Street

Now, what troubles me in this Movement is that there is a covert element with organizations such as Anonymous and Adbusters, as well as their main websites. Who is behind it? Who is financing it? I recall that immediately when the Movement got going, that several prominent personalities came to the support of Occupy Wall Street. And these were people like Warren Buffett, Howard Buffett, Ben Bernanke, and Al Gore. Now these people, from my standpoint, do not constitute the solution to the crisis, they are the cause. They are the actors behind this crisis. Warren Buffett is the third richest man on planet earth, and his sympathy for the Movement should be viewed with some suspicion. That's the way I see it.

Now I should also mention another organization which is OTPOR! OTPOR! was an organization involved in Serbia in the year 2000. It was not a pro-democracy organization, it was actually an organization which shunted the 2000 elections in which Kostunica, who was the runner-up together with Milosevic, would have won in any event. But they prevented the second round of elections from occurring. And they essentially established the conditions for regime change. That was a colored revolution.



**ОТПОР!**

And OTPOR! subsequently became a consulting firm, which is called CANVAS. It's non-violent forms of action which were implemented in a large number of countries. CANVAS, it's logo is the clenched fist. And they were involved in Georgia; they were involved in various former Soviet republics; they were involved in Iran; they were involved in Egypt, and in Tunisia. They've provided consulting to so-called revolutionary groups. But they are also backed by Freedom House and the National Endowment for Democracy, which are U.S. foundations closely allied both with the State Department on the one hand, the U.S. Congress, as well as U.S. Intelligence. So that in effect, CANVAS is really acting as a consulting arm of the U.S. Intelligence apparatus supporting a training program of CANVAS.



Now we know that the Egyptian leaders of the protest movement of the so-called Arab Spring, they were trained in Belgrade. They were trained by OTPOR! And it should come as no surprise that the clenched fist was used also in Egypt. And it was used in a number of countries. It's of interest that the name of the resistance movement in Georgia was « Enough. » And in Egypt, the Kifaya movement, also in Arabic, means « Enough. » So that in fact, you find the same names, the same logos, the same catch phrases in several countries. And this is no coincidence, because CANVAS is operating as a professional consulting arm assisting the movements in various countries.

Now what this suggests is that this movement, at least the grassroots of this movement, who are committed people — we have to acknowledge that; these are people we should support, people in the street, people who are unemployed, students who can't pay their tuition fees, people who are committed to social change — we must support them. But they are being manipulated by a framework which from the very outset is pernicious, because it's based on links to the seat of power. In other words, if its linked to the National Endowment for Democracy, or to Freedom House, or to the CIA, it cannot have an independent stance in challenging Wall Street.

And then the question is, « Who is funding this undertaking? » You cannot challenge Wall Street, and then ask Wall Street to pay for your travel expenses. And that is not something

that is not limited to these events in New York City and around the United States. It's something that has characterized progressive movements for a long, long time.

Trade unions have been infiltrated, their leaders invited to the World Economic Forum in Davos, then you also have other organizations such as those that joined the World Social Forum, or the People's Summits. All those organizations are funded by tax-free foundations.

### The World Social Forum

I've been looking into the World Social Forum, which was created some ten years ago. It started off in Brazil. And the World Social Forum was in effect funded by the Ford Foundation. Now we know that the Ford Foundation has links to the CIA. And many of the organizations didn't realize that by being funded by the Ford Foundation, their hands were tied. The Ford Foundation would set the outer limits of dissent. And this is what I call « manufactured dissent. » It's when the elites, through their tax-free foundations, will go in, and they will support limited forms of dissent which do not threaten their fundamental interest, which is the interest of making money and enriching themselves and so on.

So you have an expression of support to this Occupy Wall Street Movement which is coming from various corners, and which is also supported by Establishment figures, and which is receiving a fair amount of media coverage. I recall events where you had mass rallies in Washington, D.C., and anti-war movements against the U.S. government, and there was a total media blackout. There was simply absolutely no coverage. And also in Egypt, there was coverage initially of the events at Tahrir Square when people were getting rid of Mubarak, but once they started mobilizing against the new regime, which in effect was Mubarak without Mubarak, because the same military establishment were calling the shots, well then the media simply didn't cover those events.

### Egypt and The Arab Spring



And what I also noticed in the case of Egypt was that at no time were the main organizations, which consisted of Kifaya, the April 6th movement, and the Muslim Brotherhood, at no time did they actually challenge the macro-economic reforms of the IMF and the World Bank, the neo-liberal agenda, which were imposed on Egypt starting in 1991 at the height of the Gulf War. And I so happened to be in Egypt at that very moment. I was in the Minister of Finance's office. And that was imposed. And you had that whole period, over a period of 20 years, when the country was subject to these deadly macro-economic reforms, leading to the destruction of agriculture, and the massive unemployment in the public sector.

And that framework remains today. It hasn't changed. In fact, it's gotten worse, because in effect, in the wake of Tahrir Square, the Egyptian economy ran into certain difficulties, particularly with increased levels of external debt. And so the clenched fist of the IMF and the World Bank is still there. And the protest movement did not, from my standpoint,

change the fundamental relationship which exists within Egyptian society, which is the whole state apparatus that is controlled by external creditors, as well as by the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Military. That we know.

So Tahrir Square cannot be presented as a model of pro-democracy protest, because essentially they have achieved virtually nothing. And they have achieved nothing precisely because the main groups — Kifaya, April 6 and Muslim Brotherhood — are controlled precisely by the U.S. Government. U.S. and British Intelligence in relation to the Muslim Brotherhood — that relationship is well established — and the links between the April 6th Youth Movement and the U.S. Embassy are well-documented. So you cannot run a revolution against the Empire — which is Washington — and then ask the Empire to give you money through its various foundations to fund your resistance against the Empire. It doesn't make sense.

And Occupy Wall Street is in a very similar situation. First of all, it is using Egypt and Tunisia as a model. They are not a model. They are failures. They are colored revolutions which have manipulated the grass roots, and which have led these countries into coup de sac, into a status quo. So the end game of the protest movement is the status quo. It's a semblance of democratization, but in effect, what happens is that the people in power who are in positions of government are replaced by other people who are in effect playing the same role on behalf of the U.S. and the external creditors of those countries.

Now there was one thing which disturbed me in a statement by Occupy Wall Street. I recall that there was a statement by a number of personalities, including Naomi Klein, Noam Chomsky, and Vandana Shiva among others. And part of the statement was alright. But then they said they had to fight against « a global al-Assad, a global Gaddafi », and that these dictators personified the IMF and the World Bank. They said the IMF and the World Bank are behind this agenda, and they are treating us in the same way Gaddafi and al-Assad are treating their people. Now that kind of comparison is totally misleading because it is demonizing the IMF and the World Bank through the image of a political personalities, rather than focusing on the IMF and the World Bank as economic demons in their own right. [In fact the objective of this misleading comparison is to demonize Assad and Gadaffi, M.Ch.]

[Potent News] A two-part question here. First, how can we keep this movement as pure as possible as opposed to a media spectacle that is coopted? And what would you advise for people whose hearts are in the right place, and want to make a difference?

Organized Protest. Confronting Wall Street requires a Strong Organizational Structure

[Michel Chossudovsky] Well, I think a movement which is confronting the World Economic Order, the New Economic Order, has to be organized across the land not solely in terms of street events, it has to have an organizational structure in towns, and cities, and villages, and workplaces, and parishes, in universities and colleges. In other words, all the various entities of civil society. It also has to permeate mainstream organizations such as trade unions and human rights organizations. It has to have a very strong organizational structure which can confront the corporate agenda. Corporations are very well organized, but they still constitute a minority. Now if the 99% want to ultimately reverse the tide, they have to organize. They have to have strong leadership. They have to have a program. And they are not there to make demands. They are there to question the legitimacy of the corporate agenda. They are there to unseat these powerful actors whose legitimacy actually is sustained by a very crooked and fraudulent apparatus. So that's what you have to tackle.

## The Tobin Tax: Taming the Speculators

I recall many years ago when the World Social Forum started up, there was another movement which was called ATTAC, which was one of implanting a tax on speculative transactions. It was called the TOBIN tax. And everybody joined the bandwagon of the TOBIN tax. saying we have to put a tax on speculative activities, and use the proceeds of this tax to help the poor.

I was opposed to that for various reasons, but more fundamentally, if you want to get rid of highway robbery, you don't put a tax on highway robbery. If you want to get rid of speculation, which is ultimately the instrument for transferring wealth, you do not provide legitimacy to the speculators by taxing him 1%, or whatever, of his transactions. You freeze those transactions. And that is something that can be achieved. In other words, their whole series of speculative instruments on Wall Street which affect, let's say the price of food, the price of oil and which are impoverishing people worldwide.

## Putting a Freeze on Derivative Trade

Now, how do you reverse the tide? You put a freeze on derivative trade. You don't tax the speculator. The speculators were the first people to endorse the TOBIN tax. Why? Because they're stealing from the 99% by using very complex financial instruments. And if a tax is imposed, the legitimacy of their undertakings is not questioned. They pay the 1% tax that is used to compensate the people who have been expropriated and impoverished as a result of their actions, and it provides a human face to the speculative onslaught. That is what is behind this complicity of people like Warren Buffett and Ben Bernanke in this Occupy Wall Street movement. You do not reverse the tide by taxing the rich. You have to tax the rich, but ultimately you have to address the broader question of how do these people enrich themselves at the expense of the 99%.

## NATO Atrocities in Libya

[Potent News] So one last question. Apparently, yesterday at the conference at the university [St Mary's University, Halifax] there, apparently was someone doing the video that was actually shedding light on what's actually happening in Libya. I heard that one of the people there cried and walked out. How important do you think it is to be able to gain the strength to face what is being done in our world and often in our name?

[Michel Chossudovsky] Well, I think in Libya, atrocities have been committed by NATO. Thousands of people have been killed. The media is not reporting those atrocities. It has a responsibility as media, as journalists, to report the facts on the ground. But that is not happening. In fact, it's the reverse: they are obfuscating. They are acting as a camouflage, as a cover-up. And they are providing a human face to the rebels, which are in large part are made up of al-Qaeda militia. This is not a pro-democracy movement. And what has happened is that the media has supported this war.

NATO: « We are running out of bombs »

Without the media, they could not have run this war, because they would not have been able to camouflage the impacts of those bombings. Anyone who has a minimal understanding of fighter aircraft knows that if you have 10,000 strike sorties, with a dozen missiles on each of these fighter planes, you're going to kill a lot of people. You're talking

above 50,000 bombs. And it's certainly worth noting that already in the month of April [2011], after one month of bombing, NATO has said, « We're running out of bombs. » They're running out of bombs?! That's an incredible observation against a country of 6 million people. And then they would make the same statement, « We haven't killed anybody. »

So people don't analyze necessarily that data which comes out from NATO. Every week they will publish the number of strike sorties. But the military analysts working for the mainstream media, who know the planes, who have an understanding of war, and of the impacts of advanced weapon systems, they have a responsibility to report those, to analyze them. They are not doing it.

#### Killing Gaddafi. Destroying an Entire Country

And yes, atrocities are being committed. But what I find disturbs me is that when you go to Occupy Wall Street, they say we must implement pro-democracy following the example of our brothers and sisters in Libya. And they are referring to the transitional council which is made up of a bunch of criminals, and which does not represent the Libyan population. And then they present Gaddafi as the enemy of democracy.

I'm not particularly a fan of Gaddafi, but Gaddafi is not the enemy of democracy, it's the United States of America, which in the course of the last 100 years has supported dictatorships all over the world. And now they say we're pro-democracy. The fact is, if they don't like a particular head of state, or head of government in the case of Gaddafi, they go in and they kill him, and they kill the members of his family, and his grandchildren. And that is not the way you implement democracy. You implement democracy by respecting the sovereignty of countries, and the rights of people in those countries to decide on how they want to run their own affairs.

#### Libya Had the Highest Standard of Living in Africa

And I think it's important for the record that Libya was one of very few countries in the world that did not obey the diktats of Washington and the IMF. And as a consequence of that, whether we like Gaddafi or not, the figures published by the United Nations, UNICEF, and the World Health Organization, confirm that the standard of living in Libya is the highest in Africa. There's full employment, there's almost 100% literacy, 50% of students who graduate from high school go to university, and it is by African standards an advanced welfare state. Whether we like the political regime or not, we have to acknowledge that.

And what has happened with the bombings over a period of several months since March [2011], is the destruction of a country, of its water system, of its food supplies, of its schools, its hospitals, its universities. Because these are being bombed, and we have evidence that they are being bombed. And if the Occupy Wall Street movement is a significant pro-democracy movement in the USA, Canada, and the Western world, it should take a stance against those NATO bombings. It should not present NATO as the role model, and all the rebels as the role model.

And that is precisely what was implied in some of those statements made by Occupy Wall Street that ultimately we should support our brothers and sisters in Libya who are fighting against Gaddafi. Those brothers and sisters are essentially al-Qaeda. They don't represent the majority of the population, which ironically was supportive of the government. I mean,

there's opposition within all of those societies, but broadly speaking that society, that country had a project, had a high standard of living, had an educated population, and the result of this seven months of bombing has been to destroy a country. And it's certainly not a role model for Occupy Wall Street.

### Occupy Wall Street Must Take a Stance against War

And so Occupy Wall Street has to take a stance not only against Wall Street, but against all the wars which are led by Wall Street, by the oil companies, by Washington, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Palestine, in Libya, and in other parts of the world where they come in, in the Congo, in Rwanda, in Somalia, which is characterized by The Agenda. It's the Agenda of going off the terrorists, going off to al-Qaeda. But then we discover that al-Qaeda is a creation of the CIA, and that al-Qaeda in effect are the foot-soldiers of NATO in Libya. It's the Libya Islamic Fighting Group which constitutes the main paramilitary force.

And then we discover that in Syria, the gunmen involved in the confrontation with the government forces are paid mercenaries who are Selafists, al-Qaeda-affiliated, and they are also supported by Western Intelligence. And this is an insurgency which purports to destabilize a sovereign country. Whether we like al-Assad or not, I respect the right of the Syrian people to decide on their own future without the intrusion of armed gunmen paid by foreign powers. And that is what is happening.

And the media also has the responsibility of reporting what's going on in Syria. And when they have protesters armed with heavy machine guns, they have the responsibility to acknowledge that; because that's not a protest movement, that's an insurgency.

[Potent News] Thank you for joining us and donating your time Professor Michel Chossudovsky. Thank you very much.

[Michel Chossudovsky] Thank you very much. Delighted.

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### A propos :

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