

Occupy This

✘ Many of the videos coming from Occupy [your town here] do viewers the comedic favor of showing feckless tag-alongs who have no real idea why they're doing what they're doing. Generally you're seeing a ragtag collection of young, unserious hangers-on who are wandering aimlessly, using and wearing products made by the same corporations they're supposed to despise. It's all great fun, but in the end you're told in subtext everything you really need to know: Occupy Wall Street isn't really occupying Wall Street, because even New York City knows who butters its bread.

But when it comes to Oakland – amongst the sexual assault, graffiti, rats, urination, and sex – you get a higher breed of derelict advancing the kind of old, studied class warfare that comes only from years of studying dogeared copies of Marx's greatest hits. Jonah Goldberg linked to an eight-and-a-half minute video of Oakland occupiers telling you exactly how they'd like the United States to be – the Marxism isn't surprising. But the extreme lack of forethought is.

One woman explains she has no sympathy for people “with obscene amounts of money.” Asked when mere money making becomes obscene she answers, “I, you know, honestly, anything over \$200,000 is like, you're, that's, no one spends that amount of money on anything. That's ridiculous.” She would be surprised to know that building a mile of road in a small, Midwestern town costs about \$200,000, but no doubt she would explain that when a government spends this much money, it's worthwhile.

Question: How does the government get \$200,000? It's a trick question – the federal government either borrows it or continues printing inflationary currency; but how does a small Midwestern town get it? Taxes, mostly, in their various forms: income, sales, property, vehicle registration fees, et cetera.

When it comes to this, government actually really likes wealthy people because they make the kind of income, rack up the kind of sales, own the kind of property, and drive the types of vehicles that collect much higher taxes than those in lower income brackets.

A man says, "There's a class war going on in this country. We're the richest country in the world, and we have the most inequality between the rich and the working people and the poor." Well, yes. Of course. That is an inevitable byproduct of a society where a man is allowed to rise as high as his abilities and talents will take him. Some people will always do better than others, and because becoming rich is hard work, there will always be many more poor than rich. How else would they like it to be?

Glad you asked. Our friends in Oakland would have you believe that if government brought the rich down to the level of the poor, and redistributed the pilfered cash among the proletariat, the distribution of wealth would finally become fair. More questions: (1) For how many years do they think this is possible? Once you're in the business of collecting all excess wealth, what is the incentive to create a dollar above the level deemed excessive? In the name of brotherhood we'll say that some of the formerly rich will stick out for awhile, but at some point you're going to bump up against diminishing returns, and then what do you do, when there's nothing left to redistribute?

(2) What about income tax? Notice that when they say "redistribution of wealth" it always begins and ends with the rich being done in by the poor; they forget all about the government wanting its share. Hell, even illegal income is taxable (Al Capone could have told you all about that), so once the poor absorb this windfall, they'll have to pay taxes. And if they think they're going to pay the same tax rate they did when they were womens' studies majors, they're going to be sadly surprised. See, the IRS is going to get what it wants,

and it doesn't care whether it comes from millionaires and billionaires, or a few million hundred-thousandaires.

Sooner or later, our Oakland classists would get to the ugly truth: Poor people don't make the world work. There are plenty of countries that behave exactly as they would like America to behave; they could live in one, if they really wanted.