

The black Occupy protester -- missing in action



Larry Elder - Syndicated Columnist - 12/22/2011 9:45:00 AM



As "Person of the Year," *TIME* magazine named "The Protester." The subhead read, "From the Arab Spring to Athens, From Occupy Wall Street to Moscow."

Well, yes, but what about the lack of American black protesters? Where is the racial diversity/inclusion/proportional representation?

Back in the day, the tea party's alleged lack of black participants was beyond worrisome to the media. The lack of black faces in the crowd allowed the major media to describe the tea party as racially exclusionary, if not ... racist!

"Some of them in Congress right now with this tea party movement," said Rep. Andre Carson, D-Ind., "would love to see you and me ... hanging on a tree." Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif. said tea partiers can "go straight to hell." A *New York Times* op-ed described tea partiers as "overwhelmingly white, but even compared to other white Republicans, they had a low regard for immigrants and blacks long before Barack Obama was president, and they still do."

So the formula is set: Lack of blacks plus "overwhelmingly white" equals racism. Right? Not so fast.

This formula does not apply to the Occupy Wall Street movement, which is as white as an Idaho picket fence. A *Washington Post* opinion piece cites a survey that found "African Americans, who are 12.6 percent of the U.S. population, make up only 1.6 percent of Occupy Wall Street." And blacks are 25 percent of New York City's population. Occupy Wall Street was a home game for them. By contrast, six percent of tea party supporters, according to an April 2010 Gallup poll, are black. That's almost four times the number of blacks who make up Occupy Wall Street.

Why so few blacks in the Occupy movement?

A *Washington Post* opinion piece offered one reason -- black resignation: "Perhaps black America's absence is sending a message to the Occupiers: 'We told you so! Nothing will change. We've been here already. It's hopeless.'"

But blacks view the economy differently -- and a lot more optimistically -- than do whites.

Despite around 16-percent unemployment, as compared to the 8.6-percent national rate, and nearly 50-percent black teenage unemployment, blacks feel better about the economy than do whites. A February 2011 *Washington Post* survey found that 24 percent of blacks

were "very" or "somewhat satisfied" with the economy, compared to 12 percent of whites. A recent NBC poll found that by a lopsided 73 percent to 19 percent, most Americans considered the country on the "wrong track." But not blacks. Forty-nine percent of blacks think the country is "headed in the right direction" versus 38 percent who do not.

Then there's the President Barack Obama factor. For some blacks, joining the Occupy protests would be an admission that Obama has failed to deliver on his promises to make things better, to squash special interests, to diminish the influence of lobbyists, etc. It's not hard for a black Obama lefty (redundancy intentional) to rationalize: "I thought a black president would make a real, actual, touchable difference in my life. He has not. But he's trying. He inherited a mess that those awful Republicans left him. So, he deserves re-election." How else to explain that while 57 percent of Americans *disapprove* of Obama's handling of the economy, 86 percent of blacks *approve*?

The real reason for the lack of black participation, or lack of participation by anyone else in the Occupy movement, *should* be simple: a complete rejection of its sole unifying theme, which seems to be "give me some of what 'they' have."

The real reason to reject the Occupy movement is that complaining about "inequality" without regard to how the haves became the haves is a time-waster. Those in the top earning demographic have some things in common: They are more likely than the non-top-20-percenters to have at least a college degree; are married; work long hours; and did not inherit, marry, steal or win their wealth.

The problem is blacks reject the Occupy movement, but not the party whose values reflect its unifying "victicrat" theme. Yet Democrats and the Occupy movement share a common philosophy. Obama said to the Occupiers, "You're the reason I ran for office."

Both believe in empowering government to address "inequality" by redistributing wealth. Both believe that those who achieve great wealth do so through exploitation, which justifies the claim others make on the money.

The economy of the early '80s saw higher inflation, interest rates and unemployment than during the so-called Great Recession. But unlike Obama, President Ronald Reagan deeply and broadly cut taxes, continued deregulation and slowed down the rate of domestic spending. The result? Black adult and teen unemployment fell dramatically, much faster than it did for white adults and teens.

The real question is not why so few blacks belong to the Occupy movement. The real question is why so many blacks still belong to the Democratic Party.

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