

Zuccotti Park Talk*

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10 Here in the church they call Wall Street, money is worshipped as
bankers drink the earth's blood and feast on her flesh. War machines
of epic proportions are financed – and sent out to kill, maim, and
destroy millions of people from Korea to Vietnam to Iraq. Every day
that bankers gather, human lives are bought and sold in the name of
15 stocks, bonds, derivatives, and futures. They steal our children's and
grandchildren's futures as they profit from their clever machinations.

Twenty-two years ago on Earth Day, hundreds of us tried to shut
down Wall Street. We were met with overwhelming police force and
compelled to withdraw. The next year, we tried again, but once
20 more, our numbers were too small. Now in 2011, the time has come
when we've been able (at least temporarily) to overwhelm the forces
of order – in fact, police – like the rest of us – have been hurt by the
greed of bankers and stockbrokers.

Q1

25 What has changed today? Today there is a global mobilization
against the system of death. From the streets of London and Athens,
from Tunis to Cairo, people are rising up all over the world. That is
what is different today – the global uprising has intensified.

I was at Woodstock; I was in the streets in the 1960s. I have been in
the streets ever since. Today, we are in the streets together all over the
30 world. We are not just against a war or any particular government. We
are against the global system of corporate rule enforced by murderous
wars. No one told us to take to the streets. Everywhere people decided
for themselves.

35 The media seek our leaders in vain. We have no leaders. We are the
99%; we need no 1% to represent us! We, the people of the world,
declare: Humanity will no longer tolerate bankers' greed and billion-
naires' rule. We will no longer sit by while life is a cheap commodity
daily bought and sold so they can profit.

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They say we have come to destroy; I say we are here to stop destruction. I say we are here to build a new world, a world in which people come before profits.

45 They say we are dirty; I say they are the ones up to their ears in filth; they are the ones who have polluted the planet, killed off thousands of species and decimated millions of human beings.

They say we must leave; I say their time is up. Don't count our days - count theirs.

50 They say Wall Street is theirs. I say we built the wealth around us. The blood, sweat and tears of generations of working people created this wealth. Bankers and billionaires claim it as theirs. The profits from African slavery, from Chinese laborers building the railroads, from teenage girls like my grandmother toiling in the textile mills of New England built this place. We the people have built this country
55 and created the wealth which billionaires have stolen.

WHO BUILT WALL STREET? WE BUILT WALL STREET!
WHO OWNS WALL STREET? WE OWN WALL STREET!
WHOSE STREET? OUR STREET!

60 They say they will take care of us - they give us violent movies and plastic food.

They say we have all the freedom we want. I say, where is our freedom to live on a planet where we can freely breathe the air? Where is our freedom to live with world peace? Where is our
65 freedom to live as equals? Where is our freedom for everyone to have enough to eat? Where is our freedom for everyone to have a place to live? Where is our freedom to live in safe and loving communities? Where is our freedom to think about our lives in terms other than jobs and money? Where is our freedom to take part in decisions
70 that directly affect us?

I want to talk a moment about the crisis in Greece. For generations, people there struggled under foreign occupation, against Nazi invasion, against poverty. They won the right to retire at 55, to live well and to spend time with their families.

75 Now the banks and governments of the world are ordering them to work many more years, to spend less time at home and more in factories and offices. WHY? So banks and corporations can make larger profits.

80 When the prime minister of Greece announced a plan to hold a referendum, for people to vote on whether they would accept the bankers' deal, world leaders practically beat him up in public.

According to the BBC of 11/11/11, the proposal for a referendum sparked a “financial and political crisis that threatened to engulf the euro zone.” **Q2**

85 Is democracy, real democracy, so threatening? Yes, it is! That is why we want to have a direct say in decisions that affect our lives. We will no longer let representatives elected by television and corporate contributions make decisions for us.

90 We can no longer leave major decisions up to representatives. Even the best of them betrays democracy. Look at Obama. In the first two and a half years he has been in office, Wall Street made billions more than in all the years of Bush II.

The system is the problem. The solution is real democracy, power to the people!

95 They know the stakes. That is why they are systematically cutting education, laying off tens of thousands of teachers. By dumbing down society, they believe they will leave us unable to see their tricks. They hope to leave us blind. Governments have attacked the BBC, and Canadian Broadcasting; corporations have turned CNN into entertainment news. They think they can rule through our ignorance, but guess what?

100 We are the 99% and we will not be denied!

The time has come when we will no longer stomach their greed, when we can no longer allow a system based upon billionaires’ stealing our future. We are sickened by the atrocities of war and daily starvation. More than 30,000 children perish from unnecessary causes every day. That amounts to more annually than the number of Jews, Communists and gays killed by the Nazis in their entire rule!

110 We will no longer be good Germans while they destroy the earth and compel us to live lives of their making. By occupying Wall Street, we not only stand here together, but we stand together for all time. WE OCCUPY HISTORY.

115 Historical antecedents to our actions can be found not only in our attempts 22 years ago to shut down Wall Street on Earth Day. Inspiration for the current global upsurge – from the Arab Spring to the Occupy movement – can be found in waves of movements in 1968, when a global series of uprisings resonated in relation to each other, a phenomenon I call the eros effect.

120 Instances of the spread of movements across borders, involving a process of mutual amplification and synergy, such as the present moment, are significant precursors for future mobilizations. We may not win a final victory today but step-by-step we prepare for that day!

In the period after 1968, as the global movement's capacity for decentralized international coordination developed, other episodes of the eros effect can be discerned:

- 125 1. The disarmament movement of the early 1980s
2. The wave of East Asian uprisings from Gwangju to Manila to Beijing
3. The revolts against Soviet regimes in East Europe
4. The alterglobalization wave leading up to Seattle in 1999 and anti-war mobilizations on February 15, 2003
- 130 5. The Arab Spring of 2011

By acting today, we enrich and enlarge this growing global insurgency against the system. Each time we act we build for the next phase in ever-larger waves. One day we will wash clean this bankers' church where billionaires worship greed and sanctify murder. What we are
135 doing today is not the end, but neither is it the beginning. We will be free!

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