

Alan OldStudent

www.occupytacoma.org
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March 23, 2012

To: The Honorable Mayor of Tacoma, Washington
Madam Marilyn Strickland
CC: The Residents of the City of Tacoma

Dear Madam Mayor,

This is an open letter to you, which is also being videotaped for the internet.

Please permit me to introduce myself. I'm one of several editors and administrators of the Occupy Tacoma website, a longtime Tacoma home owner, tax payer, and semi-retired worker. I'm known as Alan OldStudent.

I speak only for myself and not as a spokesperson for Occupy Tacoma. The Occupy Tacoma GA (General Assembly) has not approved this communication as an official statement. However, undoubtedly many other Occupy Tacoma supporters have similar views. Indeed, it's entirely likely that many Tacoma residents in general feel exactly the same way as I do.

Madam Mayor, thank you for your gracious acknowledgment that we OT, or Occupy Tacoma supporters, are and have been law-abiding citizens, both while peacefully occupying the park, and by voluntarily obeying Washington state's illegitimate eviction order, a violation of our rights to publicly exercise free speech and assembly. Ironically, the state said we were trespassing on public land! Imagine that! Trespassing on public land?? Really, we were only protesting in view of our entire community, our neighbors, our friends, as is our right.

Moreover, Mme Mayor, as grateful as I and many other occupy supporters are for your kind and charitable words, the implication that our comrades in such places as Portland, Seattle, Oakland, and elsewhere are not responsible citizens disturbs me a bit. You see, we Tacoma occupiers do not see them as naughty children, while we are the good children. In truth, they are us and we are they. We in Occupy Tacoma are 100% in solidarity with each and every one of those Occupy movements. They, like us, merely exercised their democratic rights of free speech, public assembly, and redress of grievances

These rights are for all humans, even occupiers in Oakland, in Portland, in Federal Way, in Seattle, in San Diego, in Los Angeles, in Longshore. They have the EXACT SAME GOALS as we do in Occupy Tacoma. And like us, they want the majority, the 99%, to take political control, to seize political power away from the plutocrats, and to create a real democracy.

Unfortunately, a few provocateurs and some of our political opponents in the mass media and elsewhere have sought to discredit and disrupt our movement. In several municipalities, city

administrators and police agencies have attacked our peaceful occupations, justifying their violent assaults by their vulgar lying stereotypes of us, claiming we're lazy, shiftless, dope-taking hippies, who would rather be on the public dole than earn our way. They accuse us of wanting to let hard-working Americans support us, so we can fornicate in the park, get stoned, play bongo drums, when it's really the big corporations who suckle at the teat of the common weal and get high on the drugs of greed.

There is no democracy in America today, you know. Being allowed to vote on one or another of the 1% politicians isn't democracy. We don't get to vote on whether there's full employment, whether millions lose their homes because the gangsters, brigands, and thieves who ruined the American economy and ruined the financial edifice of this country and are now picking the bones of the carcass clean like the vultures they are. We don't get to vote on whether the air we breathe is clean because the 1% don't want to clean it up, or whether the politicians give multi-million dollar tax refunds to the hugely profitable oil industry, refunds we low-income and working people pay for. We don't get to vote on whether health care is available to all, whether the politicians gut Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and aid to cities to rescue the banksters and the industrial-military complex from the consequences of their malfeasance.

Did you know we spend 1 million dollars per year per soldier in Afghanistan? Wouldn't your administration make better use of just a tiny fraction of those funds that now go for that barbaric institution of organized mass murder known as war? The 1% spend billions of our hard-earned money to support the corrupt Afghan and Iraqi dictatorships. Where are the moneys for Tacoma? Why spend our resources on corrupt dictators while Tacoma cuts back on first responders?

You know, we occupiers really are people of principle, have made many sacrifices for the public good. I speak not only of OT occupiers' discomfort during Tacoma's winter, with its rain, icy wind, and snow. On a national, and even a world-wide basis, we occupiers have sacrificed much more:

Since our movement began about a half a year ago, authorities arrested 6,811 occupiers between September 17, 2011 and March 17, 2012, according to occupyarrests.org. Wikipedia reports that 150 occupiers have been injured, and 24 occupiers have died. Our comrades in other countries such as Spain, Greece, and the UK have made similar and even greater sacrifices, endured even more hardship. And in repressive regimes such as Syria, Egypt, and Libya, our comrades have suffered much more brutal and murderous repression that we here in Tacoma or the United States can even begin to imagine in our worst nightmares.

All over the world, we have made these sacrifices as responsible citizens who feel a sense of duty to our communities, to the world, to history.

And how many of those responsible for the crash of 2008 in the USA have made such similar sacrifices? Did they forgo their bonuses, their raises, take their pay cuts, endure the slashes to the standard of living that we 99 percenters have? In fact, how many have gone to jail for their crimes that pan-caked the economy in the first place? Zero! In truth, none of those responsible for this disaster have been convicted of any crime or have suffered any criminal consequence whatsoever! Where, Madam, is the equity, when thousands of peaceful protestors get jailed while the robber barons and war criminals go Scot-free!!

Don't you see that in cities such as New York, Chicago, Oakland, Portland, San Diego, the problem has not been the protesters. Rather, the problem is authorities' illegitimate responses to our legal, peaceful protests!

So with all due respect to you, Madam Mayor, recognizing your good will and good intentions--to compare Occupy Tacoma protesters with those protesters in other places misses the whole point entirely because it paints the helmeted perpetrators of violence with their rubber bullets, flash-bangs, and water cannon as being the victims of violence, while at the same time it implies that we, who are the targets of police assault, are the perpetrators of violence!

So Madam Mayor, we obeyed the state's illegitimate eviction order instead of resisting it as our brave comrades in other places did for the same reason we took the park in the first place.

We occupiers understand America's dirty little secret, that we Americans live in a class society, that we 99 percenters are an economic class, with interests that differ greatly from those of the corporate ruling class, that is to say the bankers, the military-industrial war profiteers, the robber barons and parasites, the greedy knaves that rule us. The American ruling capitalist class monopolize political power, and we 99 percenters are politically impotent as long as we restrict our activism to the vote. Voting means every 4 to 6 years, we get to choose which corporate representative oversees us. We're like slaves who get to vote on which of the slave-owner's sons gets to run the plantation for the next 4- or 6-year term.

Sadly, a sizable number of us 99 percenters do not yet understand the significance of these facts. But believe me, Madam Mayor, as time goes on, they will if we occupiers have anything to do with it!

Educating ourselves and the rest of the 99% about the class nature of America and the potential power of mass nonviolent action are our keys to winning, our keys to mobilizing ourselves to definitively seize power from the corporate minority and place it in the hands of the majority, not some election with preselected candidates of the ruling class.

Seizing the park was an act of civil disobedience that enabled us to reach out to and educate a large number of people about the class nature of our society. Leaving the park also has made it easier for us to reach out to and educate a large number of people.

As I've said elsewhere, in a world where billions are spent to stupefy us, to convince us that one brand of aspirin is better than another brand of aspirin, to convince us that toxic sludge is good for us, to convince us that we must engage in yet another war of aggression to support big oil, yes—in a world where billions are spent to hoodwink and stupefy us, education is a revolutionary act, and an empathetic imagination is subversive. And Madam, you can be sure we aim to bring education to the masses and to awaken their empathetic imagination to the possibility of a better tomorrow.

These then are some of the considerations which went into our passionately debated decision to obey the state's illegitimate eviction order.

Madam, if you give a man a gun, he can rob a bank, but if you give a man a bank, he can rob the world!

All over the world, people are rising up against the banksters, against the mega-corporations! The world will rise on new foundations! You, we, I are making history.

With respect, Madam Mayor, ask yourself this: What side of history are you on? What side of history are we on? If we can build a true democracy where fair play, the environment, and human need determine how we allocate the incredible resources of this precious and beautiful planet, THE ONLY HOME WE CAN HAVE--if we can reverse big capital's assault against the land, the air, the oceans, if we can create a world that makes war unimaginable, that guarantees work for all who want to work, that uses the resources that exist TODAY to feed every hungry child who is starving on the face of this fertile, watery, and green planet, won't history judge us favorably? In 500 years, how will history judge those who are a part of this world-wide upsurge and those who oppose it? Madam, in the words of the old Wobbly song, we all must ask ourselves this: "which side are you on?"

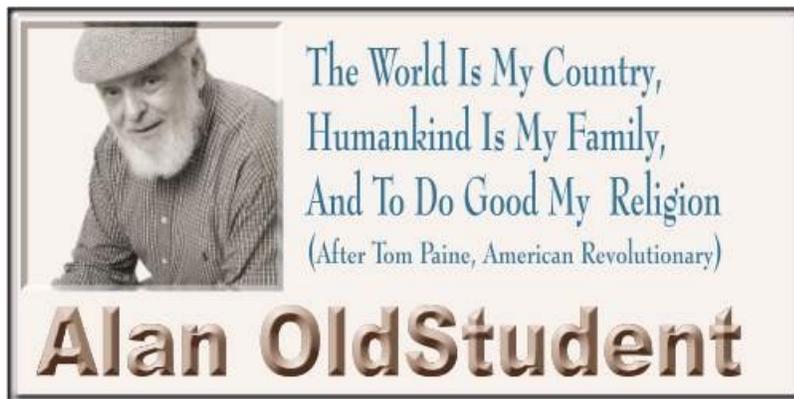
Thank you for your gracious attention to my words, Madam Marilyn Strickland, honorable mayor of the beautiful city of Tacoma, Washington, in the United States of America, where I am so grateful to live and to work.

And to those viewing this video, this has been Alan OldStudent. If you like this video, please share it. Click on the like button. Email the link to your friends and post it everywhere. Please visit us at www.occupytacoma.org.

Long live Occupy Tacoma! Long live occupy the world!

Thank you, and good evening.

Regards,



Alan OldStudent
The Unexamined Life Is Not Worth Living – Socrates

This letter contain the transcript of the video uploaded to YouTube at <http://youtu.be/5s7mw5nV3kk>

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