

#1446 Occupy Wall Street is Part of a Very Long Continuum

[00:00:00] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Welcome to this episode of the award-winning *Best of the Left* podcast in which we shall take a look at what precipitated Occupy Wall Street and the legacy it left behind, as we can see it now from 10 years after the encampment at Zuccotti Park in the heart of the financial district, New York City. Clips today are from *Economic Update* with professor Richard Wolf, *The Dig*, *Belabored*, *Countdown*, the *David Pakman Show* and *The Majority Report*.

Occupy Wall Street Analysis and Legacy Part 1 - Economic Update with Richard D. Wolff - Air Date 9-16-21

[00:00:27] **RICHARD WOLFF - HOST, ECONOMIC UPDATE:** About a hundred years ago almost capitalism crashed. In fact, it was the worst crash of capitalism in the United States, or indeed in the world. It came to be known as the Great Depression because people understood how horrible it was. It lasted 11 years, 1929 to 1940. At its worst moment, in 1933, the official unemployment rate was 25%--five times what it is today.

Staggering cutbacks in production, staggering decline of our economic reality, vast suffering. To this day I still think that the greatest rendition of what it meant was John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. If you've never read it, take some time out, it will teach you about American history.

But there was a heroic side to the suffering. The American people moved sharply and politically to the left. That's very important in a country that has trouble recognizing its own left-wing tendencies that run deep, and that Occupy Wall Street brought right back up to the surface. But back for a moment to the 1930s. Millions of people moved to the left politically. They joined unions on a scale we've never seen in American history, never before and never since. Millions of people join unions to fight collectively against the employer class in this country. These were people who had never been in unions before. They were people whose parents had never been in unions before.

Hundreds of thousands joined true socialist political parties and a communist party to give the left real depth, not only on the workplace, but throughout

society. And there was a powerful coalition, an alliance between the labor movement as one part of the left and the socialist and communist parties on the other side of the left, and together, they made huge changes. Social security was created in the 1930s--a vast program to give the working class a decent shot at a decent retirement. Unemployment compensation by the federal government. When you lose a job through no fault of your own, which capitalism does to us every four to seven years, the government will give you money every week to get you through the hardest part. Federal jobs program that hired millions of people. I could go on... the first minimum wage, amazing. But the price had to be paid.

When the war was over, 1945, when the Great Depression, followed immediately by the great war, was over a backlash unleashed itself in this country that shaped our history. The business community was horrified that they had to pay the taxes to pay for all of those progressive programs for the people. They didn't want that anymore. They wanted to undo what was called The New Deal by the Roosevelt government. The conservatives were horrified by the alliance of the United States with the Soviet Union during World War II. The religious community saw secularism as rising up as people discovered that struggling in this life might make at least as much sense as being the good person for that future life.

All of that came together in a vast reaction, and from 1945 up until Occupy Wall Street, you could see the effects. Communist and socialist parties destroyed by deporting their people, by arresting their leadership, and by terrifying the American people about even being interested in what socialists had to say. No more of that was allowed, a taboo descended. Even when people fought for progressive goals, and end to racism, an end to sexism, an indecent approach to our natural environment, whatever the issues were, they kept carefully away from a critique of capitalism because of that was the center of the reactionary goals of that time.

And the Left was destroyed in the United States. Not a hundred percent, but a lot. And it got quiet and they got fearful, and it didn't show up, and it cleaned its act up by making itself more and more acceptable. Nothing showed it more than the steady move of the Democratic party from the push it made under Roosevelt to the pale shadow it became in recent decades.

Occupy Wall Street changed that. In the summer and autumn of 2011, a political movement rose up suddenly and it turned the clock around. It didn't hide the economic critique of capitalism, on the contrary, it put it right up front. The number one slogan was "the 1% versus the 99%" - brilliant. In one set of a

few words, the key point was made, we are a movement of the 99 and we're against the 1. That's what had been said in the 1930s and no one dared pick it up from 1945 until Occupy Wall Street.

I shouldn't say no one did. There were always a few and we're all grateful to them for keeping the criticisms alive, but they were marginalized. They were quieted. They were on the bare edges. Occupy Wall Street brought them back in. I can't overstate this. In a matter of weeks, let's remember, 300 cities across United States reproduced those encampments that were led by what happened in Zucotti Park, in the Wall Street neighborhood of New York City.

Occupy at 10 with Astra Taylor Part 1 - The Dig - Air date 9-25-21

[00:08:12] **DANIEL DENVIR - HOST, THE DIG:** Sociologist Ruth Milkman and coauthors wrote, quote, "OWS was not a spontaneous movement that appeared out of nowhere. It was carefully planned by a group of experienced political activists, newly inspired by the Arab Spring and the surge of mass protest around the world in the first half of 2011."

That may be true, but what Occupy became went well beyond anything that planners had imagined, and many people who became active participants didn't have much political experience at all. Particularly as occupation spread beyond New York to cities all over the place.

Meanwhile, most everyone on the left at the time, as far as I can recall, was absolutely shocked that Occupy took off and exploded the way that it did.

What did Occupy seem like at the beginning? What did you make of it? And then what did it become?

[00:09:08] **ASTRA TAYLOR:** The one thing is that it was planned. It had been planned for months by group calling themselves the New York General Assembly. And this was a small rotating group of a few dozen folks, if that. One of them was my good friend, David Graeber, the late and great anthropologist and writer who would really come into national prominence during Occupy Wall Street, which coincided with the publication of his book, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* that was an international bestseller.

And so it was planned. They had different working groups within this assembly. They focused on media, communications. They came up with the slogan, "We

are the 99%," the frame of the 99%. They actually decided in those meetings, which happened weekly in Tompkins Square park. They decided not to have demands, for strategic reasons, and we can get into that because I think they were right.

And they had a tactical group. It was this group that had scouted Zuccotti Park and knew that it was there and actually knew about its legal status. There was even a group of them that did a trial run, where they tried to spend the night at the New York Stock Exchange, sleeping on the sidewalk. And the results were pretty bad. I think nine people got arrested, so it wasn't very promising.

So David Graeber was very direct. He's said in interviews, I think he even said in the Milkman piece that you just referenced, I didn't think we'd make it through the night. I thought we'd get arrested.

And that was what I thought as well, because I had spent the aughts in New York City protesting under the shadow of the war on terror. When, you would, it just felt like you would come into public space and be kettled. It was impossible to get a critical mass. Maybe you'd be shunted into a free speech pen. Gatherings of over 20 people were illegal.

And this was not a group that was asking for a permit, right? So I, on the one hand, yes, this group was planning an occupation, but I don't think they thought they were going to make it through the night.

It's also important to give the context. And then you mentioned the Arab Spring. If we think of that as the beginning of Occupy, then things actually kick off in Tunisia in December of 2010, when a vegetable seller named Mohammed Bouazizi, he was being harassed by the police and in protest, he immolated himself. And that energy was circulating around the globe. And so Occupy felt really late to the game. Of course there's also the financial crisis that it was responding to. And so there had been a call from AdBusters, the Canadian magazine, and it was about as minimal as you could get. The call was: "Occupy Wall Street, September 17th, bring a tent, stay for months."

[00:11:47] **DANIEL DENVIR - HOST, THE DIG:** And there was a little dancer on top of the Wall Street bull.

[00:11:51] **ASTRA TAYLOR:** Yeah. And it said 20,000 people. The people who were planning Occupy Wall Street were like, Stay for months with 20,000 people? I mean, It was totally disconnected from reality on the ground. And so they set their own ambitions, they set their own terms. September 17th was

completely arbitrary. It was picked because it was the birthday of one of the editors of Adbuster's mother. Right? It was completely random.

And the fact that it took off was a testament to the folks who were planning it. Some of whom included people who are online rabble-rousers and connected to Anonymous, which was another big social trend at the time. It was in a way the most vibrant political force in the United States, which I think is a real contrast to where we are now.

So there were people who are trying to organize and translate online discontent and rebelliousness into offline action, which is always difficult. And it just felt very improbable that it would take off.

And the other thing I'll say is context is that there were attempts in that period to mobilize movements against Wall Street. There had been a multi-week occupation called Bloombergville that was targeting the city budget and the mayor that lasted a couple of weeks, but definitely didn't grab national headlines. There'd been a massive March in May of 2011. I went to it. I can't even remember it, but I know I went to it from emails, but it was so boring that I don't even have a memory of it, but it had lots of great demands. A huge number of people in comparison to those early days of Occupy showed up. And yet it didn't do anything, in terms of lighting a fire. So it was interesting. I don't know what it was about Occupy, but it was, I'm sure that it had to do with the audacity of it. And the fact people just stayed put.

There was also a radicalization against the police. There was a lot of kind of naive -- the police are part of the 99% -- messaging. I don't know if you remember, there was this hipster cop who became kind of iconic at Occupy.

[00:13:48] **DANIEL DENVIR - HOST, THE DIG:** He was a plain clothes, nattily dressed young hipster-looking cop.

[00:13:53] **ASTRA TAYLOR:** Right? But he was still a fucking cop, you know. And these things became more apparent the week of the mass arrest on the Brooklyn Bridge, whenever 700 people were arrested. There was a donation of \$4.6 million from Jamie Dimon, diamond -- sorry, he needs to have that "d" on the end of his name.

[00:14:13] **DANIEL DENVIR - HOST, THE DIG:** I think that's what I thought his name was for a long time.

[00:14:17] **ASTRA TAYLOR:** -- to the NYPD, and basically the sense of like, yeah, Wall Street and NYPD are working together, and were one and the same. And that, I think, in no way can that, can you take credit for the amazing work against the criminal punishment system and police that's happening today, but I think it was really radicalizing for a lot of people who were part of Occupy who had never had hostile encounters with the police before, to see just the wanton violence and the contempt that they were treated with.

[00:14:51] **DANIEL DENVIR - HOST, THE DIG:** And it did start, I think, Occupy in a lot of complex ways did start to intersect with what were really BLM precursors around Troy Davis, who was executed in Georgia during Occupy's early days on September 21st and then around Trayvon Martin's murder, which took place just a few months after Occupy started.

And then as you're saying, the NYPD had a major impact on the course of Occupy. And I feel like the repression mostly pretty much backfired, which is not to trivialize or romanticize what, in some cases were pretty horrible cost of this repression, including a really serious injury suffered by the Iraq war vet, Scott Olson in Oakland. But there was all this repression, and though activists obviously and rightly decried police abuses at the time, it seems to me like it did more good for the movement by helping draw more attention to it than it did in terms of harm than it did harm in terms of by taking people off the streets and putting them in jail. Because both the September 24th mass arrests and pepper spraying of active activists, and then the October 1st March across the Brooklyn Bridge, which as you mentioned, led to the NYPD making more than 700 arrests. These were both things that generated just like massive amounts of attention.

[00:16:16] **ASTRA TAYLOR:** Yeah, it is true. After that it sort of catapulted into the mainstream media, by these incidents and by these viral videos of police violence. I mean, there were some too that we forget, but that were really major. So I remember this young activist, Megan Linuk, and I actually had her write an account of it -- filmed on her Blackberry, so that dates this movement - - as these NYU students were going to a Chase branch to close their accounts in protest. And the cops started basically dragging people from the sidewalk into the bank and beating them up and arresting them all when they were just going in there they weren't doing a sit-in, they were just saying, I'm against your role in the financial crisis, I'm closing my account. For which they were arrested and held for over 30 hours. And that video got over a million views. And that was novel at the time, right? To have these moments be transmitted and circulated. A lot of that was Anonymous, was amplifying these things and they had such an enormous reach online.

And I think, Occupy, what people had to get their minds around was that cops protect capital. That's who they are serving. They're protecting property, not people. And ultimately they're protecting profits. And that's actually something that is a really core insight.

And they were, there to smash heads when the time came. And I saw a lot of people get thrashed, at my time at Occupy. And certainly it was happening, I think there were over 8,000 Occupy-affiliated arrests around the country, and millions of dollars. I think Oakland paid out over a 10 or \$11 million of damages. So the public's paying for that too. We're paying for the violence that these forces are perpetrating.

The Legacy of Occupy Wall Street, with Ruth Milkman and Nastaran Mohit Part 1 - Belabored - Air Date 9-24-21

[00:17:52] **SARAH JAFFE - CO-HOST, BELABORED:** We mentioned the Arab Spring earlier. One of the interesting aspects that came out of Occupy that I think other movements have also, since then, reflected was the global orientation and the interest in transnational organizing, or at least building some sort of global solidarity with movements, and I think we've seen that resonate with Black Lives Matter and the Me Too movement as well, and also labor I think has evolved in that direction too. So I was wondering if we can get outside of New York City a little bit, how you two feel that Occupy as a globally facing movement may have informed the way people organized or the way activists see themselves?

[00:18:35] **NASTARAN MOHIT:** I think for people around the world to see, for the victims of so much of the pain and death and destruction that US imperialism wreaks on them it was, I'm sure, a really inspiring and heartening development to see that people are finally taking to the streets. And because there was such a long stretch of time... of course there were protests throughout the 2000s. The most sizeable protest before Occupy that I can remember was the anti-war protests in the early 2000s, where hundreds of thousands of people came out in the streets, not only in New York City, but around the world. And we invaded anyway, of course.

So I think that once Occupy took off and that message spread around the world, in the same way that we were watching the Arab Spring with such hope, even though it was it took off in New York City and then subsequently took off in

other cities across the country, it was a message that was heard around the world, particularly because that message of the 99% is one that's felt in so many places around the world. And New York city is the heart capital, so I think that message... it's hard to really put your finger on or quantify what exactly, or pinpoint, and I'm sure Ruth you've found this in your research, when someone asks do you think that this was a result of Occupy? it's really hard to put your finger on it because it's something that is, as I said earlier, kind of amorphous, but I think that message has definitely infused movements across the world.

[00:20:08] **RUTH MILKMAN:** Yeah. Let's remember first that Occupy cloned itself all over the world. So it began in Zuccotti Park here in New York, but then we very quickly replicated, first across the United States in hundreds of places and then also elsewhere.

And at the same time, it was inspired, as we already talked about, by somewhat similar movements elsewhere in the world. I remember, there was this wonderful publication that appeared in Zuccotti Park, the Occupied Wall Street Journal, put together by some very talented journalists, and I remember the first issue had this timeline starting with Tahrir Square in Egypt and going through a series of other movements and then ending with Zuccotti Park, but of course that wasn't the end. It continued.

So there is that global story, just in a very short run both before Zuccotti and after, and then, maybe this isn't so much global, but I do think the success of Occupy inspired even people who hadn't directly participated, as well as many who had, to become involved in other kinds of movements, including Black Lives Matter, including Me Too, all the things that we've seen develop over the last year. And so it was kind of the starting point of a massive wave of protests that really did not exist before 2011. Sure there were protests here and there, but they'd never had the scale or captured the public imagination in the way Occupy did in the years immediately proceeding.

So, you know, not since the 1960s, have we really seen this kind of explosion of social activism and I think Occupy was the starting point. So even though it didn't last very long as Occupy it became the catalyst for a whole range of activities in the decades since.

[00:21:56] **SARAH JAFFE - CO-HOST, BELABORED:** Yeah. And I think also in terms of the way movements brand themselves and the circulation of symbols and imagery and slogans, facilitated by social media, I think that Occupy was definitely laid out a template for other movements to build upon. And hopefully we'll see other iterations of that in the coming years.

[00:22:14] **RUTH MILKMAN:** And we called our report, the report I co-authored with Stephanie Luce and Penny Lewis, we called it *Changing the Subject*, and that was meant to have a double meaning. On the one side, as many people have pointed out, the whole issue of inequality and its explosive implications was put into the center of political conversation after 2011, by Occupy. We've documented that just in searching Google news for mentions of the word inequality. It goes up in 2011 and stays up thereafter.

So there's that, but it also created a new political subject, that's the other "changing the subject", a new generational political subject I would argue, that went on to do all these other things. So, some people poopoo the whole thing as this, "you know, oh, it was just a couple months, these kids in the park, you know, what's the big deal?" but in fact, my own claim would be that this really was the start of something very important that has continued since.

Occupy Wall Street Analysis and Legacy Part 2 - Economic Update with Richard D. Wolff - Air Date 9-16-21

[00:23:08] **RICHARD WOLFF - HOST, ECONOMIC UPDATE:** I want to make clear that Occupy Wall Street was a turning point, as I stressed in the first half. In my judgment there could have been and would have been no Bernie Sanders effort in 2016 without the ground being prepared by Occupy Wall Street five years earlier, and the same goes for the 2020 election. And the same goes for the sudden emergence of young active socialists running for and getting elected for offices across the United States at the federal, state, and local levels. These are outgrowths, developments, building upon what Occupy Wall Street made possible.

Let me turn a bit more analytically. What were the four causes I would point to for why Occupy Wall Street happened? The first one was the crash of 2008-2009. The importance of this, also in my judgment, cannot be exaggerated. Capitalism collapsed in those four final months of the year 2008. We came this close to closing the US economy altogether. I mean the kind of closing when you don't know whether there will be milk in the store when you run out to replenish for your children, that kind of collapse. Everything went wrong. All of the tools that we had been told could manage this economy so we would [mockingly] "never again have the Great Depression," uh, well, we had it again. All of the geniuses who promised we wouldn't were wrong. All of the presidents who told us, "we will never again have the Great Depression. We've taken the steps, and I, my administration..." all BS, and we lived through it, and

we knew it, and it shocked the American people because it reminded them that you live in an economic system that can turn on you on a dime. No preparation, no planning, no nothing. You just have to go through it, and it's cataclysmic. That sparked something that led to Occupy Wall Street.

Then there were those long years from 1945 right up until 2011, when we had all watched Republicans, and unfortunately Democrats, undo most of what had been done in the Great Depression and the New Deal. Make a joke out of social security because it wasn't enough to sustain people. Watch the minimum wage drop in its value as prices rose and the minimum wage didn't. Watch us go through the crash of 2008-2009, never having either the president or the Congress seriously debate a federal jobs program, which could have solved unemployment overnight, the way it did in the 1930s. But this was now taboo. Couldn't do that. The business community didn't want it, so we didn't have it. And that contributed to an anger that led to Occupy Wall Street. Everything is being taken away from us as the economy shows how badly we need it.

Then there was the vague feeling, which has become of course stronger now than it was 10 years ago, and this vague feeling was the empire is now shrinking. Yeah, at first it was just a Korean War. It didn't quite work out. And then there was Vietnam and clearly we got defeated there, and now we've been defeated in Afghanistan. Excuse me, I shouldn't say defeat. We chose to withdraw. It does sound so much less troublesome, but the reality is very clear and Iraq is right behind what Afghanistan already showed us. So that also led to Occupy. What's all this activity, costing trillions of dollars, unspeakable amounts of killed people and wounded people and soldiers coming back and committing suicide, and all of it that we know - this is not working out. This system is busted and that too contributed to Occupy Wall Street.

And here's the fourth and final one. As the empire begins its downward trajectory in the early years of this new century, as the costs of undoing the new deal, come in and bite us where we live and work. We watched what? We didn't watch the anger that had given us a progressive 1930s come back. No. What we saw was the tea party. We saw things going to the right. People becoming angry at conspiracies that they invented in the bad part of a rough night. QAnon and all the rest of it. What are we looking at here, those of us who know better? And that too contributed to Occupy Wall Street. We have to be, show, and move in a different direction. Those folks who are upset on the right are right to be upset, we share that with them, but the solutions they're looking for, those are paid for by the very corporations that are the problem.

at 10 with Astra Taylor Part 2 - The Dig - Air date 9-25-21

[00:29:01] **DANIEL DENVIR - HOST, THE DIG:** We should also mention that Occupy definitely existed on the internet. On Twitter, of course, and also on this amazing Tumblr, where people posted photos, holding up handwritten posters or notes, if I remember correctly, explaining what life experiences had led them to support Occupy: losing a job, debt, et cetera. And this was this moment also when people are trying to think about what the internet and social media meant for politics and activism. Sometimes I think in a hyperbolic or faddish way that didn't have a lot of rigor, but that doesn't mean that there weren't important things happening with social media and the internet. What do you think that the internet meant for Occupy and for the Left more generally that was re-emerging at the time?

[00:29:53] **ASTRA TAYLOR:** Yeah. You're talking about the We Are The 99% Tumblr.

And so one thing before I get into the technology of that is, again, that for people to share their debt, to share their stories of hardship, was so powerful because I think that's something that has been de-stigmatized a lot. And that's part of having a Left, where you go, okay, this is structural problems. It's not your personal failings. It's not that you failed to lift yourself up by your bootstraps. Like you're impoverished by design, you're indebted by design. And so for people to come out and I mean, literally coming out and saying, "I can't make ends meet" was a really powerful thing. And the internet made it easy for people who weren't somewhere where they could go to an encampment and do it by holding that cardboard sign to add their voice to the chorus.

Occupy was always this really neat mix, aesthetically, of technology, of Twitter and Facebook and Tumblr. And then like these really just rustic or whatever, like simple cardboard signs, right? Like it had this mix of very low fi and, and Hi-Fi together.

I was writing at the time of Occupy I was writing my book, *The People's Platform*. So I was thinking a lot about the internet. And one thing that stood out to me was that these pundits -- people I was critiquing in the book is social media, internet, cheerleaders were going on and on and on about the Arab Spring. In Iran it was the Twitter revolution. And then Egypt was the Facebook revolution. And, oh, did we hear a couple had named their child Facebook? And, I was always very skeptical of these guys too, because they never talked

about the need for revolution at home. Like it was always some distant place that the internet was liberating.

[00:31:25] **DANIEL DENVIR - HOST, THE DIG:** It always somehow seem to end up just crediting US tech overlords for spreading progressive social change elsewhere.

[00:31:34] **ASTRA TAYLOR:** Exactly. Like those people need our technology to bring -- we're bringing democracy to them through this, you know, basically colonial means.

[00:31:41] **DANIEL DENVIR - HOST, THE DIG:** Pat on the back American capitalism.

[00:31:43] **ASTRA TAYLOR:** Exactly. And I thought was really interesting was that the lesson though that all of us who had been watching these revolutions on live streams, the lessons we took from it was like yeah, it's important to get the word out. It's important to livestream. But what's really important is going in your body to a public place. So in other words, this chattering class was fetishizing the tech and giving these Silicon Valley tools as credit. But for regular people, we're like, oh, we need to meet in space as embodied humans and find each other, and defy the authorities together, in real time, in real space. And so I was always very struck by the fact that people weren't taking a kind of determinist or tech fetishist lesson from these mediated, these technologically mediated revolutions.

I interviewed Nelini Stamp, who was a very visible figure at Occupy and Direct Action, all sorts of working groups. And, she's been involved in basically every movement since then about Occupy's legacy. And she pointed out that in the United States Occupy was the first movement that live-streamed everything that had that constant updating of the Twitter feed.

Transparency was a really big theme in Occupy, right? So people would tweet out, you know, there was no messaging discipline, you tweet out all the ugliness, all the conflicts and everything like that. And what that enabled, in addition to transmitting the tactics -- bring a tent, set up a food station, set up a library -- what it did was it enabled all of these local Occupys to feel connected to the national narrative and to this global narrative. And it was the first time that we really experienced that here in the U S.

And so in that sense, I think Occupy changed protests in two ways. One, it brought back this kind of defiance and this yeah, we're not doing the

choreographed thing. And then also, you live stream it, and you spread the word that way.

The Legacy of Occupy Wall Street, with Ruth Milkman and Nastaran Mohit Part 2 - Belabored - Air Date 9-24-21

[00:33:33] **NASTARAN MOHIT:** I think one of the biggest criticisms, and there are many, one of the biggest criticisms of Occupy over the years and at the time even, was just that this was a leaderless movement without any demands. Obviously there are pros and cons to that, but I think that the absence of a concrete campaign to get behind, I think it was a detriment, I think in many ways, and so when we had actual campaigns to rally around it absolutely drew new people in. Folks that were down at Zuccotti, when they found out that we had a picket line somewhere, when they knew they could help out on some campaign concretely to support the low wage immigrant workers in New York City who are struggling. So it wasn't just this nebulous, and I don't mean that in a derogatory way, but it wasn't this amorphous demand. It was a very concrete thing that they were coming to support, which is to go after this employer, like this one deli on the Upper East Side in a very wealthy zip code right here in New York City.

We had folks who would just show up, we put out a call and people just showed up. People showed up with instruments. There were two amazing supporters who showed up with their cameras to document the struggle at Hot & Crusty, and then they ended up producing an award-winning documentary called the hand that feeds, but they were initially, Rachel and Robin were just initially supporters of - they were just coming to support the picket line and they happened to bring their camera and record what was happening and it ended up turning into this amazing piece of history.

So people really brought their skill sets, and for the workers, it was just incredible to see these strangers who they may have seen down at Zuccotti and they may have seen in one of the working group meetings, but to see them actually show up outside of their workplace and hold the line, really join a picket line, and not just show up one day or one hour, but continue to show up day after day for the workers was I think a really transformative experience for a lot of people.

[00:35:22] **SARAH JAFFE - CO-HOST, BELABORED:** And in our last couple of minutes, I guess I wanted to get a sense in retrospect, when you look at what Occupy accomplished and maybe the type of resonance it had well beyond the movements and the campaigns themselves, maybe you could address some of the critiques of the movement that have come out over the past decade or so. And maybe also lessons learned, both what is possible and what could be done differently next time.

[00:35:50] **RUTH MILKMAN:** I think the most compelling criticism was actually that, although on the one hand that strength of Occupy was it's focused on class inequality, there were times when other kinds of oppression and inequality were not sufficiently attended to race and gender in particular. And it wasn't completely absent, and there were struggles with Occupy to lift those things up, but I think, that was both a strength and a weakness at the same time. But I think that lesson was absorbed pretty rapidly by the people involved and, again, Black Lives Matter being one of the after effects.

[00:36:26] **SARAH JAFFE - CO-HOST, BELABORED:** Nastran, any lessons learned?

[00:36:30] **NASTARAN MOHIT:** Yeah, I would agree that was probably the most significant criticism. Not only at that time, but even just looking in retrospect years later. Just that it was largely a movement of white activists who were just looking at New York City, who didn't really have very much connection with the city itself and the working people in the city. I remember that was my biggest criticism from the first time I started joining meetings, and so I think that the message was incredibly powerful and the lack of hierarchy was at times very empowering, I think, for so many people to join this space, because there weren't the same barriers and limitations that exist in other organizations, or political parties, or jobs, non-profits. It was so decentralized that it really allowed so many people to join its ranks and learn and grow.

But it was mostly white folks. We know the significant limitations that that presents. It wasn't just the fizzling out of the actual physical space. I think once the loss of the physical space happened, many of the people that were down at Zuccotti didn't really know what to do from there, because They weren't necessarily connected with any struggles in New York City. And and I can go on and on and on about what that eventually led to. I think a lot of amazing people ended up doing great work over the years. And there were many organizers that were involved in Occupy that actually were from New York City or were part of the labor movement, but they were the exception.

So I would say that that was the biggest criticism. And then looking at Occupy Sandy there's a whole nother set of considerations with that work, and the fact that organizers who were not from the outer boroughs of New York City, who were plunked down there for a few months to do that work and were able to do fantastic work, but also we're not from those communities themselves. But yeah, I would agree with Ruth that was probably the biggest criticism of Occupy.

Keith Olbermann reads first collective statement of Occupy Wall Street - Countdown

[00:38:30] **KEITH OLBERMANN:** For the whole of the time that the Occupy Wall Street protestors have been making their case for a sea change in the way we Americans permit big business to draw and quarter and circumscribe our lives, media too corrupt or too dense to understand anything more complicated than whether the blonde is missing or the verdict is guilty, have parroted, what do they want? What is their catchphrase?

In our third story, it is not a catchphrase, but it is a declaration of what they want. That the document, which I will read in full in a moment, is not a list of laws to be repealed, nor politicians to be elected, may only confuse the precocious ninth graders now passing for TV anchor newsman these days. But the absence of the kind of painted footsteps with which they used to mark the floors of dance instruction studios is in a way breathtaking.

The two by four, that Errol Lewis described, it implies that there is so much to change, but such a tipping point has been reached that some easy to apply band-aids just are not going to be enough. And it implies that the commentators and politicians and moneyed interests that do not come to understand the scope of what must change will be without influence and without power before they realize that the change has happened.

So with that as preamble, here is, formally and finally, what Occupy Wall Street says and wants. It is in essence their special comment.

As we gather together in solidarity to express a feeling of mass injustice, we must not lose sight of what brought us together. We write so that all people who feel wronged by the corporate forces of the world can know that we are your allies.

As one people, united, we acknowledge the reality that the future of the human race requires the cooperation of its members. That our system must protect our rights. And upon corruption of that system, it is up to the individuals to protect their own rights and those of their neighbors, that the democratic government derives its just power from the people.

But corporations do not seek consent to extract wealth from the people and the earth, and that no true democracy is attainable when the process is determined by economic power.

We come to you at a time when corporations, which plays profit over people, self-interest over justice, and oppression over equality, run our governments.

We have peaceably assembled here, as is our right, to let these facts be known.

They have taken our houses through an illegal foreclosure process, despite not having the original mortgage. They have taken bailouts from taxpayers with impunity and continued to give executives exorbitant bonuses. They have perpetuated inequality and discrimination in workplaces based on age, the color of one's skin, sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

They have poisoned the food supply through negligence and undermine the farming system through monopolization. They have profited off the torture, confinement and cruel treatment of countless animals and actively hide these practices. They have continuously sought to strip employees of the right to negotiate for better pay and safer working conditions.

They have held students hostage with tens of thousands of dollars of debt on education, which is itself a human right. They have consistently outsourced labor and use that outsourcing as leverage to cut workers' healthcare and pay. They have influenced the courts to achieve the same rights as people, with none of the culpability or responsibility. They have spent millions of dollars on legal teams, but look for ways to get them out of contracts in regards to health insurance. They have sold our privacy as a commodity. They have used the military and police force to prevent freedom of the press. They have deliberately declined to recall faulty products, endangering lives in pursuit of profit. They determine economic policy, despite the catastrophic failures their policies have produced and continue to produce.

They have donated large sums of money to politicians who are responsible for regulating them. They continue to block alternate forms of energy to keep us dependent on oil. They continue to block generic forms of medicine that could

save people's lives or provide relief in order to protect investments that have already turned a substantial profit.

They have purposely covered up oil spills, accidents, faulty bookkeeping, and inactive ingredients in pursuit of profit. They purposefully kept people misinformed and fearful through their control of the media. They have accepted private contracts to murder prisoners, even when presented with serious doubts about their guilt.

They have perpetuated colonialism at home and abroad. They have participated in the torture and murder of innocent civilians overseas. They continue to create weapons of mass destruction in order to receive government contracts.

To the people of the world: we, the New York City General Assembly occupying Wall Street and Liberty Square urge you to assert your power, exercise your right to peaceably assemble, occupy public space, create a process to address the problems we face, and generate solutions accessible to everyone.

To all communities that take action and form groups in the spirit of direct democracy, we offer support, documentation, and all of the resources at our disposal.

Join us and make your voices heard.

The statement issued from Zuccotti Park by the General Assembly at Occupy Wall Street.

Will Occupy Wall Street Affect 2012 Election: Glenn Greenwald Interview - David Pakman - Air Date 11-14-11

[00:43:32] **DAVID PAKMAN - HOST, DAVID PAKMAN SHOW:** Glenn Greenwald is with us. He's author of the new book, "With Liberty and Justice For Some." He's also a contributing writer over at salon.com.

And I want to talk to you, Glenn, about, "Immunity and Impunity in Elite America: How the Legal System was Deep Six and Occupy Wall Street Swept the Land."

The most interesting point that I took from it is that income and wealth inequality have been present for a really long time in the United States. So that... that alone, even though it's, kind of, become the defacto number one cited reason for Occupy wall street, in your opinion, can't really be enough to have spurred this incredible coming together of events that are these protests.

So, number one, what else has been a factor; but more interestingly, number two, why has that become such a convenient and popular number one reason that we're hearing?

[00:44:21] **GLENN GREENWALD:** Right. Well, it's not just that income inequality and wealth inequality had been in the United States for a long time-- although that is true-- what also is true is that it... it has been significantly increasing for several decades. So the trend line has been towards greater and greater levels of inequality.

And yet, you didn't really see a sustained protest movement over inequality. And I think the reason for that is because Americans are basically inculcated, for better or for worse, to accept, not just the inevitability, but the virtues of, inequality, of wealth inequality, and outcome inequality.

So, for example, when someone like Steve Jobs dies with 7 billion or \$8 billion in net worth, even though huge amounts of joblessness, and homelessness, and foreclosures, and the like, are sweeping the land, most people don't begrudge that, because there's this, sort of, embedded political value in the United States that inequality is legitimate, as long as it's fair and just.

And I think that's, really, the key behind this protest movement, and what is so radically changed is the perception, obviously correct, in my view, that these inequalities are no longer the by-product of merit, or hard work, or a deserved, uh, achievement, but instead are really... is really the by-product of cheating, of... of people shielding their ill gotten gains, and most of all, using their superior political and financial power to exempt themselves from the rule of law, from the... the rules of... of society, to which the rest of us are bound, so that these inequalities are no longer legitimate, but are illegitimate.

And I think that's really what's sustaining the protest. And one of the reasons why you don't hear much about that, and why the media has an interest in portraying this as nothing more than just, sort of, anger over inequality unto itself. is because one of the ways of demonizing the protest, or dismissing it, is to say that it's nothing more than the, sort of, socialist or communist anger from

the 1960s over the fact that some people have a lot, and lazy and worthless people have very little.

Um, and I think that's clearly not what the protest movement is about, by and large. It's about the fact that, for example, the people who collapsed the world economy through their illegality and criminality have not paid any price, but instead have prospered.

[00:46:28] **DAVID PAKMAN - HOST, DAVID PAKMAN SHOW:** Sure. And it's, I mean, it's no surprise, when we look over the years at poles-- fairly asked poles-- asking people, "Do you think the government has a fundamental responsibility to provide you healthcare?" And the overwhelming majority of people, usually two thirds, or even more, do think so, but you don't see that reflected in the politicians that are elected.

You don't see that reflected in the policy that is proposed in any kind of serious way, other than, you know, every once in a while, Dennis Kucinich mentioning it. So it should be no surprise to us that policy does not-- at all-- reflect the will of the people, does it?

[00:47:01] **GLENN GREENWALD:** Well, but this is, you know, that's an important point about why the Occupation Movement has emerged, and why it continues to flourish, and... and the driving force behind it.

Of course, politicians do go before the public and claim that they share the sentiments that polls reveal are... are... are embraced by majorities, and promise to carry out that agenda, and huge numbers of people in 2008 were persuaded by the Obama campaign that electing Barack Obama would result in those policies being implemented.

And in fact, you know, I think the most significant thing about the 2008 campaign, with respect to what the Occupy Wall Street Movement is that, the Obama candidacy, we really specifically targeted those people who had decided that working within the political system was no longer, um, worthwhile, or that they who... who had always concluded that it wasn't worthwhile. People who, you know, as Obama described them, were, sort of, wallowing in this corrosive cynicism.

And that's what all of this stuff about "Yes We Can," and... and "Audacity Of Hope" was designed to do, was to persuade specifically those people that there was a reason, there was a value to them devoting their time, energy, and resources to electing a Democratic candidate, that things would actually change.

And when they did that, and they saw that nothing changed, that everything continued as is, that the same factions continued to be served, that was really what increased the cynicism more than it had ever existed before. And it's what led so many people to the conclusion, "Well, if it didn't happen here, it's never going to happen. And now I realized that the only viable course of action is to work outside of this system, is to dissent from it, and to change the political culture, rather than working for one party or the other." And I think that... that... that is a huge energy behind this movement is the anger, and disappointment, and sense of betrayal that people feel from 2008.

Prophetic article calling for the occupation - Majority Report 10-25-11

[00:48:48] **SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT:** Let me read this. The, one of the, the, one of the final paragraphs of your piece. Cause I think it's prescriptive and uh, in some ways it was prophetic. What is needed is a new paradigm of disrespect for the banker, the financier, the one percenter, a new civic space in which he is openly reviled in which spoiled eggs and rotten vegetables are tossed at every turning.

What is needed is a revival of the language of vigorous old, progressive. We're in the parasite class was denounced as such. What is needed is a new resistance. We face as Hessel describes a system of social control that offers nothing but mass consumption as a prospect for our youth, that trumpets contempt for the least powerful and society that offers only outrageous competition of, again, all against, all to create is to resist a right's Hessel to resist is to create.

And then your final paragraph. Such creativity. Alas is unlikely in New York. And you go on to say, the city is regressing, the sparks, no protest from its people. And literally, I think as you uh, probably sent this into um, uh, Orien magazine or maybe a couple of weeks before or after you sent it in We get uh, occupy wall street.

I eat my words, man. Well, Listen, you know, you'd say it's a huge piece. And the only thing is that I think is inaccurate and may have been unpredictable. Was that last paragraph where you thought it would be unlikely to see this rise up? What accounts. I mean Both your lack of optimism to see any type of revolt in the fact that we are seeing now, at least to some degree a growing and aggressive and strong rebellion against this.

[00:50:32] **CHRISTOPHER KETCHAM:** I completed the first draft of that article with. With more or less, that kind of dark and rather despairing ending. I completed it, more, almost a year ago. New York, you see what New York is all about? You know, We've got a lot of, a lot of young people here who are just obsessed with playing the game with serving the corporate master with making money, with getting the big bucks and being part of uh, the system.

If you will. You know, New York is not today. Until the, the eruption at Zuccotti park, New York was not a place that was inspiring in terms of alternative cultures or Inspiring for people to, to rise up and establish themselves against a, against the corporate talk.

Resy you know, this town is run by corporate talk. See, it's owned by corporatocracy. It's the very nature is corporatocracy.

[00:51:31] **SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT:** You get into the history of uh, essentially the, the last great, populist movement that essentially grew, I guess, in the late eighties just to walk us through some of that history because I think uh, you use it as an example you know, a call to arms at that time and as a paradigm from which uh, people could fall.

[00:51:54] **CHRISTOPHER KETCHAM:** Right now we're talking about the 1880s here. Yeah, there's a section of the article in which I discussed the the candidacy for mayor of a guy named Henry George and Henry George was a um, you know, he was a visionary. He felt that the real problem with capitalism was that We've given to those who did not do their fair share of work.

We given to them all sorts of outrageous remuneration and in particular. Those people who owned a lot of land and speculated on land and could make a, what he called economic rent. And um, you know, he basically said, all right, we've got a lot of rent here, rent tears in our society that people making money without doing productive labor.

So how do you fix this? You change the laws. So that you get rid of the rentiers. And so that people have to actually work for a living now, today in New York. And one of the great crises that we face in our society is that we in the United States are top heavy with rent, tiers, and rent here as being the finance class, who apparently.

Do nothing. They are socially useless as a great piece in the new Yorker, concluded a piece by John Cassidy. The they don't do anything and yet they get paid enormous sums of money and they suck away. Norma's some society and

they draw off incredible amounts of economic rent. So in the Iran piece, I drew this parallel.

Back to back to Henry George 1880s, in which, you know he basically running from Mary, he drew a enormous wide ranging ecumenical following of lower class, middle class people of all races and professions who basically said no. We no longer want to be ruled by the rent tiers, by what progressive back then called the parasites.

The parasites are running things today. The parasitic class, the hedge fund, the financier, the wall street, or the 1% they're running things. And I think it's a it's high time to that the progressive movement today embraced. That old muscular language of progressive isn't that a guy like Henry George back in the 1880s used, talking about the hedge funder and the wall street, or as a parasite, because these are parasites they're bloodsucking vampires.

They're ticks, sat in themselves on society. And um, something has to be done.

[00:55:00] **SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT:** In the follow-up piece that you had to the reign of the one percenters in a brief post on Orin you talk more about the populous movement uh, of the 1890s. Tell us about the populace and what they basically carried that message, but they transferred that message into not just protests, but into political power

[00:55:21] **CHRISTOPHER KETCHAM:** right now, Henry George could be considered one of the first populous, but it wasn't until the RA's of the people's party of 1892, which became known as the populous party that you really had a nationwide movement that demanded a.

It demanded a transformation of law in favor of the working men, what were then called the productive classes against the parasite classes. Now the populace, arose as the, it was an agrarian movement is movement farmers from the Midwest basically said that they no longer wanted to be exploited by monopoly bankers and railroad owners who were controlling.

Uh, Railroad transport rates and controlling the systems of credit and impoverishing these productive classes, these farmers who could not survive in the marketplace. They envision also as the things that, that required. Decades, Jen, a whole generation, two generations to be realized, you know, the minimum wage in the eight hour a day they wanted to nationalize the railroads, nationalized, the Telegraph services they wanted to create a bank, a people's bank that would regulate money on behalf of the public interest, they want to.

And create all sorts of social security protections. Now, a good number of these populist ideas. First floated in the 1890s were later put in effect by FDR in 1934 and thereafter. So comparison that can be drawn today to the occupy wall street movement, is it may take.

10 15, 20, 30, 40 years for a movement to actually affect real change in this country. It may be a multi-generational affair just as it was a multi-generational fair with the populace arising in 1890s, but not seeing their platform partially implemented until the 1930s.

Occupy at 10 with Astra Taylor Part 3 - The Dig - Air date 9-25-21

[00:57:30] **ASTRA TAYLOR:** When the camp was cleared, there was a drive among some people to occupy their spaces. So there were quite a few attempts to reOccupy, to find new territory. And that was people started to mistake in my view, a tactic for the goal. Or for a strategy, right? Like it was like no, the tactic, the tool, and maybe it's played itself out in this context.

We are outmaneuvered. Like we are not as powerful as the state and we are not as powerful as the police. And, so I think the offshoots of Occupy that were more generative were those that were like, okay, we need to take this movement and its focus on inequality, the attention to capitalism, and we need to carry it forward in less literal fashions.

[00:58:13] **DANIEL DENVIR - HOST, THE DIG:** Yeah. And that included immediate successors to Occupy, including Occupy Homes, which spun off in Atlanta and Minnesota, I believe. Occupy Sandy, this massive mutual aid operation in New York after hurricane Sandy. Then something quite a bit about Strike Debts, Debt Jubilee, which ultimately, if I have it right, led to the Debt Collective. There was also Occupy the SEC whose comments helped shape the Volcker rule curbing bank leverage.

[00:58:42] **ASTRA TAYLOR:** Right. And the Occupy Sandy, it was a really powerful thing because it was also a kind of moment of redemption for Occupy. So it was 2012, universally praised by the New York Times, praised by the Department of Homeland Security, which wrote a report that was like, wow, this decentralized relief effort really works.

But it also has the interesting statistic that Occupy Sandy mobilized 60,000 volunteers. So these were the kinds of networks that were formed during

Occupy Wall Street and that were there to be activated. So that was interesting. Yeah.

And then, strike that began as a working group at Occupy, so once again, David Graeber, as I mentioned, he recruited me and he said, you know, Astra, there's this group forming. And for me, the insights really came directly out of my experiences at Zuccotti Park. I've told this story many times, but on my second or third day at Zuccotti Park, there was a young man and he was speaking in the voice of a carnival barker and he said, step right up and write down what you're worth to the 1%. He had these huge pieces of paper. And I had to take a breath in, walk around the park before I went to him and got in line and wrote my \$42,000 of student loans. Because I just hated facing that number. I had just defaulted on them. And this young woman behind me wrote down 120,000. And then these other people were writing their medical debt and their housing.

It was something people were really discussing and it was such a breakthrough because there was something so shrouded in shame up until that point. I had never been in public where we were all like, how much debt do you have? I guess I'll never own a house. Hey, me neither. I can't pay.

And, we went from, I can't pay it then going, like maybe we shouldn't pay. And so we began, as nerds do, we began researching the financial sector, really digging into theories of financialization, but through an organizing lens, like what would it take to organize around this, to build strategic power around this?

So it was actually at Occupy Wall Street in 2012, actually at Zuccotti Park, where the call for student debt cancellation was first raised. There was a big protest called One T Day. It was the day student debt surpassed \$1 trillion. It was organized by the Occupy Student Debt campaign. And someone who does not forget, and I remember that Reuters and NPR totally mocked this action and said, the government's never going to cancel that. And here we are in 2021. And in this year alone, thanks to the Debt Collective, which is the group I helped found that emerged out of this, Joe Biden has erased almost \$10 billion in student debt alone.

Now, has he met his full campaign promise? No. And we're still organizing to make him do that. But the fact is Joe Biden, Obama's vice-president and Mr. Former Senator of Delaware, the credit card capital of the world, the long-time friend of creditors campaigned on debt cancellation. And that would not happen without Occupy.

A response for Alyson from Boulder - Scott from Canada

[01:01:33] **VOICEMAILER: SCOTT FROM CANADA:** Hi Jay!, This is Scott from Canada.

I wanted to respond to Alyson from Boulder Colorado.

I agree that much of the moderate anti-choice rhetoric is sexist, or as Alyson puts it, "slut-shaming." Alyson points out how their assertions that abortion ought to be "safe, legal, and rare" is sexist; I would add that their concessions that abortions ought to be allowed in the case of rape are also sexist. Because if a woman is impregnated against her will, then it's not her fault she's pregnant.... not like those sluts that get knocked up having dirty, dirty consensual sex.

But I want to emphasise as well that a lot of the time, the work being done by those exact instances of rhetoric is also the demonstration of moderation. To be militant is distasteful in modern American politics; to be moderate is divine. And so, an unthinking person will seize an opportunity to signal their moderacy by parroting the "safe, legal and rare" line, or the "exceptions in the case of rape" angle.

I like to urge people to recognise the error they are making in embracing a moderate position on abortion. Really, a militant pro-choice position is the only moral position a person can make if they really consider every angle of this issue.

Summary 10-6-21

[01:02:44] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** We've just heard clips today, starting with *Economic Update* with Richard Wolff laying out some of the historical context of leftism in the hundred years leading up to Occupy. *The Dig* discussed how Occupy got started and the impact of online videos and live streaming, which were pretty new at the time. *Belabored* highlighted how occupied permanently changed the discussion on inequality in a marriage. *Economic Update* then looked at the foundational problems that helped spark Occupy. *The Dig* discussed the role of social media in the recent uprisings around the world. *Belabored* looked at some of the valid criticisms of the movement. And *Countdown* with Keith Olbermann from 2011, read the collective statement of the general assembly of Occupy Wall Street.

That's what everyone heard, but members also heard bonus clips from the *David Pakman Show* from 2011, in which David spoke with Glenn Greenwald, who I don't particularly endorse these days, explaining Occupy as part of the disillusionment from the first few Obama years. *The Majority Report* also in 2011, spoke with a writer who looked back to the populist movement of the 1880s. And *The Dig*, this year, described more of the lasting legacy of Occupy, including Joe Biden of all people campaigning on debt cancellation.

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And now, we'll hear from you.

Final comments on the ideological splits on the left dating back to Occupy Wall Street

[01:04:21] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Thanks to all those who called into the voicemail line or wrote in their messages to be played as VoicedMails. If you'd like to leave a comment or a question of your own to be played on the show, you can record a message at 202 999 3991, or write me a message to jay@bestoftheleft.com

Now, I do have more messages about 9/11 truth conspiracy theories and how to deal with them. I would love to get back to that today. I find it interesting in a, sort of, analysis kind of way, and, you know, dealing with misinformation and critical thinking. I love that. I'm going to have to put that off until another day, because I have something very time sensitive to deal with.

And it has to do with the three clips that members just heard. I will have played at least a little snippets for non-members. For context, because I had a bit of a revelation during the production of this episode, and I want to tell you about it, and it has to do with the... the ideological split on the left, and how I thought it played out, and how maybe I was wrong about the timeline and how, um, how it might've played out a little bit differently.

So, here here's my timeline that I have been using for awhile: I thought that by, approximately, the end of 2009, getting into 2010, progressive on the left were starting to feel pretty disappointed in Obama. And, you know, we gave him a lot of leeway, and... and we were excited about him when he came in, but he put a

lot of very bank-friendly people in his administration at the exact moment in time when we needed to be very unfriendly to banks.

That's, sort of, the shorthand. There... there might be a lot of other things to be either happy or unhappy with him for, but that was the big one. And so I thought, okay, like, there's this split on the left where a lot of people thought, "Hey, we got a Democrat in office. This is great. What's the problem?" And progressives like me who were like, "Whoa, boy, that got disappointing fast. That is too bad."

And then I thought, moving ahead several years, that there was a subsequent split on the left during the Bernie Sanders campaign in 2015 and 2016, when the "Bernie or Bust" crowd splintered off and started advocating that we not attempt to defeat Donald Trump if we couldn't do it with Bernie Sanders. And, sort of, making comparisons with Hillary Clinton being, essentially, just as bad as Trump, or arguing that it would actually be long-term good if the country fell under a Trump administration, because we'd all see how bad it was, et cetera. They've had all sorts of explanations.

So anyway, I thought that was another split on the left that happened. And so there's, sort of, these three branches, now, the, sort of, moderate liberals who are perfectly happy with people like Obama, would have been thrilled with Hillary Clinton, think Joe Biden is doing great; there's the progressives, this is the camp I fall into, who... unfortunately, I'm probably never going to be happy with anyone, ever, and I will take wins where I can get them, and we'll always push for more, that's kind of where I fall; and then there's this other splinter left, which is the, "The political system is so fundamentally broken, we're not going to get what we need using the political system."

And as I said, I thought that 2015-2016 was the real splinter point for that. But, as we all just heard, Glenn Greenwald, back in 2011, described disillusion with Obama as being the point at which people, in 2011, had already begun to think that the political system was beyond repair, if Obama wasn't going to be the one, then we needed to look elsewhere. Not at different politicians, necessarily. Elsewhere, in terms of different ways of working the political system.

And at the time, he was referring to things like Occupy. Which is great. This is an example of inside-outside politics; inside is the politicians, and lobbying, and trying to get bills passed; and outside is activism, and pressure, and campaigns-- not political campaigns, with politicians, but campaigns with activists, that sort of thing.

So, those go hand in hand. That is how politics is supposed to work. And so at the time, that didn't strike me as... as anything bad or wrong. But now, with the benefit of hindsight, I can see the beginning of that 2015-2016 splinter in what Glen is saying in 2011.

And that the Occupy mentality was the beginning of what became "Bernie Or Bust." Occupy, which I wholeheartedly endorse and enthusiastically championed at the time, and "Bernie Or Bust," which I thought was completely silly and childish from the first moment I heard it, and now five, six years later, I still can't wrap my mind around what those people thought they were going to get out of that campaign.

But then it gets even better, because then, in another clip that members heard in full, there was an interview with someone, again, back in 2011, talking about Occupy, but taking a huge broad scope of history, looking back to the 1880s, to the last major progressive movement, and talking about how that movement took 40 years to gain traction, to finally come to partial fruition in FDR's New Deal Era.

And the gap between these mentalities is so enormous, it makes me realize that the "Bernie or bust mentality," the, "Well, if Obama, in 2011, is already so disappointing, I am now convinced that if he wasn't going to be the one to fix it all, then there is no one who could ever fix it all. And the political mechanism is not the mechanism that we need to use to find solutions," that that mentality, which I have thought is pretty childish, I now even think is more so, with the benefit of this other vision of how progressive movements work, and the length of time that they take to come to fruition.

I mean, we are living in the pinnacle of the neoliberal movement, which has been underway for 40 years. This is how long movements take to come to fruition.

But then, when we get to our third bonus clip, it gets thrown into even starker relief when we're reminded that Joe Biden, of all people, was campaigning for president using ideas born out of Occupy Wall Street. That is how populist movements get their power: they infuse their ideas into society and they get implemented into the political system.

And no, it doesn't happen as fast as we would like for it to, it certainly didn't happen as fast okay. We would have liked it to back in the 1880s; it took all the way until the FDR administration. And no, it didn't happen as fast as we would have liked to, immediately after the crash, and the Great Recession, and Occupy

would have been very happy to have their policies implemented under the Obama administration.

And it didn't happen, but we've laid the groundwork and progress is being made. So here we are under a Biden administration. I was in no way excited about a Biden presidency. And yet, I can still see it as a sign of progress. And I think that what people might have a problem understanding is that what I'm saying is not "Be patient." Be patient is terrible. Don't be patient. Don't think that what I'm saying is "Things move along at their own pace and you just need to wait for it." I am not saying that.

Be impatient, be eternally impatient; but also have perspective. Understand realistically how long things take, and be impatient all along the way, recognizing that it is your impatience that helps move that along faster, as long as it may take anyway.

As always keep the comments coming in at 202 999 3991, or by emailing me to jay@bestoftheleft.com. That's going to be it for today. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show and participation in our bonus episodes.

Thanks to the Monosyllabic Transcriptionist Trio, Ben, Ken, and Scott for their volunteer work, helping put our transcripts together. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets, activism segments, graphic designing, web mastering, and bonus show coshosting.

And thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing a gift membership at bestoftheleft.com/support, or from right inside the Apple podcast app. Membership is how you get instant access to our incredibly good bonus episodes, in addition, to there being extra content and no ads in all of our regular episodes.

For instance, today, you would have heard the full clips from David Pakman and Glenn Greenwald and The Majority Report and all of that, that we discussed.

For details on the show itself, including links to all of the sources and music used in this and every episode, all that information can always be found in the show notes on our website and likely right on the device, you're using the lesson.

So coming to you from far outside the conventional wisdom of Washington, DC, my name is Jay, and this has been the Best of the Left podcast coming to you twice weekly thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from bestoftheleft.Com.