

# SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER: THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT HAS ALREADY WON

A UFCW Canada Human Rights Department Release

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Ottawa (15 Nov. 2011) - The response of the mainstream media, business class and political establishment to the Occupy movement has been dismissive, patronizing and hostile.

It's sad. But it's predictable. And it's been the story of successful progressive movements for the last hundred years. A powerful elite have been treating our

democracy and economy as their own private playground and everyone else and the public interest with contempt.

Some of us have been highlighting the problem for a while. Finally, something clicked. And the Occupy movement sprung up around the world.

There isn't a specific policy demand or political strategy. That's not what the movement is about. It's on a moral mission.

The economic and political system today is rigged against ordinary people who work hard and play by the rules.

It's this moral failure the movement is talking about. They've brought two essential things to the table: passion and people.

Change starts with evoking visceral emotions about what is fair and unfair – not armies of actuaries, squads of statisticians and detailed policy prescriptions. The Occupy movement is forcing people to think hard about a moral issue: do you think the current system is fair or unfair for the vast majority of people?

Change also requires boots on the ground. People need to stand up and fight for what they believe in – as if the cause depends on every one of them showing up, because it really does.

These things have made the movement a game-changer. No matter what happens from this point forward the movement has already won.

Recent polling by Nanos Research shows a majority of Canadians believe the point the movement is making is very valid.

It has altered the political debate. It has shifted the discussion in the media. And it has changed the conversations on loading docks and around the water cooler.

The issues of economic and social equality – issues ignored by the powerful for a generation – are front and center once again.

This is a huge victory for the movement. And it follows the best traditions of successful progressive movements.

All the major progressive movements that changed our society (e.g. the union movement, civil rights movement, peace movement, gay rights movement, and environmental movement) have followed the same model.

They started with a small group of people highlighting a moral question. They brought energy and passion. They believed in each other and put themselves on the frontlines.

And they succeeded only after long struggles and in the face of bitter opposition and sneering attacks from the powerful and privileged.

The Occupy movement is here to stay. It will morph into something else. But it's not going away until there are serious reforms to our economy and democracy.

It all reminds me of the old saying: "First they ignore you. Then they ridicule you. Then they fight you. Then you win."