

To our kindred occupiers in Zuccotti park,

When we called out to you, requesting you join us on 12 November in defending our revolution and in our campaign against the military trial of civilians in Egypt, your solidarity—pictures from marches, videos, and statements of support—added to our strength.

However, we recently received news that your General Assembly passed a proposal authorizing \$29,000 dollars to send twenty of your number to Egypt as election monitors. Truth be told, the news rather shocked us; we spent the better part of the day simply trying to figure out who could have asked for such assistance on our behalf.

We have some concerns with the idea, and we wanted to join your conversation.

It seems to us that you have taken to the streets and occupied your parks and cities out of a dissatisfaction with the false promises of the game of electoral politics, and so did our comrades in Spain, Greece and Britain. Regardless of how one stands on the efficacy of elections or elected representatives, the Occupy movement seems outside the scope of this; your choice to occupy is, if nothing else, bigger than any election. Why then, should our elections be any cause for celebration, when even in the best of all possible worlds they will be just another supposedly “representative” body ruling in the interest of the 1% over the remaining 99% of us? This new Egyptian parliament will have effectively no powers whatsoever, and—as many of us see it—its election is just a means of legitimating the ruling junta’s seizure of the revolutionary process. Is this something you wish to monitor?

We have, all of us around the world, been learning new ways to represent ourselves, to speak, to live our politics directly and immediately, and in Egypt we did not set out to the streets in revolution simply to gain a parliament. Our struggle—which we think we share with you—is greater and grander than a neatly functioning parliamentary democracy; we demanded the fall of the regime, we demanded dignity, freedom and social justice, and we are still fighting for these goals. We do not see elections of a puppet parliament as the means to achieve them.

But even though the idea of election monitoring doesn’t really do it for us, *we want your solidarity, we want your support and your visits.* We want to know you, talk with you, learn one another’s lessons, compare strategies and share plans for the future. We think that activists or as people committed to serious change in the systems we live in, there is so much more that we can do together than legitimizing electoral processes (leave that boring job to the Carter Foundation) that seem so impoverished next to the new forms of democracy and social life we are building. It should be neither our job nor our desire to play the game of elections; we are occupying and we should build our spaces and our networks because they themselves are the basis on which we will build the new. Let us deepen our lines of communication and process and discover out what these new ways of working together and supporting one another could be.

Any time you do want to come over, we’ve got plenty of comfy couches available. It won’t be fancy, but it will be fun.

Yours, as always, in solidarity,

Comrades from Cairo
13 November, 2011

P.S. We finally got an email address: comradesfromcairo@gmail.com