



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on March 10, 2011

Zeitgeist and the Venus Project

The Zeitgeist Movement has already attracted a large following, claimed to be over a half a million people so far — worldwide. Numerous Facebook groups — one with more than 70,000 people, another with more than 35,000, and still one more with almost 20,000 — transmit instructions and ideas to the activists around the globe. Various local and national groups have memberships in the thousands, using social-networking services to coordinate their campaigns and events.



It is led by a man who calls himself Peter Joseph. He refuses to release his last name, citing privacy concerns about his family and friends. Regardless of his true identity, he has made certain statements that have caused great concern amongst various groups. For example, in one video posted online, Joseph called people who bear children “self-serving,” saying they don’t care about the “carrying capacity of the Earth.” When things get really bad, he said, “I might not be against governments imposing one-child policies.”

The worries of some aside, today he is a truly famous man. His first video reportedly received 100 million views in just its first year. The *New York Times* published a glowing article about a “Z-Day” event Joseph hosted in New York, offering not one critical word about any of the ideas presented by Joseph — or his mentor, Fresco. One of Joseph’s movies won an “Artist” award at a prominent film festival backed by the United Nations.

His first “documentary,” called *Zeitgeist: the Movie*, exploded into the Internet-video world in 2007, and has garnered, according to Joseph, some 200 million views to date. Divided into three parts, each one with a separate focus, the film uses a mixture of truth and dubious “facts” to reach some astounding conclusions.

The first part claims Jesus Christ did not exist, referring to Christianity as “the fraud of the age.” Drawing heavily on the work of “theosophy” luminaries, Joseph, as the film’s narrator, claims Christ is a representation of the sun and that Christianity is essentially a hodgepodge of ancient religious myths. Jesus’ apostles, according to the film, were “symbolism” representing the 12 signs of the Zodiac.

The second part of the film deals with the Federal Reserve System and the debt-based money system it oversees. This portion actually does a good job explaining some of the problems in the current monetary system, making it simple to understand even for someone with no background in economics.



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Finally, the third section claims — citing first responders, initial media reports, and a variety of experts — that the terror attacks of September 11 were orchestrated by elements of the U.S. government at the behest of the international elite.

Zeitgeist: the Movie laid the foundation for the success of Joseph's second film, *Zeitgeist: Addendum*. That "documentary" goes into more depth on currency and monetary-system issues, making an excellent case yet again that the existing debt-money fraud is dangerous and harmful. However, the film then proceeds to call for abolishing money entirely, not simply reforming the system or introducing sound money. Jacque Fresco's Venus Project is portrayed as the solution to the world's problems. The "Zeitgeist Movement" then officially becomes what Joseph and Fresco refer to as the "activist arm" of the Venus Project.

Finally, a third film was released in late January entitled *Zeitgeist: Moving Forward*. It describes in more detail the exact vision of the Venus Project and its "Resource Based Economy." It also features a parade of "experts" — mostly academics — touting the supposed benefits of collectivism and the purported evils of private property, profit, and free markets. Using a barrage of pseudo-intellectual terms such as "Unified Dynamically Updated Global Management Machine," the movie essentially concludes that Fresco's vision is the only way to move forward. It ends with the statement, "The revolution is now."

The long-term goals are to abolish money — all forms of money — entirely, collectivize all of the Earth's resources under a global management system, and relocate the Earth's population into planned communities. Robots and machines would provide for every human need, the movement claims. The promises are similar to those made by tyrants of all varieties throughout the centuries, only bigger: There would supposedly be no more war, no more exploitation, no more starvation, no more crime, no more poverty, and no more problems. Or so the narrative goes.

Arizona Tragedy Connection?

The movement and its movies burst into the headlines recently after the Tucson shooting. Apparently, accused murderer Jared Loughner was a big fan of the movement's films.

"I really think that this *Zeitgeist* documentary had a profound impact upon Jared Loughner's mindset and how he viewed the world that he lives in," Loughner's friend Zach Osler told ABC News, noting that the 22-year-old shooter didn't watch TV or listen to the radio.

Osler's allegation catapulted the *Zeitgeist* Movement, and the Venus Project by extension, into the media spotlight. Commentators on the political Left tried to pin *Zeitgeist*'s anti-money, anti-market, and anti-religion films on the political Right, while right-leaning commentators claimed it should clearly be associated with the Left.

In defense of the movies, Peter Joseph responded: "Make no mistake: The social system is to blame for the rampage of Jared Loughner — not some famous online documentary, which is known as the most viewed documentary of all time in Internet history." He added: "Are the other 200 million people who have seen the film also preparing for murder sprees? I think not."

Joseph is undoubtedly correct that his "200 million" viewers won't go on rampages because of watching the film, but he fails to recognize that it would also be safe to assume that the six billion people living in "the social system" that he blames for the rampage probably are not going to begin blasting away with bullets either. Perhaps the irony of assigning collective blame in response to allegations of collective blame eluded him. But it is very indicative of the movement's collectivist mindset, which permeates



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every facet of its push for a global collectivist regime.

The Venus Project

Headquartered on a 20-something-acre “Research Center” in Venus, Florida, the Venus Project is the brainchild of 94-year-old Jacque Fresco, a friendly and witty industrial designer and “social engineer” who, along with his younger partner Roxanne Meadows, claims all of the world’s problems could be solved using the scientific method.

In the “sustainable new world civilization,” Fresco notes in an online video that “there will be no families.” Plus, “children are a pain in the [rear end]” anyway, he said. Overpopulation and global warming, among other things, “threaten each of us,” the organization claims on its website.

“[The Venus Project] calls for a straightforward redesign of our culture,” the site notes in its frequently-asked-questions section. “It envisions a time in the near future when money, politics, self- and national-interest have been phased out.” To solve the problems, “we must declare Earth and all of its resources the common heritage of all of the world’s people,” it concludes, echoing the terminology of internationalists the world over, especially those at the United Nations, about how to redistribute the world’s wealth in areas such as the law of the sea, outer space law, environmental law, human rights, and humanitarian law.

Eventually, government would be abolished, the project claims. But during the transition from a money-based system to the so-called “resource-based economy,” a team of specialists would be needed. “Their job will be to carry out the restoration of the environment to near natural conditions as possible on land and in the sea,” the webpage explains. “They will also economically layout the most efficient way to manage transportation, agriculture, city planning, and production.” (In other words, specifics are lacking, but it caters to ultra-environmentalists, technophiles, atheists, and other segments of liberal ideology.)

And while the ideas might sound far-fetched to critics, the duo has had some interesting audiences for their speeches. In the ’70s, Fresco was a guest of Larry King. More recently, a Florida Fox News affiliate called him a “very brilliant man” who knew what the future looked like because he was “designing” it. Fresco and Meadows also spoke at a conference recently put on by Mikhail Gorbachev’s globalist “Green Cross International” foundation, and at another in the Queen Beatrix Palace in the Netherlands for the 10th anniversary of the United Nations “Earth Charter.”

Leader Jacque Fresco Goes on Tour

The New American had an opportunity to spend the day with Fresco and his partner during the project’s 28-country “World Tour” stop in Stockholm, Sweden. The event attended by this correspondent, one of two in the Scandinavian capital, filled a good-sized presentation room in an expensive downtown hotel. Estimates on the number of people in attendance just that night ranged from 200 to 300, each of whom paid the equivalent of about \$30 in Swedish money.

Present were older men in suits, young hippies in goofy hats, many people wearing Zeitgeist t-shirts, ragamuffins with oddly colored hair, and generally what felt like a microcosm of Swedish society: teachers, students, factory workers, professors, clerks, and the unemployed.

After a presentation lasting more than an hour that introduced the main points of the project — abolishing money, having robots build futuristic new cities, advocating the notion that people are entirely a product of their environment, attacking religion and national sovereignty, explaining some of



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the logistics, and more — it was time for the question-and-answer session. Most of the people who raised their hands and spoke were wondering what they could do to advance the mission.

One woman, for example, suggested introducing the Venus Project as part of government-school curricula, to which Meadows responded that some countries already had. Another asked if vegetarianism wouldn't be a better route for the new society. Fresco replied that a cucumber was six times more sensitive to pain than humans, but that veggies were indeed more environmentally friendly. A younger gentleman wondered how the rich could be persuaded to give up their property. Another demanded to know what the transition away from the monetary system would look like, and how its arrival could be hastened. A Greek man asked if the Venus Project would create a new international language based on science, perhaps unaware that just such a language — known as Esperanto — was created in 1887.

During the Q&A session, Fresco gave as an example of his past success in this realm his experiences helping the communist Cuban regime put technology to better use. His partner admitted that some people in a new system would still be “required to work” — the numbers would “vary” but it would decrease over time.

After the event, throngs of enthusiastic supporters rushed to the front of the auditorium. Everybody, it seemed, had more questions. Eventually it got late, and the organizers shuffled Fresco and Meadows out the door. The crowd, however, remained, excitedly gesturing and chatting about the future world they envisioned. The next day, The New American joined Fresco and his partner for an in-depth interview at their hotel.

Fresco Speaks to TNA

In the interview, when asked about his inspiration for the Venus Project, Fresco admitted that at a young age he was attracted to the communist movement in America. The Communist and Socialist Parties, he said, taught him about the debt-money scam — in a nutshell, the scam works by creating all “money” as debt with interest attached, making it ultimately impossible to pay off because more money is owed than has been created. But unlike most of the people at party meetings, he asked a lot of questions. Realizing that the leaders didn't actually have answers to problems like how millions of people would be housed, or how corruption would be prevented under communism and socialism, Fresco proposed the creation of a “technical branch” of the Communist Party. “They said: ‘You're deviating from the teachings of Marx,’” he recalled. “I said: ‘I don't mean any harm’ ... and they said, ‘You'll have to leave.’”

No worries though, Fresco said, communism and socialism weren't “radical enough” anyway. Eventually he linked up with a group advocating rule-by-technical-experts known as a Technocracy. He eventually left them, too, after becoming disillusioned with their alleged racism. “When I resigned, I tried to design a new social system that took care of everybody all over the world,” Fresco said. And that was the start of what would eventually become the Venus Project.

Finally, in 1971, Fresco incorporated a predecessor of the Venus Project called Sociocyberneering to advance the ideas he had been working on for decades. Then came the Venus Project itself, starting off with the piece of land north of Miami where the endeavor is still headquartered today. Some 10 futuristic-looking structures dot the acreage, containing everything from models of future cities to work areas.

The System



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The entire system is based on, to put it bluntly, brainwashing the entire populace of the world to adhere to Fresco's notions of what science "requires." Critics have said his ideas are reminiscent of the push by Mao to re-educate China's populace with his Little Red Book and efforts by Lenin and Pol Pot to influence their populations — except Fresco believes he can coerce the world without force.

Prior to opening Sociocyberneering, to test the theories he was coming up with, Fresco says he decided to join the Ku Klux Klan to see if he could change them. "I worked on the [local] leader *only*," he said. After a long time trying to explain to the KKK boss that humans were a product of their environment, Fresco said, "gradually I turned them around and dissolved that organization." Meadows chimed in to add that Fresco had also succeeded in turning drug and alcohol users away from substance abuse as well.

Put in practice on a mass scale, computer programs designed by technical experts would determine policies, such as how many people should be on the Earth. Then, the masses would be convinced to act in such a way as to accomplish the population goal — or whatever other goal might have been set. The population would be kept down to "sustainable levels" prescribed by resource surveys through the use of "education," according to Fresco. "Schools and television [would] show a story called 'Dynamic Equilibrium in Nature,'" he said. Using foxes and rabbits, for example, children would be taught that if the population grows too much, everybody would suffer. "You can't have more people than the Earth can support, so all schools [would] teach dynamic equilibrium." Most people would see the sense in that and limit their procreation, he said.

The educational system required for such an undertaking, however, would be radically different from today's schools, he claimed. A controversial video posted online explains his planned methodology: "You're taught in school that everybody should have a right to their own opinion — *never* give people the right to their own opinion." In fact, Fresco emphasizes that idea a lot in regard to education. But his followers don't seem perturbed in the slightest, perhaps because even now schools' penchant for preaching individualism doesn't translate into actions — schools are intolerant of non-politically correct viewpoints, especially religious views — and so Fresco's seeming giant push would really only be a little nudge.

At his lecture in Sweden, in response to a question from this correspondent about what would guide production in the absence of prices, Fresco said it again, referring to the act of thinking as a privilege. "If you give everybody a right to their own opinion, you damage society," he claimed. In the interview with *The New American*, he emphasized the point yet again. "Giving everybody a right to their own opinion is dangerous," he said, adding that in the future, people could access all sorts of information, but not opinions.

So, in the new world's schools, children would be raised with certain values — not opinions. "The kids would be brought up to understand how we relate to forests," Fresco said, noting that they would be raised in "the science of behavior." He insists that human nature is malleable, saying people cannot be "good" or "bad" — it just depends on how they were raised. "Human beings never do anything wrong; they do what they know," he insisted, citing head-shrinking tribes and Nazis who became that way through their environment. (He overlooks the fact that many children in school have been conditioned with behavioral socialization techniques, such as those developed by B.F. Skinner, since early in the twentieth century, and human concern for others' welfare is rapidly becoming an afterthought, not a guiding principle.)

"When you run into a person who says, 'You'll never be able to control human nature,' do you think



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they've worked on it for 40 years? No. They know nothing about it. But you lost them in school by giving them the right to their own opinion," Fresco said. In addition to schools, children would be trained and "modified" at summer camps to reject the "old value systems" of their parents, he added.

As for religion, that too would be changed through the educational system, though not banned per se. "If you try to stop religion, it will go underground," Fresco acknowledged. "You can't stop it. You can educate people out of it, but you do that by means of soap operas. We would still run soap operas.... Every soap opera is a device for turning people around," he said. Movies would play a role as well. "[Religion] would be educated out through motion pictures," Fresco said. (Again, already happening.)

Meadows also jumped in, saying: "You re-educate people to have different value systems." Speaking about sexual relations and mores, she said the Venus Project would stop "imposing" an "ethical morality system." Everybody would have all the sex they wanted, she said. "You'll have access to marijuana if you want it," Meadows noted, "because nothing is banned, otherwise it goes underground."

Fresco obviously has a special disdain for Christianity, telling a story about how a minister beat him once for asking a question about rain. He called himself an atheist, adding that he became that way after reading the Bible and "realizing" Noah would have had big problems with animal excrement on the ark. Plus, he said, "I've never met a Christian yet," at least not one who lived up to the ideals expressed in the Bible.

How would resources be seized from their current owners? Getting a direct answer proved to be impossible. Fresco spoke of crises, Nazis, Charles Lindbergh, and President Roosevelt's takeover of industries during World War II. But he never explained precisely how resources would be expropriated. Should owners be compensated? He said on the subject, "Socialists believe that... that people should be compensated for their factories that the government takes over." (Again, not a direct answer, but since money would be abolished, any compensation would seem to be of little use in the Venus Project.) The key to seizing goods, it sounds like, is to wait for an economic collapse of epic proportions. Then, property owners will voluntarily surrender their factories and resources for the greater good, Fresco said.

After asking several times how the world's collectivized resources would be turned into useful products and allocated properly without a pricing mechanism, he finally offered something of a response. "There's a group in the Venus Project called the Survey Committee. They do a survey of the land, and they tell how many acres of arable land ... you have. How much water is there on that land? That tells us how big the city has to be," he said. "Fresco does no decision making. The Survey Committee tells me how many people each area can support, and how many people the Earth can support." The same thing would be true at the global level, he said.

Meadows re-emphasized a point that is central to the argument: The current system, in her eyes, doesn't work well. "The monetary system rations how we distribute resources in a terrible way," she said. In fact, "The whole market system is a waste of energy," she added, citing advertising and everyone having their own lawns and lawnmowers as examples.

But without the monetary system and markets, who would make decisions? "Nobody makes decisions in the Venus Project, they arrive at them," Fresco said. For example, a soil sample would go to "Central Agriculture," which would analyze it, and make a determination as to what the best crop to grow in that soil would be. "We intend to use surveys to arrive at decisions rather than make decisions," Fresco said.

The "Planning Committee" would then decide where factories would be built, how many were needed,



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and what they would produce. Hospitals would be allocated based on a survey of the diseased population in the area.

Despite the apparent similarities to communism, Fresco insisted repeatedly that the system should not be referred to as central planning. As an analogy to rule by computer programs, Fresco pointed to radar systems on airplanes. Machines, far more accurate than humans, would tell people the facts. (But conclusions by machines are only as good as the data fed into them — garbage in, garbage out — and there is no way any government or “committee” can possibly keep track of and compute all necessary variables needed to make decisions in a sizeable economy, as was demonstrated by Cuba, the Soviet Union, etc.)

Fresco agreed that scarcity in *everything*— private jets, for example — could never be abolished. His solution, in the absence of prices and considering the fact of potentially limitless demand: no ownership, just access. As an example, he cited cars sitting unproductively outside of factories for eight hours. Essentially, everyone could use whichever one they wanted, but would have to return it to a central distribution point after they were done so others could use it as well.

He also compared Earth to a cruise liner that needs to be planned and stocked for just the right number of passengers. “We have to maintain a population and city size in coordination — perfect coordination — with the carrying capacity of the Earth,” he said, adding that the world couldn’t support four billion people “well.” (There are more than six billion people alive today.)

Countless critics have drawn parallels between Fresco’s vision and totalitarian systems that have wreaked havoc and death in the past such as communism, socialism, Marxism, and fascism. But Fresco rejects those comparisons. The difference, he said, is that the Venus Project would not have armies, navies, banks, governments, or pledges of allegiance. “You pledge allegiance to the Earth when you join the Venus Project,” he said.

Among other differences, the Venus Project “doesn’t want to kill anybody, doesn’t want to hurt anybody. It’s not that kind of organization,” Fresco said. “Hollywood makes all planned colonies look like a dictatorship of the technicians,” and that is simply not the case for the Venus Project, Fresco said. Critics, he added, have invented “all kinds of lies” about him, for example that he was being bankrolled by the mafia, the Vatican, or the Rothschild family.

In videos posted online, however, more similarities between the Venus Project and various sorts of tyranny become even more apparent. In one speech, Fresco informs the audience that everybody’s location would be tracked by satellite. But not to worry, he said, “It’s not Big Brother watching you.... It’s for your own good.” In another, he expresses hope that humanity will become a “modified species” through biotechnology.

The plan, in its entirety, overlooks the most obvious of all roadblocks to its implementation: human nature (and the lack of “thinking” robotic slaves). No matter the brainwashing done, self-interest will reduce any such plan to failure, as it has when implemented by the plan’s kissing cousins — socialism and communism — for generations. But also because of the nature of human nature, don’t expect this plan to go away soon.

Graphic: Jacque Fresco



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