

Occupy and “The American Spring”

A Time for Occupy To Blossom?

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National Occupation of Washington, DC Will Bring Occupiers Together to Share Experiences, Educate Each Other and Build an Independent Movement to Shift Power from Concentrated Wealth

By Many in the corporate media like to think the Occupy is over, but those of us involved know better. We do not rely on the corporate media to validate the work of Occupy, we see it in our communities. And, we know to look to our own media for accurate information. The [Occupied Wall Street Journal](#) reports on the actions of the Occupy, it's weekly [“Reports from the Front Lines”](#) is something many of us look forward to so we can see the movement taking action across the country.

Another visible presence of Occupy will be evident this spring in Washington, DC when [the National Occupation of Washington, DC](#) begins on March 30th. The event, which will continue through the month of April, is being organized by members of dozens of occupiers from around the country. Twenty-five General Assemblies have passed statements of solidarity for this national occupy event.

NOW DC begins with [a lot of activity](#). On the first day, [Occupy the EPA](#), will bring people together to protect the planet for a sustainable future. It will feature Helen Caldicott, a pediatrician nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, known for her anti-nuclear activism, Dr. Marsha Coleman-Adebayo an EPA whistleblower and Margaret Flowers, also a pediatrician, noted for her advocacy for single payer health care among others. The march will include a pack of alpaca's, a giant Earth and a giant polar bear puppet.

The weekend of March 31st and April 1st includes a two day “Bail Out America” direct action training organized by [the Backbone Campaign](#) which will provide information on strategies and tactics and developing creative actions that advance the causes of Occupy. Also that weekend will be the [Occupation of the Department of Education](#), which will include teach-ins about how to end high stakes testing which is destroying schools and being used as a tool to privatize education. Finally, that weekend will include trainings for peace keepers who will help to ensure NOW DC remains non-violent in its challenges to the Washington, DC power structure.

While the first two weeks will primarily focus on the [NOW DC Social Forum](#), there will be a housing protest on Monday, April 2nd seeking to reduce mortgages so they reflect the real value of housing, not housing bubble mortgages and a protest focused on student debt on April 3rd.

The first education event will be an all-day strategy conference “[Control the Corporation](#)” organized by the Center for the Study of Responsive Law which will feature experienced anti-corporate power crusaders speaking on countering the impact of corporations in elections, holding corporations accountable for their crimes, creating alternative economic models that provide jobs and increase wages, protecting the “commons” from the insatiable advocates of privatization, occupying the future and mobilizing for action.

The remainder of the week from April 3 to 5 and continuing on April 10 to 14 will be the [NOW DC Social Forum](#). In-between those dates, there will be activities focused on spirituality, religion and activism to recognize the Passover, Ramadan and Easter holidays. The Social Forum will bring occupiers together to learn from each other and will be held at the historic [Friends Meeting House](#) on Florida Avenue near Dupont Circle. Occupiers from across the country have developed workshops on policies and strategies to shift power from the 1% to 99%, lessons and the way forward for Occupy, direct action tactics and strategies, models for building alternative systems, occupy and labor and occupy faith.

On April 14th and 15th Occupy will celebrate at the OccuFest a music, arts and political free speech event that will be held at Meridian Hill Park, also known as Malcolm X Park, on 16th Street, NW in DC’s Columbia Heights. Musicians are being brought together by occupiers from across the country as well as by [Occupy for Music](#). There will be an occupy speak-out, spoken word, comedy, arts and politics also at the event.

The second half of the month will be primarily focused on protests, marches and civil resistance against the power structure in Washington, DC. This will not be limited to Congress but will include the corporate powers and lobbyists who dominate the government. On April 17th Occupy Congress is organizing “A17,” to protest Congress for consistently putting the interests of the 1% ahead of the people. Also planned is Occupy the Department of Justice on April 24th, which will protest mass incarceration, political prisoners, privatization of prisons and highlight the case of Mumia Al Jamal whose 57th birthday is the day of the protest.

Education will continue throughout the month with regular movie showings and educational events on or near Franklin Square Park, the center of NOW DC. In addition, on April 28th, occupiers are encouraged to participate in the [Drone Summit: Killing and Spying by Remove Control](#) sponsored by CODE PINK, the Center for Constitutional Rights and Reprieve being held at the Mt. Vernon Place United Methodist Church. This will be followed by a strategy session on April 29th on how to deal with this new form of warfare.

The goals of NOW DC are to elevate the skills, cohesion and vision of occupiers. People will be able to bring back new ideas, skills, strategies and tactics to their local Occupy. During the month of NOW DC conversations will be held to discuss next steps for the Occupy – where do we go from here?

The reality is, not only is the Occupy ongoing but it is just getting started. It is escalating its activities, building its skills and the best days of the movement to end the rule of the 1% are ahead of us.

Kevin Zeese was one of the original organizers of the [Occupation of Washington, DC/October 2011](#) and is an organizer with the [National Occupation of Washington, DC](#).

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