

“Occupy”: Unity Will Increase Our Power

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Region: [USA](#)

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Occupy

Getting to the Next Level of Constructing a New Society Requires a Common Vision, Strategy and Unity

Once again the [corporate mass media got the story wrong](#). Headlines across the country claimed that occupiers in New York came from households with incomes of over \$100,000. The movement writer for [The Nation](#), Allison Kilkenny, interviewed one of the researchers who points out that a lot of these were young people earning under \$15,000 per year who were still in school and living with their parents.

The most important takeaway lesson from the researcher’s point of view:



“The takeaway for me is that this is part of an arch of social movement activity that built on previous work, and is building into continuing work.”

That struck us because we are working with political activists and occupiers across the country to develop a strategy to reach a more effective level of advocacy for transformation to a peaceful, just and sustainable society.

An article from [Yes! Magazine](#), [Occupy 2.0: The Great Turning](#), resonated with us pointing out that there are thousands of people working in movements around the world and that uniting them would create an unstoppable force. How do we unite in a way where we keep the diversity of multiple movements but still work together in solidarity? The answer in part is a common vision and strategic framework. The author, Michael Nagler of the Metta Center, puts forward a strategy they have been developing which they call “The Roadmap.” (The article links to a webinar on this approach.)



Their approach recommends a two track strategy similar to one we have emphasized from the beginning, [Stop the Machine, Create a New World](#); or a resistance program of direct action and a constructive program of building what we want. This approach dates back to Gandhi and has been used in many transformative movements. [In an article about the hidden history of economic democracy](#) and how it relates to major social transformations throughout U.S. history, we summarized these two tracks by writing:

"History reinforces the idea that to achieve transformational change, we must proceed on twin tracks: protesting and building. Mahatma Gandhi changed his emphasis in the mid-1930s, a dozen years before independence from the British Empire, to work focused on building economically self-reliant communities from below (sardovaya, or social uplift for all). This became an adjunct to the strategy he is most known for, satyagraha (noncooperation and civil disobedience to unjust laws). Gandhian economics meant thousands of self-sufficient small communities with self-rule and the need for economic self-sufficiency at the village level joined together in a cooperative federation of village republics. This is bookended by the Gandhian social ideal of dignity of labor, equitable distribution of wealth, communal self-sufficiency and individual freedom."

There is incredible work going on throughout the United States on both these tracks. [Economic democracy is gaining a foothold](#) in the U.S. putting in place the kind of economy we want. And resistance continues to grow. In the last ten days we have reported on the following protests:

- [A Tar Sands Blockader Disrupting an Oil and Gas Pipeline Conference](#)
- [An Occupy Offshoot Protesting Bag Searches in Boston on Their Subway](#)
- [Navajo, Appalachians, Veterans, and St. Louis Residents Confront Peabody Coal](#)
- [Plans by Occupy the Economy to Protest at Corporate Headquarters in May](#)
- [Hundreds of Mine Workers Protesting Peabody Coals Theft of Their Pensions](#)
- [Protesters Demanding Trauma Center on the Southside of Chicago](#)
- [Parents and Students Protesting the Closing of Schools in Philadelphia](#)
- [Occupy Albany Protesting Corporate Food](#)
- [Protests at the Inauguration](#), and [here](#)
- [Anonymous Avenging the Death of Aaron Swartz Death by Taking Over the US Sentencing Commission Website](#)
- [More Than 1,000 People Protesting Pipelines in Maine Despite Freezing Cold Weather](#)
- [Utah Climate Activists Infiltrating an Energy Summit](#)
- [OWS Fighting Back Against NY Post Lies](#)
- [Occupy Portland Marching on the County Building, Demanding Sheriff Cease Evictions](#)
- [Occupy Light Brigade Joining With Idle No More for Water Security and Recognition of Native Treaties](#)
- [An Activist Disrupting the Kerry Nomination Hearing, Demands End to Military](#)

[Aid to Israel](#)

That is just in the past ten days! And, we have no doubt we are not reporting anywhere near all the protests that are occurring. As we found out when we were organizing the Occupation of Washington, DC at Freedom Plaza, [Americans have been in revolt for a long time](#), the media just does not report it.



For a while Occupy brought a lot of movements together under the broad anti-Wall Street goal of economic fairness and justice; that was one reason the movement was not ignored. But now greater solidarity is needed, in order to show that there is a mass movement that people should be part of, a movement that can succeed in shifting power from concentrated wealth to the people.

One thing needed to bring the movement for social justice to the next level is unity. It will take many working together to achieve effective solidarity. At [OccupyWashingtonDC/Ocober2011](#), we are considering what we can do to advance solidarity. We ask for your thoughts, write us at info@octobr2011.org. Of course, unity is not all that is needed, but it is one step.

In the meantime, realize that Americans are awakening and taking action. Whether they are helping to build cooperatives, community or public banks, community-supported agriculture and farmers markets or other more democratic economic institutions; or whether they are protesting the mistaken direction of the U.S. economy and government – a lot of good work is being done and we should rejoice that so many are working to create a new world.

Some upcoming events:

- February 6, 2013: Flood the NY Federal Courthouse on in opposition to the NDAA, see [here](#) and [here](#).
- February 9, 2013: Anti-Drone Protest at the CIA Headquarters, [information here](#)

Activities that are asking for support:

- The Rolling Jubilee continues to eradicate debt, get involved! Click [here for information](#).
- Occupy Sandy in New York and New Jersey continues to clean up and help people get their lives back. Click [here for information](#) and [here](#).

This article is a modified version of a weekly newsletter that covers activities in Occupy and other political movements. You can [sign up to receive the newsletter here](#).

Kevin Zeese and Margaret Flowers were both organizers of the [Occupation of Washington, DC](#) at Freedom Plaza, co-direct [It's Our Economy](#) which works for economic democracy and co-host [Clearing the FOG radio](#) and [television](#).

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