

Popular Resistance and Protest Movements across America

While Media Looks for Encampments, Occupy Helps Build the Popular Resistance

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Yesterday, a media outlet contacted us to be on a show about how Occupy had “fizzled coming into this year’s May 1.” The media keeps looking for encampments or last year’s protests and is missing how popular resistance is growing and demonstrating all over the country.

This year there were actions in many cities on May Day. On [Occupy Washington, DC](#) we have reports from [New York, NY](#), [Denver, CO](#), [Portland, OR](#) and [Richmond, VA](#) as a few examples among many.

[Allison Kilkenny, the movement writer for the Nation](#), got it right when she wrote, “Now is actually the time when the most exciting grassroots workers’ actions are taking place.” She points to the [low-wage worker](#), [fast food](#) and [non-unionized](#) workers actions as examples. As you will see in this weekly report there are many more examples of the growing popular resistance.

Kilkenny also points out that the FBI counter-terrorism unit in Washington State remains concerned and was interviewing activists about their plans for May Day. In the end, in Seattle, there was a mass peaceful march on immigration and an anti-capitalist march [marred by police violence and property destruction](#).

While a single day action can show breadth of support, we prefer campaigns to single day actions like May Day, because a campaign has the time to build, educate and energize more people. Here is news about a few recent campaigns:

The [month long protests against drones](#) ended with actions on both coasts. At the Hancock Air National Guard Base in Syracuse, NY, the Upstate Coalition Against Drones organized a banner drop, conference, rally and mass protest. Bruce Gagnon, an antiwar activist who [works to keep weapons out of space](#) and serves as the [Green Shadow Cabinet](#)’s Secretary of Space, wrote [a thorough summary](#) of all of the events, and we added photos and a video of the banner drop. Bruce was one of the 31 arrested at Hancock who participated in a die-in after reading the names of victims of drones. And, at Beale Air Force Base in California, [protesters closed the base](#) for hours resulting in long lines of cars waiting to get in. Five people were arrested.

The [month-long protests against the Guantanamo prison](#), done in solidarity with the hunger strike at the prison, have raised awareness of the abusive detention without charges. They forced President Obama to address the issue, saying he would try again to close the prison

(of course, under the law he could do a lot more than “try again”). And a petition put forward a few days ago by Col. Morris Davis, who served in the US Air Force for 25 years and was chief prosecutor for terrorism and trials at Guantanamo Bay for over two years, to close the base already has over 110,000 signers. Here is a [link so you can sign it](#).

Related to these war crimes was the opening of the Bush LIE-bury. [Activists showed up in force](#) to let all the presidents know that many Americans oppose their policies of war and militarism. Dick Cheney was arrested! Actually, it was really Dennis Trainor, Jr. who was wearing a Dick Cheney costume. Dennis produced a [powerful mini-documentary of the Bush protest events](#). And, Bradley Manning, the young man who blew the whistle on war crimes in the Bush and Obama administrations, created controversy after his selection as a grand marshal for a gay pride parade was rescinded by the board. The result: [protests against the group](#) and pressure to fire the chairman of the board.

Environmental protests, which we [regularly report on in weekly newsletters](#), continue. In New York, Dr. Sandra Steingraber and dozens of others who [protested a fracking waste storage facility](#) that will threaten their water supply and the health and safety of their community were [released from jail](#) ten days into their 15 day sentence. It was Steingraber’s first arrest for civil resistance. She voiced what many people are learning,

“I would do it again in a minute. ...Being new to civil disobedience, I’m still learning about its power and its limitations... But I know this: all I had to do is sit in a six-by-seven-foot steel box in an orange jumpsuit and be mildly miserable, but the real power of it is to be able to shine a spotlight on the problem.”

The power of protest has been evident in the effort to stop TransCanada’s Keystone pipeline. While the approval of the pipeline has looked like a sure thing in DC, the fact that [TransCanada has spent \\$280,000 lobbying](#) for the approval shows it is not a done deal. They’ve been bringing in high powered lobbyists connected to the State Department where the decision will be made. Lobbyists include former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s Deputy Campaign Manager for her 2008 campaign, and a top grassroots organizer for the current Secretary of State John Kerry’s 2004 presidential campaign. This is [another sign](#) that we might be closer to success than we realize – keep the pressure on. Even if they approve the pipeline, that does not mean they will be able to build it if protests continue to escalate. See below for information on direct action training camps.

Environmental destruction is one of the key issues that have led to an inspiring campaign in New York for the 400th anniversary of the first treaty between the Native Indians and European settlers – [the Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign](#). The two parallel rows in the wampum record the agreement between two nations – Indian and European settlers – which include a three-part commitment to friendship, peace between peoples, and living in parallel forever—“as long as the grass is green, as long as the rivers flow downhill and as long as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west.” This summer they are planning an epic canoe trip down the Hudson to renew the agreement, which has been repeatedly violated by the United States.

The annual [shareholders meeting of Peabody Coal was protested](#) by a coalition of miners, environmentalists and Indians in Wyoming. Peabody, the world’s biggest coal company, has been subjected to [repeated protests](#) because it destroys the land, pollutes the air and water, adds carbon to the climate and steals worker’s pensions. Peabody moved its meeting from

its headquarters in St. Louis to avoid protests, but found they couldn't hide. The protest in Wyoming included the arrest of three people for dropping a banner and for holding a sign in the parking lot that said "Peabody Abandons Miners."

There are lots of upcoming events as part of the growing popular resistance:

- On May 3, the movie [Occupy Love launched its tour](#) in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle and other venues.
- On May 8 there will be [nationwide protests against Bank of America](#) (Muckrock released FOIA documents this week showing how [BoA intelligence worked with DC police against Occupy Our Homes in DC.](#))
- On May 10 [National Day of Actions Against Corporate Personhood](#) organized by Move to Amend.

May 11 [Poor People's Campaign March](#) from Baltimore to DC

- May 18 to 23 The Home Defenders League and Campaign for a Fair Settlement are planning a [week of actions around foreclosure](#)
- May 18 ['Operation Green Jobs' March](#) From Philadelphia to Washington, DC begins
- May 22 [Stop the Frack Attack People's Forum](#) in Washington, DC
- May 25 Day of protests against Monsanto, everywhere on May 25th.
- June 24 to 28 [Fearless Summer week of actions unites front line environmental movements](#)
- July 21 to 28 [Tar Sands Direct Action Training Camp in Utah](#)
- July 27 to August 9 [Epic Hudson River Canoe Trip](#) as part of the Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign begins in Albany, NY.

You can order or print [OccuCards](#) to bring with you to these actions. There are cards for all of the issues being protested above and new cards are being created.

The popular resistance is growing. Historian Howard Zinn in the "[Coming Revolt of the Guards](#)" described a vision of how a broad popular resistance could bring change, and that is what we see growing in our midst:

"The prospect is for times of turmoil, struggle, but also inspiration. There is a chance that such a movement could succeed in doing what the system itself has never done-bring about great change with little violence. This is possible because the more of the 99 percent that begin to see themselves as sharing needs, the more the guards and the prisoners see their common interest, the more the Establishment becomes isolated, ineffectual. The elite's weapons, money, control of information would be useless in the face of a determined population. The servants of the system would refuse to work to continue the old, deadly order, and would begin using their time, their space-the very things given them by the system to keep them quiet-to dismantle that system while creating a new one."

This article is based on the weekly newsletter of October2011/OccupyWashingtonDC.org. You can [sign up to receive this free newsletter here](#). NOTE: We will be transitioning to PopularResistance in the coming weeks.

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