

# Occupy is Not Just About Occupying: The Goal is Not to Occupy it is to End Corporate Rule

By [Kevin Zeese](#)

Global Research, December 11, 2011

11 December 2011

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

In-depth Report: [OCCUPY WALL STREET](#)

With encampments being closed across the country it is important to remember the end goal is not to occupy public space, it is to end corporate rule. We seek to replace the rule of money with the rule of people. Occupying is a tactic but the grand strategy of the Occupy Movement is to [weaken the pillars](#) that hold the corporate-government in place by educating, organizing and mobilizing people into an independent political force.

The occupations of public space have already done a great deal to lift the veil of lies. People are now more aware than ever that the wealth divide is caused by a rigged economic system of crony capitalism and that we can [create a fair economy](#) that works for all Americans. We are also aware that many of our fellow citizens are ready to take action – extreme action of sleeping outside in the cold in a public park. And, we also now know that we have the [power to shift the debate](#) and force the economic and political elites to [listen to us](#). In just a few months we have [made a difference](#).

Occupying public space involves a lot of resources and energy that could be spent educating, organizing and mobilizing people in much greater numbers. There is a lot to do to end corporate rule and the challenges of occupying public space can divert our attention and resources from other responsibilities we have as a movement.

When we were organizing the [Occupation of Washington, DC](#) – before the occupation of Wall Street began – we were in conversation with movements around the world. The Spanish Indignados told us that an occupation should last no more than two weeks. After that it becomes a diversion from the political objectives. The occupation begins to spend its time dealing with poverty, homelessness, inadequately treated mental illness and addiction – this has been experienced by occupiers across the country.

Occupying for a short time accomplishes many of the objectives of holding public space – the political dialogue is affected, people are mobilized and all see that fellow citizens can effectively challenge the corporate-state. Staying for a lengthy period continues to deepen these goals but the impacts are more limited and the costs get higher.

What to do next? The Occupy Movement needs to bring participatory democracy to communities. Occupiers should develop an aggressive organizing plan for their city. Divide the city and appoint people to be responsible for different areas of the city. Depending on how many people you have make these areas as small as possible. Develop plans for house-to-house campaigns where you knock on doors, provide literature, ask what you can do to make their lives better. Do they need snow removed? Clothes? If so, get the occupy

team to fulfill their needs, find used clothes, clean their yard – whatever you can do to help. This shows community and builds relationships.

Plan a march through the different communities in the city. Make it a spectacle. Have a marching band. Don't have one – reach out to local school bands. Organize them. Create floats, images and signs. Display yourselves and your message. Hand out literature as you march. Let people know what the occupy stands for they should join us in building a better world for them and their families.

Plan public General Assemblies in communities across the city. Teach people the General Assembly process, the hand signals, how to stack speakers, how to listen and reach consensus. Learn the local issues. Solve local problems. Again, build a community that works together to solve problems.

Let people know about the [National Occupation of Washington DC \(NOW DC\)](#), [the American Spring](#) beginning on March 30th. Organize people to come, share rides, hire buses, walk, ride a bike – get people to the nation's capital to show the united force of the people against the rule of money. This will be an opportunity to display our solidarity and demand that the people, not money, rule.

How rapidly a movement makes progress is hard to predict. It is never a constant upswing of growth and progress. We may be in for a sprint, or more likely, a marathon with hurdles. If you are hoping for a sprint, note that the deep corruption of the government and the economy has left both weaker than is publicly acknowledged. It may be a hollowed out shell ready to fall.

But, this may also take years to accomplish. Take the timeline of the Civil Rights movement: 1955 Rosa Parks sits in the front of the bus, not until five years later in 1960, do the lunch counter sit-ins begin. Not until three years later in 1963 does Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. lead a march on Washington for the "I have a Dream" speech. No doubt the time between Rosa Parks and the lunch counter sit-ins and Civil Rights Act passing in 1964 seemed slow to those involved. Looking back it was rapid, transformational change. In fact, the movement grew in fits and starts and had roots decades of activity before the 1950s. In those times of seeming lull, work was being done, to educate and organize people that led to the big spurts of progress.

Older movements, when communication was slower, have taken even longer. The women's suffrage movement held its first convention in 1848 in Seneca Falls, NY. Twenty years later, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton formed the National Woman Suffrage Association. In 1913, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns formed the National Women's Party to work for a constitutional amendment to give women the vote. Finally, in 1919 the federal woman's suffrage amendment, originally written by Susan B. Anthony and introduced in Congress in 1878, was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate, sent to the states for ratification and signed into law one year later.

With mass media, and especially the new democratized media of social networks, the Internet, anonymous leaks and independent media, it is very likely the end of the rule of money will come more quickly. If we focus on our goal, act with intention and use our energy and resources wisely victory will come sooner.

Our challenge to corporate power has roots. The [Project on Corporations Law and Democracy](#) was founded in 1995. In 1999 the protests against the World Trade Organization occurred in Seattle. In 2000, long-time crusader against corporate power, Ralph Nader, ran his first full presidential campaign and [continues](#) to challenge corporatism. This decade has been called the "[Great Turning](#)," which Joanna Macy has defined as "the shift from the Industrial Growth Society to a life-sustaining civilization." "[America Beyond Capitalism](#)" by Gar Alperovitz, just printed its second edition, five years after the first, documenting the evolution of the developing [democratized economy](#). These are some of the foundations on which the Occupy Movement is building as the unfairness and insecurity of corporate capitalism becomes evident to all. Our roots are deeper than the few months of our existence.

The elites are foolish to think they will stop this movement by closing occupations. The Occupy Movement will evolve in new and unpredictable ways that will make the elites wish for the days of mere public encampments. The 1% should know they will be held accountable. The people have found their voice and will not be silenced. The era of the rule of money is nearing its end.

**Kevin Zeese** is an organizer of [Occupy Washington, DC](#) and co-director of [It's Our Economy](#).

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