

A Call for Mass Action Against the Suppression of the Occupy Movement

These past several months have witnessed something very different in the U.S. People from many different walks of life came together to occupy public space in nearly 1,000 cities in the U.S. They stood up to vicious police violence, they broke through the confines of “protest as usual,” and in the middle of all that, they built community. Even in the face of media attempts to ridicule, distort, and demonize these protests, their basic message began to get through. People throughout the U.S.—and even the world—took notice of and took heart from these brave and creative protesters.

The political terms of discourse began to shift; the iced-over thinking of people in the U.S. began to thaw. Standing up to the unjust brutality and arrests became a badge of honor. People began to listen to and read the stories of some of the victims of this economic crisis, and to share their own. And most of all, as the protests spread to city after city, the fact of people occupying public space forced open debate and raised big questions among millions as to what kind of society this is, and what it should be. Why does such poverty and need exist in the face of a relative handful of people amassing obscene amounts of wealth? Why do the political institutions of society seem only to serve that handful? Why do so many youth feel they face such a bleak future? Why does the insane destruction of the environment continue to accelerate? And what is needed to overcome all this?

Those who actually wield power in this country regarded these protests, and these questions, as dangerous, and reacted accordingly. Time and again those who wield power violated their own laws and ordered police to pepper spray, beat with clubs, and shoot tear gas canisters at the heads of people who were doing nothing more than non-violently expressing their dissent and seeking community. This reached a peak in the recent coordinated and systematic attacks of the past few weeks against all the major occupations. In fact, the mayor of Oakland admitted on BBC to being part of conference calls that coordinated national strategy against the occupiers. On top of all that, and in another blatant show of illegitimate force and power, they attempted to prevent journalists and photographers from covering these acts of repression—unless they were “embedded” with the police.

To put the matter bluntly, but truly: the state planned and unleashed naked and systematic violence and repression against people attempting to exercise rights that are supposed to be legally guaranteed. This response by those who wield power in this society is utterly shameful from a

moral standpoint, and thoroughly illegitimate from a legal and political one.

Now this movement faces a true crossroads. Will it be dispersed, driven into the margins, or co-opted? Or will it come back stronger? This question now poses itself, extremely sharply.

One thing *is* clear already: if this illegitimate wave of repression is allowed to stand... if the powers-that-be succeed in suppressing or marginalizing this new movement... if people are once again “penned in”—both literally and symbolically—things will be much worse. **THIS SUPPRESSION MUST BE MASSIVELY OPPOSED, AND DEFEATED.**

On the other hand, this too is true: movements grow, and can only grow, by answering repression with even greater and more powerful mobilization.

The need to act is urgent.

As a first step in the necessary response, there must be a massive political mobilization on a day, or days, very soon to say **NO!** to this attempt to suppress thought and expression with brutality and violence. This mobilization should most of all be in New York, where this movement started... but it should at the same time be powerfully echoed all around the country and yes, around the world. **This is a call for massive demonstrations—soon—carried out in public spaces where they can have maximum impact and exposure and where the authorities cannot pen in, suppress, and otherwise attempt to marginalize these demonstrations.**

These demonstrations must be large enough to show clearly that people will not tolerate that which is intolerable... that people will not adjust to that which is so manifestly *unjust*. Such demonstrations, along with the efforts to reach out and build them, can draw many more people from passive sympathy into active support and can awaken and inspire even millions more who have not yet been reached. Such demonstrations can powerfully answer the attempt by “the 1%” to crush and/or derail this broad movement. Thousands and thousands in the streets, acting together, can seize new initiative and change the whole political equation. The urgent questions raised by Occupy—and other urgent questions that have yet to be raised in this movement—can once more reverberate, and more powerfully than before.

The repression of the Occupy movement must not stand. Act.

See back for partial list of signers

Partial List of Signatories:

Gbenga Akinnagbe, actor on the HBO series *The Wire*

Carole Ashley

Fr. Luis Barrios

Renate Bridenthal, Professor of History, Brooklyn College, CUNY, retired

Elaine Brower, World Can't Wait & Military Families Speak Out

Cynthia Carlson, artist

Nina Felshin, independent curator

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition, NYC

Harmony Hammond, artist

Barry Holden

Camille Hankins, Founder and Director: Win Animal Rights and No Kill, New York

Ray Hill, producer/host of Ray on the Raydio Internet radio show, Houston, TX

Lee Siu Hin, National Coordinator, National Immigrant Solidarity Network

Judith Henry

Rev. Dr. James Karpen, Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, NYC

Chuck Kaufman, Executive Director, Alliance for Global Justice

Rev. Earl Kooperkamp, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Harlem, NYC

Jim Long, artist

Waqas Malik, artist

Lydia Matthews, Dean of Academic Programs, Associate Dean of Parsons/Professor

Ann Messner, artist

Travis Morales

Dorinda Moreno, Fuerza Mundial/FM Global/Hitec Aztec, U.S. Liaison Secretariat, International Tribunal of Conscience of Peoples in Movement/TICPM

Nick Mottern, ConsumersforPeace.org & kNOwDrones.org

National Immigrant Solidarity Network

Bradley Olson, psychologist, activist

Rosemary O'Neill

Lindsay O'Neill-Caffrey

The Rt. Rev. George E. Packard, Retired Bishop of the Episcopal Church for the Armed Services and Federal Ministries

Craig Phipps, Ombudsman at Casa Esperanza

Ann Ratner

Suzanne Ross, PhD, clinical psychologist

David E. Rousline, PhD, Berkeley, CA

Rev. Juan Carlos Ruiz, New Sanctuary Movement

Jayce Salloum, artist, Vancouver

Irving Sandler

Donna Schaper, Senior Minister, Judson Memorial Church

Stephen Soldz, Director, Center for Research, Evaluation, and Program Development, Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis,* Past President, Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR)*

Bob Stein

Rev. Max Surjadinata, Area Coordinator of Friends of Sabeel North America

David Swanson, warisacrime.org

Matthew Swaye

Debra Sweet, Director, World Can't Wait

Athena Tacha

Dennis Trainor, Jr., writer, producer & host of Acronym TV

Marina Urbach, independent curator, other projects, New York

Nancy Vining Van Ness, Director, American Creative Dance

Jim Vrettos, Adjunct Professor, John Jay College of Criminal Justice*

Jen Waller

Vince Warren, Executive Director of the Center for Constitutional Rights*

Cornel West

Andy Zee, Spokesperson, Revolution Books, NYC

David Zeiger, Displaced Films

*For identification purposes only

To sign this call or for more info, contact: dontsuppressows@yahoo.com