

What was the significance of the Oakland general strike?

The Nov. 2 Oakland general strike, called by Occupy Oakland, was a big step, only a step, but a big one because it was in the right direction. The general strike proves that it is the working people that produce the goods and services that everyone depends upon. When we don't work, there is no "economy." It follows that we need not be victims of "the economy" because we are—we can be—the masters of it.

Our view has always been, for 106 years now, that politicians are just the administrators of capitalism, and that neither individual politicians nor corporations are the real problem. The real problem is the whole system which creates a small elite that increasingly usurps our wealth and our rights as creators of all wealth.

But let's not spend too much time haggling over who is to blame for our problems. We must take the steps necessary to resolve them. If we want an economy and society that works for everyone we must build the grassroots organizations to do it. This is done organically by building on our on- the-job experiences in productive cooperation and our activist institutions, like our general assemblies. We don't have to start from scratch: we did it for a time in Hungary in 1956 and in France in 1968. The general strike, by showing our power when we don't work is the gateway for showing what we can do when we do work, but for our own needs.

*From members of the Denver-Boulder Industrial Workers of the World
IWW.org or breadandroses@msn.com
The IWW is a global, anti-capitalist union founded in Chicago in 1905.
We're on the web at IWW.org or email breadandroses@msn.com*

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*Workers of the World, Awaken,
Break your chains, Demand your rights.
All the wealth you make is taken
By exploiting parasites.
Shall you kneel in deep submission
From your cradles to your graves?
Is the height of your ambition
To be good and willing slaves?*

*If the workers take a notion,
They can stop all speeding trains.
Every ship upon the ocean
They can tie with mighty chains.
Every wheel in the creation,
Every mine and every mill,
Fleets and armies of the nation,
Will at their command stand still.*

*From a song written by IWW organizer and song writer Joe Hill
from his jail cell just a few month before being killed
unjustly by the state of Utah
September, 1913*

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