

# Occupy Oakland Calls for Participation in a May 1, 2012 Global General Strike

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The General Strike is back, retooled for an era of deep budget cuts, extreme anti-immigrant racism, and massive predatory financial speculation. In 2011, the number of unionized workers in the US stood at 11.8%, or approximately 14.8 million people.

What these figures leave out are the growing millions of people in this country who are unemployed and underemployed. The numbers leave out the undocumented, and domestic and manual workers drawn largely from immigrant communities. The numbers leave out workers whose workplace is the home and a whole invisible economy of unwaged reproductive labor. The numbers leave out students who have taken on nearly \$1 trillion dollars in debt, and typically work multiple jobs, in order to afford skyrocketing college tuition. The numbers leave out the huge percentage of black Americans that are locked up in prisons or locked out of stable or secure employment because of our racist society.

In December of 2011, Oakland's official unemployment rate was a devastating 14.1%. As cities like Oakland are ground into the dust by austerity, every last public dollar will be fed to corrupt, militarized police departments in order to contain social unrest. On November 2 of last year, Occupy Oakland carried out the first General Strike in the US since the 1946 Oakland General Strike, shutting down the center of the city and blockading the Port of Oakland. We must re-imagine a general strike for an age where most workers do not belong to labor unions, and where most of us are fighting for the privilege to work rather than for marginal improvements in working conditions. We must take the struggle into the streets, schools, and offices of corrupt local city governments. A re-imagined general strike means finding immediate solutions for communities impacted by budget cuts and constant police harassment beyond changing government representatives. Occupy Oakland calls for and will participate in a new direction for the Occupy movement based on the recognition that we must not only find new ways to provide for our needs beyond the state; we must also attack the institutions that lock us into an increasingly miserable life of exploitation, debt, and deepening poverty everywhere. IF WE CAN'T LIVE, WE WON'T WORK.

May Day is an international holiday that commemorates the 1886 Haymarket Massacre, when Chicago police defending, as always, the interests of the 1% attacked and murdered workers participating in a general strike and demanding an 8-hour workday. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, despite what politicians tell us, class war is alive and well against workers (rank-and-file and non-unionized), students, people of color, un- and underemployed, immigrants, homeless, women, queer/trans folks, and prisoners. Instead of finding common ground with monsters, it's time we fight them. And it's time we make fighting back an everyday reality in the Bay Area and beyond.

On May Day 2012, Occupy Oakland will join with people from all walks of life in all parts of the world around the world in a Global General Strike to shut down the global circulation of capital that every day serves to enrich the ruling classes and impoverish the rest of us. There will be no victory but that which we make for ourselves, reclaiming the means of existence from which we have been and continue to be dispossessed every day.

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<http://occupyoakland.org/2012/01/occupy-oakland-decides-to-participate-in-the-global-general-strike-on-may-day/>