



City of Oakland

Official Apology to the Citizens of Oakland and Declaration in Support of the General Strike November 2, 2011

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Friday, October 28, 2011

6:00 PM

Oakland City Hall, 3rd Floor

Jean Quan
Honorable Mayor of Oakland

To the Citizens of Oakland

As mayor of Oakland it is my great relief to make this announcement to the public. First of all, I offer my sincere apology for ordering the violent repression of the Occupy Oakland encampment in front of city hall in the morning of Tuesday, October 25, 2011. It reached the height of absurdity to use the rationale of public health and safety to justify this, and I have had a change of heart.

The Occupy Oakland general assembly has called for a general strike on Wednesday, November 2, 2011, and I heartily endorse this call. The Occupy Oakland encampment was just the kind of experiment in mutual aid and direct democracy that is needed. And a general strike could bring this to a new level. In fact, I want to up the ante to show I'm on the right side of history again.

Oakland was the last city in the U.S. to have a general strike, in 1946, and it was known as a "work holiday." This harks back to the first call for a general strike in 1832: William Benbow's pamphlet, "Grand National Holiday," in which he called a month-long strike. I propose we do that! Now, I know a common objection to the strike call is, "who can afford to take a day off work in these days?" Well, sometimes to be realistic you have to demand the impossible. 90% of the work done in this society is useless toil. We can do away with that, and turn most of the work that really needs to be done into playful past-times. And there's plenty of wealth to go around. We just have to share it.

Many of you may be asking, "what is the point of a general strike?" "Shouldn't we focus on getting the banks regulated?" "How can we have a strike without demands?" Well, I've been won over by the Occupy Movement's bold insistence on not making demands of authoritarian power structures. All our problems are so inseparable. The system needs a total overhaul. We need an unprecedented adventure in social experimentation that will banish authoritarian power structures altogether. I say ban the banks and abolish money. The people are breaking out of their acquiescence. They can make decisions over their own lives. The Occupy Oakland encampment prefigured a way of life that makes the status quo obsolete. Instead of an exploitative system based on the buying and selling of things and our time, let us create a life of ease, gaiety and pleasure for all, as William Benbow originally suggested. Let us not only shut the city down. Let us take it over and run it in a wholly new way. Together we can make every day a holiday.

Sincerely,

Jean Quan, Honorable Mayor of Oakland

For more information, contact the office of Jean Quan at 510-238-3141