

Abolishing Corporate Personhood Is Not Enough! Demonstrations Are Not Enough! We Need to Build for a Nationwide General Strike and Fight for a Workers' Government!

Even if we do away with “corporate personhood,” big business and the rich will still control the politicians and the government, just as they did before *Citizens United*. **We need an entirely new system, organized to meet the human needs of the 99% rather than to generate profits for the 1%! Only by building a fighting workers' party and taking mass direct action under its leadership can we achieve goals such as these:**

- **Full employment at prevailing union rates for all who are willing and able to work!** Spread the available jobs to more workers by requiring the bosses to give us 40 hours' pay for 30 hours of work!
- **No layoffs!** When the bosses lay off workers, workers should go on strike and occupy their workplaces. If the bosses try to close down the business, workers should take it over and run it under their own control.
- **Stop all foreclosures and evictions!** Housing is a human right! Forgive all debt on homes that are worth less than the mortgage because of the real estate crisis caused by Wall Street greed. Move the homeless and those in overcrowded or low quality housing into foreclosed and vacant homes.
- **Forgive all student loans!** The government must provide high quality, universal public education at no charge, from daycare and pre-school through the graduate level. Place all publicly funded educational institutions under the control of teachers, parents, and students old enough to participate.
- **No budget cuts!** Restore and increase budgets for welfare, child care, health clinics, schools, and all public services and benefits. Full pension and health care benefits for all retired workers, public and private sector alike.
- **Quality free universal health care at no charge from prenatal to the grave!** The only way to provide health care for all is to remove the profit motive. Abolish health insurance and for-profit pharmaceutical makers, and put all health care under the control of health workers and patients!
- **Protect the environment! Take all possible steps now to minimize climate change!** Fight for workers' control of industry in order to transform the current, outmoded technology of industrial production to totally green and sustainable technology.
- **End attacks on undocumented workers!** End the ICE raids! Free all detained undocumented workers! Full employment rights for all workers! Let workers choose where to work by demanding that all workers who do the same work get the same contract, same wages, and same working conditions, regardless of country!
- **No more “too big to fail”!** No more giving away tax money to rescue Wall Street and big business from their own stupidity! Nationalize all failing industries under workers' control and without compensation!
- **Break with the Democrats!** Fight for the political independence of the working class! Replace the sell-out labor bureaucrats who give our hard-earned money to Democratic Party politicians, and refuse to organize genuine militant strikes! We need to build a fighting workers' party based on democratically run unions and organizations of the oppressed and the unemployed.
- **US troops out of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the rest of the world!** No war against Iran! Money for human needs, not imperialist control of oil and other natural resources!

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Abolishing Corporate Personhood Is Not Enough! Form a Fighting Workers' Party to Lead Our Struggle! Build for an Indefinite Nationwide General Strike!

The Problem Is Capitalism, Not Corporate Personhood

The Occupy movement has called for a day of protest against “corporate personhood” on January 20. Occupy is right that politicians serve big business and the rich, and that our “democratic” system does not meet the basic needs of ordinary workers (the “99%”). But the slogan “Corporations are NOT people; money is NOT speech” implies we can fix that problem by getting rid of the United States Supreme Court’s decision in *Citizens United*.

This is not true. The problems in our society cannot and will not be cured just by doing away with “corporate personhood.” Big businesses and rich people controlled “our” government long before *Citizens United*. The Supreme Court decision just made it simpler and more direct for them to do so. So undoing *Citizens United* would not change much. It would only force the wealthy and powerful to fall back on the tactics they were using very successfully before the *Citizens United* decision.

Getting rid of corporate personhood would not change the basic imbalance of power in our society. The problems we face are **built into the structure of the capitalist economic system**, under which the means of production (factories, mines, technology, etc.) are privately owned, and the people who own the means of production use them in the way that will make the most profit, rather than choosing to make the things that people need most. Corporations are just one of the many possible kinds of private ownership of the means of production. Even if we got rid of corporations altogether, our system would still treat protecting private property and maximizing profits as the top priority. Capitalists have no interest in housing the homeless, employing the jobless, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, protecting the environment, or educating the young. There is always more profit to be made doing other things. **This is not because of corporate personhood, but because of the capitalist system itself.**

It is capitalism, not corporate personhood, that is responsible for the current worldwide depression. Why? Big businesses moved most of their manufacturing out of the developed countries, where workers’ standard of living was relatively high, because they could make higher profits by building factories in countries like China, where wages were lower. Meanwhile, Wall Street used the money that flowed back to the United States to gamble for profit on speculative bubbles like mortgage-backed securities. When the bubble burst, the economy tanked.

We Need More than Bandaid Reforms

Calling for reforms like “abolish corporate personhood” and “tax the rich” implies that the social problems of our country (not to mention the global economic crisis) can be solved by limiting big business’s political campaign contributions and forcing rich people to hand over more tax dollars to the government. This is a pipe dream. The truth is that these reforms will do little or nothing to solve our economic, environmental, and human needs problems, bring peace to the world, or create a genuinely democratic political system.

Reforms have been passed many times, as a result of mass pressure from groups like organized labor and the civil rights movement. But when the capitalists start to see their profits falling, they always take back the reforms. Right now, for example, they are using the bad economy as an excuse to attack organized labor; privatize public schools; cut welfare and other services to the poor; and trash social security, environmental protection, and other government services.

In order to cure a disease, doctors go after the cause, not just the symptoms. In order to build the kind of society we all want to see, we first have to grasp the simple fact that what lies at the root of the world’s problems is not corporations or rich people, but the profit-driven economic system as a whole—that is, **capitalism**. To fix the problems in our economy, our environment, and the world, we need to **eliminate the cause** – the capitalist profit system – and replace it with an economy based on human needs, not quarterly profit. If we do not develop a program that unites us in an open struggle against the capitalist system itself, the Occupy movement is doomed to be demoralized and eventually defeated.

How to Attack Capitalism at Its Roots

How can we organize for real, lasting change? There is one thing that capitalism still needs from us: our labor. The most effective weapon we have in this struggle is our ability to refuse to allow big business to profit from our labor—that is, **to go on strike**. The Egyptian people know this well; the Tahrir Square occupations last spring that overturned the Mubarak dictatorship were supported by labor strikes throughout Egypt’s industrial sector. To succeed, we must follow their example!

So to win this fight for once and for all, we need more than demonstrations in support of reforms. We need to develop the Occupy movement into a nationwide set of popular/worker/labor assemblies that meet to **plan and prepare for a nationwide, political, indefinite general strike**, with the aim of **taking power** into the hands of working people and their allies. Strikes alone are not a panacea, but in the process of organizing for a strike like this, we will lay the foundation for the formation of a mass workers’ party—not an electoral party, but a unified body that fights for a **workers’ government**. Only a workers’ government can replace capitalism with a new system that is based on workers’ self-management, workers’ planning for human needs, and workers’ democratic control.

And, because capitalism is a global system, we need to make connections with our brother and sister workers internationally. Just as the original Occupy Wall Street action was inspired in part by the Arab Spring, we need to join forces with, inspire, and be inspired by the mass movements of working people everywhere. We are all oppressed by the same tyrant: the capitalist system! We must all work together to overthrow it and replace it with a system that focuses on meeting human needs, improving the quality of life for all people, and repairing our damaged planet, rather than the accumulation of profit, privilege, and power in the hands of a few.