



The General Strike Speech by William D. Haywood

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From Content: "Comrades and Fellow Workers: I am here to-night with a heavy heart. I can see in that Raymond Street jail our comrade and fellow-worker Buccafori in a cell, a miserable cell, perhaps 4 1/2 feet wide, 7 feet long, sleeping on an iron shelf, wrapped up in a dirty blanket, vermin-infested perhaps; surrounded by human wolves, those who are willing to tear him limb from limb, those who will not feel that their duty to the political state is entirely fulfilled until Buccafori's heart ceases to beat. I had felt that this would be a great meeting. I feel now that I would hate to be in Buccafori's place. It is better, when charged with crime by a capitalist or by the capitalist class, to hold a prominent office in a great labor organization. You will then draw around you support--support sufficient to protect and to save your life. Had I been an ordinary member of the rank and file of a labor organization no more prominent than a shoe worker of Brooklyn I would not be here to-night. I am certain that I would be sleeping in a bed of quicklime within the walls of the Idaho State penitentiary. But it happened that I was a prominent official of a labor organization that was known world-wide; and for one to raise his voice in defense of the officials of that organization meant to give the speaker prominence. To speak in favor of Buccafori is to come into an out-of-the-way part of town and to speak to a small audience. There are those who prefer prominence to saving a fellow-worker's life. I came here to-night to do my little part, feeling that Buccafori is as much to the labor movement, is as much to the working class, is as beneficial to society as I myself, as any member here, or any of those who ever lifted their voice for me. I am sorry that I haven't supernatural strength to reach into that prison and release Buccafori. I am sorry that I can't bring together the forces that saved my life. I can only speak here as an individual."

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