

# UPDATE ON THE SITUATION IN KOBANE

On September 16th, 2014, ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) began a military offensive against the city Kobanê in northern Syria. The goal of this offensive is the takeover of the mostly Kurdish city and the expansion of ISIS-controlled territory. By October 2nd, ISIS managed to takeover more than 300 Kurdish villages and smaller cities and over 200,000 Kurds had to leave their homes and fled across the nearby border into Turkey. ISIS has not yet been able to takeover the city itself, thanks to the strong defense of the YPG (People's Protection Units) as well as the YPJ (Women's Protection Units) which is a feminist, all-women brigade. On October 11th, 2014, a group of local Kurds and anarchists made a call out for a rally in San Francisco in solidarity with Kobanê. More than 40 people responded to the call out and came out to Powell and Market where they held banners, chanted slogans and handed out flyers detailing the situation. A few days later on October 14th another rally took place in Downtown Berkeley. Once again dozens of people gathered to show their solidarity and support with the resistance in Kobanê. By the next morning, graffiti had appeared on several walls in West Oakland expressing support for Kobanê.

But the Bay Area is not the only place showing support with the resistance in Kobanê. All over the globe, people gathered together for rallies and marches in solidarity with the Kurdish people. In several European cities activists occupied the airports to raise awareness for the situation in Kobanê. In Cologne, Germany fascist groups took the Kurdish resistance against ISIS as an opportunity to call out for an anti-ISIS march and promote their islamophobic ideology. In response Kurdish groups and local anti-fascists gathered together to take a stand against the idea of using Kobanê to promote fascist ideas.

The biggest protests happened in Turkey following ISIS's offensive, when demonstrations escalated to generalized rioting. Buildings associated with the Turkish state, such as police stations, government offices and more were set on fire in response to Prime Minister Erdogan's complicity with ISIS. Turkey has refused to open the border to let in Kurdish refugees and allow people to provide support to the fighters in Kobanê. Instead, Kurds have alleged that Turkey has supported ISIS by providing logistical and physical support across the border. Recently multiple photojournalists, who traveled to the area to report on the situation in Kobanê and to get pro-Kurdish statements, were arrested by Turkish police. After a night in jail the journalists are now facing deportation and permanent exclusion from the country.

On Saturday November 1st supporters plan to march in solidarity with the Kurdish Struggle for self-determination. It will take place at 3pm starting from 14th and Broadway, Downtown Oakland. Bring your friends and show support for Kobanê!

## EDITOR'S NOTE

On October 15th, 2014, the Reuters News Agency reported that the Kurdish YPG was giving map coordinates of ISIS targets to the US military. This information came to the agency directly from the Kurds themselves. Spokesmen for the US military refused to comment on this issue to the press, and it is unclear if the YPG is in fact collaborating with them.

The US State Department has classified the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) as a terrorist organization since 1997. The YPG is aligned with PKK, so it is quite interesting that the US is providing material aid to this group. In other times, the YPG accepting this US assistance would be seen as collaboration with a capitalist/imperialist army. Times have surely changed for the US to now be aiding communist guerrillas.

Three decades ago, the US armed and aided jihadists in their war against the USSR in Afghanistan. Throughout the Syrian Civil War, the US has aided various jihadist groups, including ISIS itself, in its efforts to liquidate the Assad regime. But now that the international jihadist movement has grown out of their hands, the US is running to the dirty commies for assistance. Our biggest fear is that the YPG and the struggle for Kurdish autonomy will become irrevocably bound up inside the machinations of the Pentagon or the CIA.

In these confusing times, when the big nations fight covert wars across the world, our only hope is that the organic and traditional communism of the Kurds will prevail over any deals or offers from the US. Beyond this, we can only hope that the Kurds remember that the US and the CIA are the most terrible rapers and enslavers of the world that have ever existed.



**YPJ FIGHTERS FACE A POSTER OF IMPRISONED PKK LEADER ABDULLAH CALAN**

# EASTWEST

NOVEMBER 2014  
eastwest@riseup.net

*an anarchist newspaper*

ALWAYS FREE  
37°46'43"N 122°23'21"W



## NONE OF THEM WILL SAVE YOU ONLY WE CAN SAVE OURSELVES

There is much excitement around the upcoming elections in Oakland. The citizens of our fair city will vote on November 4th for who their mayor and city council members will be. But we must remember that a clear majority of registered Oakland voters will spend November 4th doing anything, but voting. During the 2010 election, only 44% of registered Oakland voters cast their ballots. That same year, only 209,000 out of 390,000 residents registered in the first place. This means that less than 1/4 of the Oakland population voted. In case you missed it, this clearly indicates that most people with the ability to vote preferred not to.

Over 150 years have elapsed since Oakland was declared a city, and in that time local democracy has degenerated to the point where most people do not vote. And why should they? Year after year, decade after decade, the offices of City Hall are filled with politicians who routinely ignore and disregard the real concerns of Oakland residents. In the meantime, these mayors and city council members make side deals, receive kickbacks, or rest comfortably in their preexist-

ing wealth. The act of voting these people into office usually brings disappointment, resentment, and regret to those who elect them. In search of a new hero, these frustrated citizens quickly move on to the next charlatan who claims to be more liberal, more conservative, more pure than their predecessor. In this manner, the charade of voting continuously renews itself. The real force that can create better conditions for poor and working people are not politicians, but direct action carried out by the people themselves.

Jean Quan is a perfect example of this fact. Back in the 1960's, (that source of credibility for dinosaurs everywhere), our current mayor was dedicated to the teachings of Mao and determined to break the Anglo-Saxon stranglehold on higher education. She fought for ethnic studies during her time at UC Berkeley and in 1969 she helped organize a student strike with the Third World Liberation Front. Throughout the next decades, a time when most of her peers sold themselves to capitalism, Jean Quan rose to power within the Oakland Unified School District Board. During her tenure on the board,

-I-

Quan witnessed the outbreak of the 1996 teachers strike, a conflict that lasted five weeks. During this time, Quan opposed the strike and refused to give a raise to working-class teachers facing over-packed classrooms. The teachers picketed Quan's home during the course of the strike as a consequence for her betrayal. Quan alleged that she received 'racist death threats' to her home phone during this time.

Since then, Quan has shouted the word racism whenever she is politically challenged or unable to deal with consequences of her foolish and self-serving actions. Despite the hatred she engendered during the historic strike, Quan billed herself as the "education candidate" when she ran for City Council after winning control over the rich Montclair district. During her term, she presided over the federally coordinated repression of the Occupy Movement, the closing of five OUSD schools, the Domain Awareness Center, and the gentrification of North and West Oakland. When she was challenged over her support of the Brooklyn Basin luxury housing project at a recent mayoral candidate forum, Quan claimed only racists would be against the project. This woman is clearly power mad, vicious, and tyrannical. If she is re-elected, she will also preside over the greatest rebellion Oakland has ever seen. **Count on it.**

Faced with the prospect of having Quan as mayor for another four years, many registered voters will be tempted to vote for Rebecca Kaplan. She is queer, she says the right things at the right time, she is fairly innocuous on the City Council, and her ego is far smaller than Quan's. But if we look at her record on the council and the AC Transit Board, we see her voting along with the other pinheads

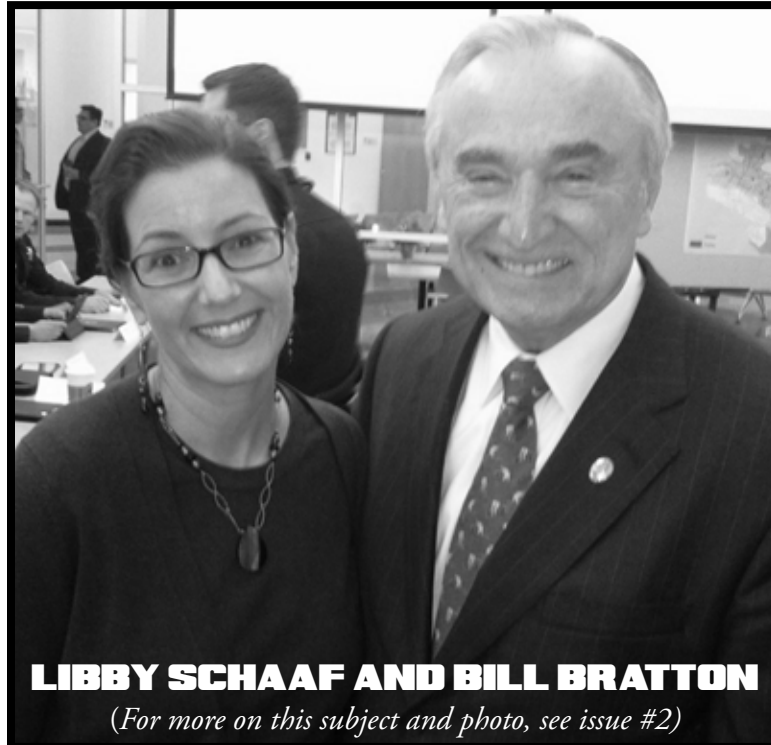
whenever she could get away with it. Signing her name to police grants, approving gentrification plans, saying yes to an anti-worker surveillance system at the port, going along with attacks on bus drivers, and giving the thumbs up to law enforcement are all just par for the course with her. As mayor, she will certainly continue to rubber-stamp all manner of vile laws, ordinances, and development schemes as fast as they come before her.

But waiting in the hills is Libby Schaaf, the golden girl from lace-curtain Montclair. After replacing Quan as city council member for this rich district, Schaaf quickly sought to undermine her as mayor. Now the two are facing off over turf. This writer witnessed both candidates walking down opposite sides of upper Fruitvale Avenue.

They entered different businesses, asked to put placards up in windows, and talked with people on the street in the hopes of getting more votes. This incident was remarkably petty and illustrates the determination with which Schaaf is attempting to knock out Quan. We can only imagine the Roman plots, intrigues, and vendettas these women carry after their immersion in Oakland politics. None of us should have to care about their bureaucratic insanity, though, so well spare you an interesting but nonetheless stupid account of the political machine to which Schaaf and Quan belong.

All that really needs to be said about Schaaf is that she was born and raised Oakland, knows all the right gray-hairs in the hills, and posed for a really nice picture with ex-NYPD

"law and order" police chief Bill Bratton (see previous issues) when he was in town. She also has shown her own ruthless side when faced with political opposition. During the debate over the DAC surveillance center proposed



**LIBBY SCHAAF AND BILL BRATTON**  
(For more on this subject and photo, see issue #2)



**REBECCA KAPLAN AS AC TRANSIT BOARD MEMBER**

## ELAINE BROWN'S SECOND PLAN

A story on a planned housing development in West Oakland has been making the rounds in the news recently. With the never-ending list of new developments popping up all across the area, what makes this one grab the headlines? Several things: the project was in part founded by ex-Black Panther Elaine Brown. The development also functions as a prisoner re-entry program, providing jobs to ex-inmates and housing to low-income families. They plan to build a community garden, with aspirations of a juice bar, fitness center, tech business, and shoe and clothing manufacturing companies not far behind. All this will be housed in a high rise building with as many as twelve stories, sitting atop the now-vacant lot at 7th & Campbell.

Providing housing for low-income families and jobs for those returning from incarcerated life is perfectly fine, but placed in the context of the gentrification epidemic in West Oakland, this development will probably act in concert with other proposed developments to further cement the fantasies of the rich. As luxury housing and up-scale businesses sink their roots into 7th street, more and more wealthy (white) people will rush to the area and what constitutes "low-income" for Elaine's development will continuously rise in price (see previous issues).

Beyond this, it is in the interests of the developers and future residents of the luxury housing to create an incubator of ex-prisoners and low-income families, keeping them in a single easily manageable space that will likely be aesthetically indistinguishable from the surrounding landscape. As for the proposed business projects, in the most optimistic of perspectives, they will only serve to integrate a select few compliant low-income families and ex-prisoners into the "new Oakland" that is being built, perhaps as the token representation of its supposed diversity. Less optimistically, poor people (largely black and brown) will spend their days working at the farm, the bar, the manufacturing plant, in service of their new, wealthy neighbors.

Is this criticism of a development project proposed by a former Black Panther to harsh? Surely someone coming from such a radical background would have better intentions than described. And perhaps that's true - Elaine Brown might very well have the best intentions, and she is certainly sincere. Along with family of Kenneth Harding, Elaine Brown helped organize the shutdown of the MUNI train system and helped oppose the WOSP development plans. However, this would not be the first time her enthusiasm for a project has been misplaced. In the seventies, after using her leadership of the Panthers to get certain politicians elected, including former Mayor Lionel Wilson, she poured enormous effort into the construction of the Grove-Shafter freeway (I-980) which is now largely considered to have separated

West Oakland from the rest of the city, reinforcing its position as the "ghetto." Mayor Lionel Wilson also oversaw a significant amount of development in what is now known as the Oakland City Center, though several of the projects began before his term.

As discussed in our last issue, opposition to gentrification cannot

take place within the capitalist system. Simply put: there are no solutions to be found within the market. As long as one class of people own property, they will drive up rents and people will be pushed out. Ultimately, they have the power of the courts, the police, and the government on their side - **we only have each other.** Despite Elaine Brown's best intentions, this new project only pushes the agenda of gentrification forward. She only has a year-long development license and is in search of investors, so it remains to be seen what plans will be cut and left behind as it comes to fruition, if it happens at all. This isn't to say that ordinary people cannot do anything to fight against sky-high rents, but it means not waiting for someone to save us, for new laws to be passed, or for new politicians to be elected. It means taking action now, organizing rent strikes, occupations of buildings, and organizing in our neighborhoods, and taking back everything from the rich and powerful.





►CONTINUED FROM PG. 5

- **Vanguard Properties, a real estate company who have faced several protests in the last year for evicting Mission residents with the Ellis Act, was completely covered in graffiti, and had its windows broken.**

- **A tech bus was attacked with bottles as rioters chased after it yelling “Fuck Google!”**

- **A start-up company was attacked with rocks and bottles as people shouted “Techies!”**

- **A Vida condo building that was under construction was set on fire after rioters breached the fence and broke some of it’s windows.**

- **Several MUNI busses were attacked, and the entire system was shut down shortly after. Last month, MUNI raised it’s fares, and it’s likely people still remember Kenneth Harding Jr., a black man murdered by the police for allegedly evading the fare on MUNI three years ago.**

- **Numerous cop cars had their windows smashed out, and were covered in graffiti. Tagged messages included “Fuck the Police” “Riot” and “KHY.” KHY, short for Keep Hoods Yours or Kill Hipsters & Yuppies, is a graffiti crew based in the Mission District, and have been active in anti-police and anti-gentrification struggles.**

- **Police officers took bottles from the Mission to the Powell shopping district, in some cases, were forced to retreat.**

Not everything that happened last night was positive, multiple shootings occurred and one person was stabbed (though the situations in which these happened are unclear.) It’s also possible that many people present had no interest in the aforementioned attacks or the antagonism behind them. But that does not and cannot erase the widespread hostility towards the

police, as huge crowds stood their ground against cops, building barricades and throwing bottles. The names of those murdered by police in recent years were chanted long into the night. The struggle against the gentrification of the Mission district also reached a boiling point, as a brick through the front window of Vanguard Properties was met with the cheers of hundreds of onlookers. Several high-end stores were tagged with anti-yuppie and anti-techie slogans.

If the rioters were so clearly conscious in nature, why did it coalesce because of a sports game? Urgent action is needed against the social order, and no sports victories can come often enough for us. There is never a wrong time to engage in conflictual action against capital and the State. Organize with people you trust to take action immediately, make connections with

people to grow networks of resistance. We have no time to waste.

for Oakland public streets, a series of posters was put up in downtown Montclair the night before the weekly farmers market. The posters showed a picture of Schaaf with a swastika on her forehead with text reading, “STOP SCHAAF - STOP THE DAC.” The smaller text on the flier explained that Schaaf was poised to vote for a federal surveillance system that would monitor all Oakland streets. It also attacked the federal government over its importation of cocaine into Oakland during the 1980’s. After hundreds of people had seen this flier, Schaaf reacted by telling the media that the fliers were a racist attack. She is Jewish after all. While council member Noel Gallo had a similar poster directed at him for his proposed youth curfew, he did not cry racism at the first opportunity. He is Mexican after all. Clearly, Schaaf is quite adept at misdirection.

As for Dan Siegel, the “workingman’s candidate” and only hope of defeating racism and police brutality (as this poster proclaims), we can only lift our finger and point at another bald white man: Jerry Brown. That’s right, current governor Jerry Brown was once championed as a righteous candidate who would hold it down for leftists, unionists, and the movement. Even Elaine Brown, chairwoman of the Black Panther Party, supported Jerry Brown when he was elected governor. And look at what happened with that! Look at pig-loving, dam-building Jerry Brown now! Unfortunately, history seems to be repeating itself. Seigel has the black vote and the labor vote, surely, and on their shoulders he will advance into the den of snakes called City Hall. Maybe he will be “the one” we’ve all been waiting for, the politician who magically transmutes the poison of capitalism and bureaucracy into bread and gold for the people of Oakland. But more than likely he will succumb just as they all have, one after the other, to the silver-tongued voices offering to make them rich. Like Jerry Brown, like Barack Obama, like all of them.

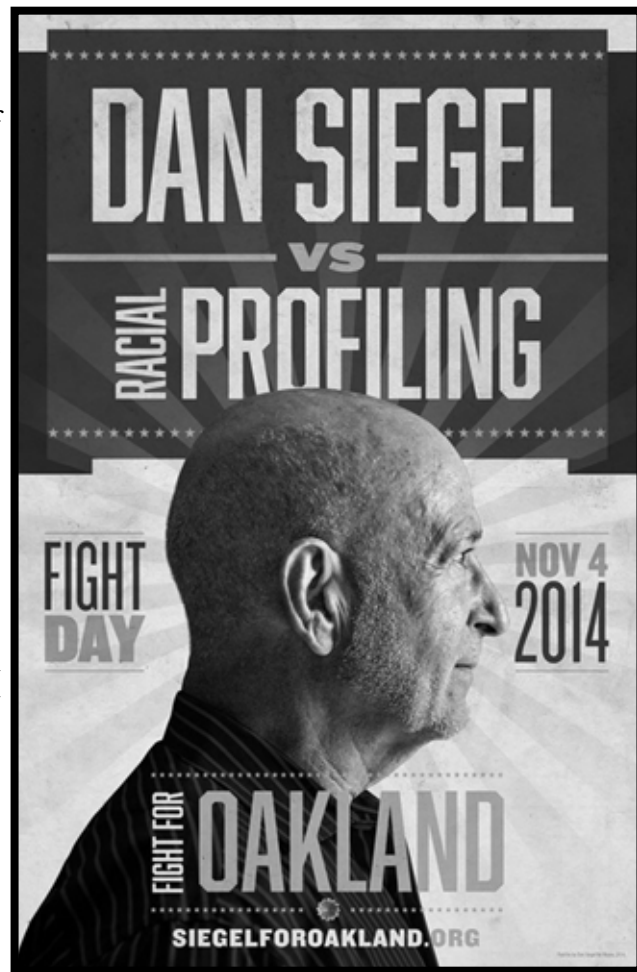
We are not being negative. We are being realistic. We know that soon capitalism will push tens of thousands from the Bay Area, driven out by inflated rents and rising

taxes. What is needed now are massive rent strikes, occupations of vacant buildings and workplaces, and the taking of land to feed ourselves. We do not want you to vote for anyone, we want you to take matters into your own hands. You do not need to ask permission to free yourself, just go ahead and do it. Capitalism keeps most of us poor and on the run, so let’s stop electing people who only want to keep capitalism alive. We will only be able to create a new world together when we are free from the laws, the jails, the police, the guns, and the brutality that City Council can use against us. Don’t vote for anyone. Clearly most people aren’t.

When we look at the exciting things people are already organizing in their own neighborhoods, it is evident that there is much more we can do besides voting. In East Oakland people occupy a vacant library and hold classes, plant gardens, read to children, and distribute free books. In North Oakland, residents fight gentrification and the turning of a public gathering place into a yuppie dog park. In Berkeley, people plant crops at People’s Park, share food, and gather together against police repression. In Albany, people that several years ago were being shot at by police for occupying the Gill Track now are eating the bounty of their harvest. People take over vacant buildings and stop foreclosures. They go on strike and fight their bosses. They come together in the streets and riot and fight the police. Why would we ever want to vote for a new bureaucrat?

City Hall is so filled with corruption that it will be a joy when the people finally burn its empty and hollow form to the ground. Until that day comes, let’s look only to each other, not to the politicians.

# LONG LIVE ANARCHY



## THE WILDCAT WHEEZES - SICKOUT STRIKES IN BAY AREA -

Ever since labor-unions became legally allowed to collectively bargain over contracts with bosses and management and began to funnel massive amounts of money into the Democratic Party, workers have been losing. As class war moved out of the streets and into the backrooms, unions have striven to negotiate with employers, not fight them. This shift was caused by both the government and unions in the 1930's, who were terrified as workers took part in strikes that led them to fight police in the streets, occupy buildings, attack the property of the rich, and joined together across racial, gender, and industrial lines. This activity and experience gave many workers a taste of a new world through fighting this one. But without a fight controlled by the workers themselves, wages have gone down while the cost of living rises, benefits are attacked, and across the board union membership has dropped.

Now days, it seems that those that own property and dole out wages feel more confident to attack workers – what do they have to fear if unions are more terrified of a strike than they are? Unions are very much afraid of workers taking action, afraid that they won't be able to control their own members! Just look at the recent BART strike, where officials tried their hardest to stop bus drivers, BART workers, and truck drivers from taking joint action. But when workers organize on their own, outside and against the union bureaucracy, a different form of organization and social relation comes about. People make decisions together, on the shop floor. They make decisions on what actions to take, how to carry them out, and how to spread information.

In the Bay Area, one tool in the class war has been the sick-out strike, in which workers call out of work en masse, shutting down the workplace in the process. This summer, MUNI bus drivers in San Francisco staged a sick-out strike and paralyzed the city for three days. Bus drivers carried this action out in the face of a union leadership that was trying to pass a poor contract. Under existing laws, MUNI drivers cannot legally go on a unsanctioned strike and lawyers quickly stepped in to try and force the drivers back to work. The sick-out was a way for bus drivers to take action on their own and withhold their labor against the bosses and in doing so they came up against the power of the government itself. Likewise, AC Transit bus drivers in the East Bay pulled off a similar action in 2010 against similar attacks, as hundreds of drivers called-out sick against an imposed contract. Around the same time, AC Transit management threatened to reprimand a driver who drove injured passengers in Richmond to a hospital after the bus was attacked with gunfire. While the driver was portrayed as

a hero in the press, AC management was angered that the driver went off-route. When other drivers heard about this, they threatened to carry out a sickout strike and management backed off.

Sickout strikes can also be a means of spreading a strike, crippling an entire industry when one group of workers goes out. In September, several bus drivers with Golden Gate Transit staged a sickout the same day as a ferry boat strike called by ship captains. Thus, an action by only a small group of drivers had an enormous impact and greatly expanded the strike.

In 2003, Oakland teachers staged a sick-out strike in the face of massive lay-offs. According to the Oakland Tribune, "A... 'sick-out' staged by Oakland teachers...to protest impending lay-offs cost[ing] the district thousands of dollars and left some classes without an instructor. About 350 teachers called in sick. The largest number of absences was at Oakland Tech and Castlemont high schools. The sick-out came about a week after the Oakland school

district sent letters to more than 1,000 teachers, warning them they may be laid off or moved to a different position next year."

During the General Strike called by Occupy Oakland on November 2nd, Oakland Teachers also staged a sick-out strike, shutting down many classrooms and encouraged their students to take part in the strike. Tens of thousands of other workers also called in sick for the day across a variety of industries and downtown Oak-

land came under the control of the demonstrators until police violently retook the area that night after a vacant building was occupied. Because the teachers were organized among each other, they were able to step outside of their roles as workers and link up with others in struggle, expanding it and deepening it.

Most recently, Waste Management recycling workers, largely immigrant Latinos who receive very low pay have gone on strike in Oakland and San Leandro. While some drivers (under a different union) have not honored the strike and thus kept trash pickups going, other drivers staged sickouts to honor the picket lines and support the strikers.

Sick-out strikes are powerful because they can be organized outside of union control. Workers can come together and call one on their own. It shows the power of workers to shutdown production and bring things to a halt. It can also expand strikes outside of the realm of one workplace or industry. But we also don't just look at these things simply as a means to get higher wages or better conditions; we see these actions as ways in which new forms of relationships can be created. These are not just tools to be used against our enemies, but point towards new ways of living outside of capital and industry.



## IN THE RIOT, NIETO LIVES ON!

Everyone knew it was going to happen, except perhaps the city officials, who threw a massive viewing party in downtown despite the warnings of the police. On October 29th, thousands of people took over the streets of San Francisco in the hours following the victory of the Giants over the Royals, taking the World Series trophy home for the 3rd time in five years.

Many activists were quick to mock the rioters, drawing comparisons between the police treatment of either black protesters or simply any protesters with a political message, and the supposed treatment of those at the sports riot, who are often white. But this line of thinking is deeply flawed when comparing the Giants riot to a common example such as the recent uprising in Ferguson. For starters, the riot in the Mission could not be described as mostly-white. Taking place in a increasingly-gentrified Latinx neighborhood, the rioters were much more racially diverse than the aforementioned narrative might let on. The Mission district has also seen countless protests over the last few years, and a number of police shootings, such as that of Alex Nieto earlier this year. Alex was a well-known Latino man, whose name appeared in both chants and graffiti during the riot.

With this in mind, it may be less the racial or class makeup of the riot that keeps police at bay than it is the size and ferocity of the riot. If we look back to the early days of Ferguson, parts of West Florissant were practical-

ly an autonomous zone as some participants described, and the police were at the outskirts of this zone, trying to force their way in. This method is not radically different from SFPD's approach to those gathered at the bonfires on Mission St., and if scaled up to account for how many more people were on that streets in SF than in Ferguson, and the level of resistance shown towards police, the approach might have been almost identical. From this we can conclude that police are much more hesitant to break up a protest or riot that will defend itself. Much could be said about why more people came out to a sports riot than a riot over the murder of a young person of color, and we would certainly prefer it the other way around, but that is not what we're discussing here.

So, why then would the police respond the same way to so-called "revelers" as they do to the supposed "thugs" and "rioters" in Missouri? Not because baseball fans are 'more' revolutionary a subject as those who rioted in Ferguson, but because baseball was simply what put people in a situation where they could take action against this world of misery and alienation *together*. But while sports may have been what brought people together, it was the context of gentrification and police brutality that clearly gave these events their character. While focus might be on the couches burned in the streets, plenty of other fun

activities took place nearby while clearly spoke to the rage people were feeling about the systems of domination:

