

# IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE UPRISING IN GUERRERO

Mexico is at a historic crossroads as a growing wave of militant social movements unleash their resistance to the neoliberal narco state of President Peña Nieto. The collective rage boiling across the country over the disappearance of 43 students from the Ayotzinapa Teachers College at the hands of municipal police working hand in hand with a local narco cartel in the state of Guerrero has stripped the state of all legitimacy. The spirit of the Yo Soy 132 movement that first took to the streets in response to the authoritarian PRI party's return to power with Peña Nieto's election in 2012 has now merged with the growing anger over the unending violence of the drug war and the Mexican State's collusion with various powerful narco cartels. During the past week, demonstrators demanding the return of the 43 missing students in Guerrero and elsewhere have clashed with police, burned down government buildings, blocked highways and airports, and staged massive marches. Their fierce uprising has opened a new political space in Mexico where the state and the narcos can be seen clearly as two sides of the same repressive capitalist coin. If these revolutionary fires continue to burn even brighter, it may signal the beginning of the end for Peña Nieto and the whole narco war power structure backed by the U.S. military aid and international capital.

## IT WAS THE STATE

## ALL POWER TO THE HOODED STREET FIGHTERS

*(from a flier handed out in San Francisco  
at a march for the 43 students)*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, Dec. 6th - 6pm - FROM FERGUSON TO AYOTZINAPA: MARCH AGAINST STATE REPRESSION - Bancroft & Telegraph - Berkeley

Sunday, Dec. 7th - 10am-8pm - EAST BAY ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR - Humanist Hall - 411 28th Street, Oakland

Saturday, Dec. 13th - 10am-6pm - HUMBOLDT ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR - 1611 Peninsula Drive, Arcata

## OUR COMRADES

QILOMBO (2313 SAN PABLO AVE) - a radical community center with a bookstore and a bike shop. Open Mon., Wed., Fri., 3-6 and on Sun. 2-4. The bike shop is open Mon., Wed., Fri., 3-6. Visit their website at [QILOMBO.ORG](http://QILOMBO.ORG) for a list of events.

LONG HAUL INFOSHOP (3124 SHATTUCK AVE) - a long standing anarchist social center in Berkeley. Stop in for a weird time. Check website for times and hours. [THELONGHAUL.ORG](http://THELONGHAUL.ORG)

THE ALAN BLUEFORD CENTER FOR JUSTICE (2434 TELEGRAPH AVE) - is a center for healing the community. Alan Blueford was a 18 year black man killed by an OPD officer in 2012. His parents and community member helped start the center. Visit the website for events dates: [JUSTICE4ALANBLUEFORD.ORG](http://JUSTICE4ALANBLUEFORD.ORG)

EAST SIDE ARTS ALLIANCE (2277 INTERNATIONAL BLVD) - is an organization of artists, cultural workers, and community organizers of color who live and/or work in the San Antonio district of Oakland. There are multiple events each month. Check the website for more details: [EASTSIDEARTSALLIANCE.COM](http://EASTSIDEARTSALLIANCE.COM)

ANTI-REPRESSION COMMITTEE - we provide support for actions that are anti-patriarchal, anti-racist, anti-imperialist & anti-capitalist. Our support work comes primarily in the form of education, information and referrals. We also manage an anti-repression bail fund for those that do not have the resources to bail or bond themselves. We are a first resort for education and information on solidarity and a last resort for financial support - [OAKLANDANTIREPRESSION.WORDPRESS.COM](http://OAKLANDANTIREPRESSION.WORDPRESS.COM)

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# EASTWEST

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*an anarchist newspaper*

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Thousands took to the streets of Oakland, California as the Grand Jury in Ferguson, MO, handed down its decision to not indict Darren Wilson, the white police officer who murdered 18 year-old Michael Brown, an African-American, in August, 2014. Brown's murder set into motion an uprising against a heavily militarized police presence that has inspired generations of young people to stand up to white supremacy and the capitalist State. While many suspected that the Grand Jury would fail to indict Wilson, the verdict has sparked widespread blockades, riots, and demonstrations across the country. Starting on Monday, November 24th and continuing into Tuesday and Wednesday, people continued to gather in downtown Oakland, march, riot, blockade freeways, clash with the police, write slogans, and loot businesses.

In Ferguson, MO, rioters looted stores, shot at police from barricades, set fires, and fought with the police. In Los Angeles, Seattle, Oakland, New York City, Chicago, and across the country, people took to the streets in solidarity and to generalize the rebel-

lion of those in Ferguson. All of this despite the pleas for calm from the Obama administration, Church groups, the Left, police organizations and other government institutions. In Oakland, non-profits like Youth Uprising opened up 'healing centers' as a way to drive young people off the streets. Clearly their efforts failed.

In Oakland starting on Monday, November 24th, people clashed with police for hours, and at one point, drove a trailer into police lines. Several times during the night, people blocked highway 580, just as people in Ferguson, Seattle, and Los Angeles blocked other major freeways. As in Ferguson, various corporate chain stores in Oakland were attacked, looted, and covered with graffiti reading, "ACAB" [All Cops Are Bastards], "RIP Alex Nieto [killed by SFPD this year] and Mike Brown," "Fuck the Police," and "Loot Back!" Various banks were also attacked in acts of targeted property destruction of an anti-capitalist nature. During the night, the looting was extremely festive and jovial, with people appropriating beer and other goods and sharing it with complete strangers

and those on the street. At one point, Starbucks and Smart and Final was looted in downtown Oakland. People wearing masks to avoid surveillance cameras and smartphones loaded up their arms with goods only to give them out in the crowd outside. As with the recent Giants riot in San Francisco, people also made use of burning barricades to create barriers between themselves and the police. When police advanced, firing flash bang grenades and rubber bullets, the crowd would fall back only to regroup again. That being said, many people in the streets last night were doing so for the first time and were easily frightened. One man yelled at the crowd as the police started firing, "Don't run! If you're a revolutionary be about it, brah!" Several people were hit with rubber bullets. Eventually, police were successful in clearing the area near Oscar Grant Plaza at 14th and Broadway.

There is no way to gloss over the very working-class and multi-racial tone of the riots. Many people were heard talking about how they had just gotten off work before coming to the events downtown, or how they were going into work in the morning. "This is how Oakland does it," stated one young person. "Riot in the evening, work in morning." The crowd was extremely diverse in character. With large amounts of black, brown, Asian, and white youth all taking part in looting and fighting the police together. The crowd



was also heavily decked out in 'black bloc,' or the use of covering ones face with a mask or a t-shirt to avoid identification from the police or the media, in scenes reminiscent of the Oscar Grant rebellions in 2009. This was also heavily on the minds of those in the crowd. "Don't forget why we here!" screamed one woman. "Justice for Mike Brown! Justice for Oscar Grant!" After smashing a window allowing Smart and Final to be looted, a person yelled, "We do this for Oscar Grant!" Although authoritarian Communist groups such as the RCP had attempted to steer the crowd earlier in the night (to varying degrees of success), many of the "activists" clearly had left the area latter on.

On Tuesday, November 25th the riots and clashes with police continued again. People met once again at 14th and Broadway before shutting down various freeways. They then marched on Telegraph where a paint store, a car dealership, a Subway, and a MetroPCS store were looted and attacked. People built large burning barricades in the street which media dubbed the "wall of fire." Rioters also attacked police cars and wrote slogans on the walls. Eventually, police were able to kettle the crowd near 40th and San Pablo and deployed tear gas. Residents

reported seeing police beating people from their homes.

Despite the deployment of police from a variety of departments around the Bay Area and armored vehicles seen in Ferguson, people again took the streets on Wednesday. With cops following the march closely with swarms of riot vans, motorbikes, and cruisers, people again rioted; breaking windows, writing graffiti, and clashing with the authorities. At the same time, police kettled a sideshow taking place at the Port of Oakland. Those inside according to twitter responded by shooting at the police and attempting to break out of the kettle. At one point, one person even set their car on fire before they could be arrested or ticketed. At the end of the three days of rioting, over 100 people had been arrested and people have begun to organize to support them in court.

In the week leading up to the Ferguson decision, occupations at University of California buildings have been spreading and ongoing. Earlier on Monday, over a thousand students and community members walked out of classes at UC Berkeley and marched across campus against a recent tuition hike and in solidarity with an ongoing occupation of Wheeler Hall. In the last several days, students and others have

taken over Wheeler Hall, the scene of previous occupations, and hosted various film showings, classes, workshops, and discussions and a variety of revolutionary subjects. Students in Santa Cruz, Davis, San Diego, and Los Angeles have all occupied buildings on campuses as well, vowing to stand in solidarity with each other. As one communiqué from Santa Cruz wrote:

*"The University of California was once a tuition-free and public institution. Now the students are facing yet another tuition hike. The most recent attempt to raise tuition in 2009 was successfully frozen by the courageous and necessary action of students, yet this week, the UC Regents have approved a 5% tuition increase each year for the next five years. This is in addition to the numerous increases that have occurred since the new millennium which amount to what will now be a 500% increase by 2020."* Students in Santa Cruz also released a statement declaring that they would occupy more buildings if police moved against the Wheeler Hall occupation at UC Berkeley.

In a recent text also issued by Santa Cruz students, they drew connections between the struggle in Ferguson and the occupation of college campuses. *"They know that the terminal threat*

### Drought Doubts

Recently, many journalists have lit upon the theory that the current dry period is not exactly exceptional. If a drought is defined as a period of "abnormal lack of precipitation," then we're not technically in one. While we may be three years deep in the longest dry stretch in California's recorded history, the fact is that California's short *recorded history* actually spans an abnormally wet period. As luck would have it, California became the fruit, nut, and veggie capital of the United States during a time when it's climate shifted and there was more rain. But now that the climate is reverting back to its long-range drier norm, 38.3 million people live here and hundreds of millions more rely on its farms for some of their most basic nutritional needs. The forecast is indeed catastrophic.

### The Insatiable Thirst of the Rich

Rich people are excellent at taking advantage of exceptional phenomena like disaster and war. They see everything in terms of potential profits, and drought is no exception. Water—specifically its capture and distribution—was central to the growth of 20th century Californian capitalism. Los Angeles would not be the well-hydrated metropolis it is today if the Owens Valley to the east had not been drained into the city's aqueducts during the California Water Wars of the early 1900's.

California is the fruit basket of the United States, producing nearly half of all domestically-grown fruits, nuts, and vegetables. Farms use a huge 80% of the state's "developed water," or water that is diverted from rivers and aquifers and into pipes and aqueducts for human use. Corporate agribusiness donated \$850 thousand to the Prop 1 campaign. Obviously, this is no coincidence. That contribution—which may seem large—is actually quite small when compared to the profits derived from the heavily irrigated farms of the Central Valley. In 2012, the state's agricultural exports brought in \$18.8 billion. With the drought on, it's easy to see why thought it wise to make sure Prop 1 passed.

Beverly Hills power couple Stewart and Lynda Resnick are really, really rich. The pair's current net-worth is estimated at \$3.8 billion by Forbes.com, so their paltry \$150 thousand donation to the Prop 1 campaign's war chest was no big deal. Their lavish lifestyle includes two spectacular mansions, one on Sunset Blvd, the other in Aspen, CO. Some of their major assets include Fiji Water, Teleflora, POM Wonderful, Suterra (agricultural pesticides), and Paramount Farms, the largest grower of tree crops in the United States. They farm 125 thousand acres of water-intensive pistachio and almond orchards in the San Joaquin Valley and reap millions in profits. According to Slate.com, almonds alone use 10% of California's developed water supply.

In a shady 1994 backroom deal known as the Monterey Agreement, a handful of water profiteers and the Department of Water Resources colluded to change state water policy. The resulting Monterey Amendments allowed the transfer of state-

ownership of the Kern Water Bank, the largest underground water storage facility in the world, to a local joint powers authority controlled in part by Resnick's companies. Today, the Kern County Water Authority operates out of the same building as Paramount Farms, which in turn owns nearly half of the Kern Water Bank. If the Water Act's infrastructure "improvements" come to pass, and the Twin Tunnels follow, Stewart and Lynda Resnick will have control over a staggeringly huge portion of California's water supply.

### Seize the Day... and the Water!

What happens to the price of something when it becomes harder to find? Think about Twinkies; the price of the little sugar sausage skyrocketed to unfathomable heights on eBay once the factory shut down. Now that production is up and running again, you can get yourself a box of ten for \$2.98 at Walmart.

The more scarce a commodity, the more expensive it becomes, as long as people still want or need it. So what does that mean for something as essential as water in times of drought? It costs more, of course, and like always under capitalism, when something costs more, poor people have less of it. As anyone who has had unfortunate experience of having their water shut off knows all too well, if you don't have the money, you're going to be thirsty.

There is absolutely no reason to believe that big agribusinesses will willingly change the ways they operate. They'll "green" operations with token improvements, sure, because even they must deal with the reality of ecological collapse. At the same time, the state will continue to make infrastructural changes to cope with the looming catastrophe. Lawmakers will collude with their rich friends to make sure everyone's happy, and then they'll send the bill to you and me. The only way to stop this is to band together to seize the infrastructure that is running—and ruining—our lives and this land. We have to organize with utility workers to take control of Oakland's water system, from its source in the Sierra Nevadas, the Mokelumne River, to the pipes running under the street, even the treatment plant. Those who know this land must collaborate to envision another way. Permaculture, habitat restoration, bioremediation—we already have the ideas and skills necessary to begin repairing the destruction wrought by centuries of deforestation, development, and fossil-fueled capitalism. We need only join the creative urge with the passion to destroy this world of toil and misery. In doing so, we will be forced to confront the material infrastructure—the highways, pipelines, factories, and fiber-optic networks—that constitute capitalism's circulatory system. And maybe, just maybe, with the all the pieces leftover, we can build a new world where the rivers and the people run wild and free once again.

# THERE IS NO DROUGHT

## California's Twisted Water Ways

For millions of years, the rivers lacing through the lands now known as California meandered freely from the mountains to the oceans. Rain fell on the robust redwood forests in the north, slowly trickling through layers of soil, sand, and rock to fill the streams and aquifers that in turn fed the rivers. Where these rivers met the ocean, as they still do today in the Bay Delta, marshy estuaries flourished with abundant wildlife. Humans arrived, the ancestors of surviving native peoples like the Ohlone and Winnemem Wintu, and they lived in balance with their home for thousands of years. There were wet years and there were dry years, but the healthy network of natural aquifers continued to sustain life.

In the few short centuries since this land was colonized by European settlers, it has transformed from the source of life into just another source of money, a collection of resources to be exploited for profit. People have changed, too. Few of us remember how to thrive in wilderness, though many grope for a life worth living and find little fulfillment in today's capitalist world. Thousands of miles of pipes bring us water, and as this infrastructure grows, we become evermore detached from the natural world and dangerously dependent on systems we have no control over.

### Prop 1 Passed But The Fight Continues

Under pressure of drought, 14.5% of California residents over age 18 voted "yes" on Governor Jerry Brown's pet Proposition 1, the *Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014*. This is the \$7.5-billion water bond that's supposed to fix the state's water problems. Thanks to this astonishing democracy, that means Prop 1 passed despite the fact that only a small proportion of California's residents agreed it was a good idea. With interest, the bond will end up costing more like \$14.4 billion—and will be paid off at a rate of \$360 million per year over the next four decades. That bill, of course, will be paid through tax money and utility increases. So if you pay your taxes and your water bill, you'll be paying off the water bond.

Sandwiched between funding allocations for nice-sounding things like groundwater cleanup, wastewater recycling, and water quality improvement, the Water Act includes \$2.7 billion for building unspecified new infrastructure like dams. This round of infrastructural changes will pave the way for another project: the deceptively named Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). The BDCP is a policy holdover from the



Schwarzenegger years and is basically a greenwashing scheme to sell the Twin Tunnels project. Governor Jerry Brown and California's largest corporate agribusinesses have proposed building two underground 35-mile and 40-foot wide tunnels—the Twin Tunnels—to divert the Sacramento River and maximize water exports from the San Francisco Bay Delta to the corporate farms of the southwest San Joaquin Valley and on to South State cities and suburbs. A constellation of groups oppose the Water Act and the Bay Delta Conservation Plan for a variety of reasons, spiritual, ecological, and economic.

The Winnemem Wintu, whose ancestral territory spreads along the lower McCloud River area above Shasta Dam, opposed Prop 1 on the grounds that many of their sacred sites would be flooded in the likely event that water bond funds go towards raising the Shasta Dam. The "Middle-Water People", as the Winnemem Wintu are known, have held several War Dances at Shasta Dam since 2004 and continue to fight for the restoration of the northern rivers and the return of the salmon. In their own words: "The salmon are an integral part of our lifeway and of a healthy McCloud River watershed. We believe that when the last salmon is gone, humans will be gone too."

Fishermen and ecologists also opposed Prop 1 due the harmful effects it will have on the already suffering Bay Delta estuary and its fish populations. The Center for Biological Diversity warns of the "smeltdown in the Delta," the impending extinction of the tiny delta smelt fish. The delta smelt is an "indicator species," one whose rapid population decline signals the poor health of the greater estuary ecosystem. Some predict that the smelt may be extinct within 20 years due to record-high water diversions from the Delta's tributaries into the state's water system, pollutants including pesticides and herbicides from Central Valley farms, and harmful nonnative species. The Twin Tunnels would only exacerbate all of this. If the smelt disappear, longfin smelt, salmon, and sturgeon will, too. This concerns the fishing industry, of course, which stands to lose a great deal of money if fisheries collapse and can no longer be exploited for profit. This *capitalist* opposition stands in contrast to that of others, like us, who do not see the earth as a "resource." **We instead see ourselves as the caretakers and protectors of the earth—of which we are part—and we struggle against its further degradation, period.**

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*to their odious machine is our refusal. We refuse to allow state violence to prevent us from taking back our buildings and our streets. There is already a state of emergency in Ferguson. It is up to us to generalize it."*

Across the world, people have responded in solidarity to the UC occupations. Students in the Egyptian city of Cairo wrote a letter of solidarity with the ongoing occupations. They write, "*We don't find it so urgent to distinguish between whether the attacks on our lives come in the name of austerity, security, or civility, but instead recognize that each of these attacks and each of our revolts against them are connected by shared logics: the logic of what you've called in your communiqué the "capitalist economy of accumulation" and the opposing logic of what we'll call in this letter "creativity and solidarity". In this spirit, we write in solidarity with all of those who look forward and see a hopeless future, and in return demand a different present and occupy it.*"

Students and others have also made the connection between the ongoing struggle in Mexico, where people have been in a fierce battle with the State which is responsible for murdering 43 Mexican students; bringing Mexico to the point of revolution. In late September, students from the rural town of Ayotzinapa were disappeared by police at the request of the local government who was trying to stop them from protesting attacks on education. It is then believed that police turned over the 43 students to narco-gangs who then brutally massacred the students.

In the wake of these atrocities, people have taken to the streets across Mexico and the world, fighting the police, burning government buildings, calling a general strike, and blocking roads. The sweeping protests also point to the growing anger over government and police corruption, which works hand in hand with narco-gangs to suppress the population. In a statement by UC Berkeley Occupiers, they wrote: "*Our struggles weave together in the tapestry of global injustice. We hope we can find some common ground with the current intersections of all these political and social upheavals in the community at Berkeley and globally.*"

People became enraged over the killing of Mike Brown not just because he was shot and murdered in broad daylight in a residential area. They became enraged because police then sectioned off the area and left Brown's body in the streets for hours. Police reacted this way because they were afraid that the crowds of largely black bodies would erupt in anger; they hoped that they could scare people into submission as they always have

done. But something snapped that day in August. People started to fight back. They recognized the police as an occupying army and recognized themselves as insurgents defending their neighborhoods. In fighting, they became our heroes and inspired a generation around the country and the world. In turn, the government responded only with more force: with tanks, with militarized police, and with high tech firepower to put down the rebellion. But even then, people continued to fight, and people across the country also took to the streets in solidarity as well.

Young people that grew up watching the Oscar Grant Riots, Student Occupations, and Occupy Oakland Rebellions and who were too young to participate 5 years ago are now in the streets. The riot is the new normalized form of protest. Things have also been brought to this point because people have seen that other forms of struggle and protest have been exhausted. What else is there to do but to raise the stakes? The riots also show the degree in which the people themselves have control over the moment and not the groups that try to represent and direct them.

The situation young people face today is one with no future — *other than a complete break with this civilization*. Wages go down and people work longer hours than ever. Despite the minimum wage rising, it still does not match pace with inflation or enable people to afford to live in the Bay Area amidst skyrocketing rents. People that decide to go into higher education often face crushing debt and ever increasing tuition.

Black, indigenous, brown, and youth of color face higher risks of incarceration, death, and poverty. When people do fight back, they face an ever militarized police force that seeks to put down any potential insurgency. Police kill people every day, to the same intensity that black people were lynched during Jim Crow while currently more people are incarcerated than during racial slavery. And, hanging in the background is the ever increasing reality of environmental collapse. In five years, many of us will be unable to afford to live in the bay area. In one hundred years, it may very well be under water.

The battles in the streets of Oakland and Ferguson, as well as the occupations of universities, point to a new form of life. A politics based on fighting and taking space, of creating new worlds and new capacities among ourselves. This is something that needs to spread into every street, every workplace, and every school.



## A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF THE SECOND NIGHT OF THE FERGUSON UPRISING IN OAKLAND

It was just after 7:00pm when some friends and I approached the plaza in downtown Oakland. There was a small crowd hanging out on the corner of 14th & Broadway, and by what we gathered from asking around was that a large group was several blocks south confronting a line of riot cops at the police station. After waiting for a few minutes and chatting with comrades, we heard the march approaching us in the distance. I stepped into the crowd and we began moving west on 14th St.

I soon found myself in a crew of a few dozen young people who were wearing masks and writing graffiti on buildings as the march passed by. Many of them wrote their tags, sometimes adding in anti-police slogans or dedications to Mike Brown. Contrary to what you might read online, I don't think a single face in this section of the crowd was white. These kids were black and brown, and from the tags they wrote, I could guess they were mostly from East Oakland.

The march was stopped by police as it neared the 980 freeway, attempting to shut it down for a second time that night. As the crowd attempted to maneuver around the police lines, a loud thud drew my attention and I watched a young Latino man jump on a police car and kick in its rear windshield.

The police were adamant about not letting us back on the freeway, so the march found itself heading north on San Pablo, on the outskirts of the heavily gentrified Uptown area. Newly opened restaurants and hip music clubs were painted with graffiti as well as the Uptown luxury apartment complexes on the other side of the street.

The march snaked through the streets, avoiding police containment, and before long ended up in the KONO district of Telegraph Ave, a recently re-branded commercial corridor. Telegraph has been a common target of previous demonstrations, and many businesses were prepared either by boarding up their building or placing security guards outside the store. Several blocks north, the crowd came to a standstill, with some people jumping the fence and climbing on the 580 freeway, while others faced off against police protecting the CHP station further ahead on Telegraph, and still more stayed behind and attempted to loot a Wal-

greens. The group I found myself with dragged dumpsters from behind A Taste of Denmark and lit them on fire in at the back of the crowd on Telegraph, preventing police from getting too close. People passed around cans of spray paint and soon every available surface was covered with tags and slogans. Those of us who stayed toward the back decided to circle around through West Oakland as the police line at the front seemed to too strong to break through. This was proven wrong, and as we turned the corner from MacArthur Blvd back onto Telegraph we could see the crowd now stretched the three blocks to 40th St, with several barricades lining the streets that were lit on fire.

Once we reached the front of the crowd, which was still in the thousands, people in the crowd started throwing rocks at the windows of a luxury car dealership, followed by some who ran inside to grab what they could. Later, someone would emerge from the dealership with a safe. Across the street, others were inspired to smash the windows of the Subway and it was looted as well. The march continued north, and a few blocks later people started breaking in to a paint store, where people collected as much paint as they could, which was later repurposed to vandalize even more businesses like the nearby McDonalds.

The crowd was embolden by these actions and any remaining fear of police repression had disappeared. As the crowd passed a bike store, I saw those same young people of color try to break down the security gate, the only thing standing between them and brand new bikes. They only stopped after being shamed by white marchers who claimed it was a local business, which is true, it's owned by transplants who opened it up less than ten years ago. Minutes later, Black Friday came early for people who rushed a T-Mobile store and looted phones on 51st Street.

The rest of the night was a blur as people continued to outmaneuver police and found themselves at the entrance to the Emeryville shopping district on 40th St and San Pablo Ave. By now, the police had fully encircled the march and had deployed tear gas multiple times. It was slowly dispersed from the intersection over the next couple of hours.



## WE ARE WRENCHES IN THE GEARS WORKPLACE RESISTANCE NEWS

In early November, recycling workers in Alameda County went out on strike against poverty wages and poor working conditions. Many of the workers involved in the strike were immigrant workers but decided to walk off the job regardless of the risks. "That's when we finally said 'Enough!,'" one striker explains. **"As a union, we support each other. If some of us can't work, then none of us will."**

"They think we're insignificant people," declares striker Dinora Jordan. "They don't think we count and don't value our work. But we're the ones who find dead animals on the conveyor belts. All the time we have to watch for hypodermic needles. If they don't learn to respect us now, they never will."

According to David Bacon writing for *In These Times*, "Sorting trash is dangerous and dirty work. In 2012, two East Bay workers were killed in recycling facilities. With some notable exceptions, putting your hands into fast moving conveyor belts filled with cardboard and cans does not pay well—much less, for instance, than the jobs of the drivers who pick up the containers at the curb. And in the Bay Area, the sorting is done almost entirely by women of color, mostly immigrants from Mexico and Central America and African Americans."

Workers also sought to expand the struggle to the Teamster drivers that carried trash into the plant, but who crossed picket lines. Some drivers did call out sick, helping to expand the strike, but Teamster leaders refused to respect the picket line. The strike ended after a week and workers made gains in wages and conditions.

Several days later, workers at Whole Foods in San Francisco affiliated with the radical and anti-capitalist union the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) staged a protest demanding higher wages. A report read: "Workers presented management with a demand for a \$5-an-hour across-the-board wage increase for all employees. Workers at the store currently earn from \$11 to \$19.25 an hour."

Workers then engaged in a work stoppage at the store and held a meeting. After the action, Whole Foods responded by giving workers a raise of \$1.25. Workers continued to fight, forming pickets in Richmond at Whole Foods warehouse, and in one instance, stopped a truck from coming into the facility. The struggle is ongoing.

Several days later, nurses staged a two-day strike in Oakland at Kaiser facilities. The strike coincides with a national day of action planned Wednesday, on which nurses are demanding that hospitals give them better protection and training against Ebola. The union accused Kaiser of

failing to adopt optimal protections against the Ebola virus.

In late November, ILWU workers at the Ports of Oakland, Benecia, Redwood City, and San Francisco all walked off the job after the death of a fellow worker. At the Port of Benecia, 57 year old Thomas Hoover died of respiratory failure. Every longshoreman at every port is exposed to toxic exhaust from ships and trucks during every shift. His death can be viewed in this context.

On Black Friday, protests again continued at Wal-Mart stores as workers continued to fight for high wages and union

recognition. Bus drivers at various tech companies are also undergoing various unionization campaigns with the Teamsters. But workers do not always have to join the big unions like the Teamsters or the SEIU. They can take things on themselves, forming action groups and holding general assemblies. The recent actions of IWW Whole Foods workers show a powerful example of this.

Another example is those of taxi, Uber, and Lyft drivers in the Bay Area, who are carrying out actions, organizing demonstrations, and taking part in slow downs that blockade traffic, as taxi drivers recently did at SFO airport. What is needed is for workers to come together across various job sites and strike in coordinated action. Together, united, we can shut down everything.



them to their car. In order to stop him, one of the robbers fired a round through the front window of the mansion. For the law-and-order loving denizens of the city of millionaires, this was all just too much. No longer would these righteous citizens be inflicted with Oakland's astronomical crime rate. Instead, they began to appeal to their civic leaders for a digital wall of surveillance to be erected between them and the lower-classes.

In April, 2014, the Public Safety Committee recommended that the City Council purchase and install 12 license plate readers (LPR) at the main entrances of Piedmont. The number LPR's was shortly increased to 39. In May the council approved the recommendation and allocated nearly \$700,000 for the LPR system. The LPRs were installed in November and by the beginning of 2014, the PPD was already using the system to apprehend burglars. An individual LPR can capture 60 license plate numbers a second and send that information to the Northern California Regional Intelligence Center where it is checked against the "hotlist" of cars suspected of criminal involvement. After this, it is sent directly to the federal government. Local law enforcement can keep this license plate information (time, date, map coordinates, etc.) for one year. The federal government keeps it indefinitely.

In August, 2014, an Acura unknowingly drove beneath the Grand Avenue LPR and triggered an alert. Within minutes, the PPD was chasing the Acura down Grand in excess of 85 mph and pursued it up to Oakland High School. The driver crashed and was then surrounded by police two blocks away from the school. Around the same time, several PPD cruisers surrounded a car and detained a woman of color at gunpoint on Grand Avenue. They made her sit on her knees in the middle of the street with her hands on her head, surrounded on all sides by guns. In the video of the incident, she is clearly trembling in fear. She was never charged with any crime. In October, 2014, the chief of the PPD announced that crime for the first three quarters of 2014 had dropped compared to 2013. Citing this drop in crime, the City of Alameda has now equipped four of its police cruisers with LPRs in order to monitor who comes in and out of the conservative island city. These cruiser mounted LPRs are capable of recording tens of thousands of license plates in a single day, depending on the length of the patrols. As it currently stands, San Leandro, Piedmont, Tiburon, and Alameda are the Bay Area cities currently LPR technology on its streets and cruisers. All of these cities have one resemblance: they are havens of the middle and upper-classes surrounded by poverty, degradation, and violence.

We have enclosed a map of the currently existing LPR's along the Piedmont/Oakland border. Some of us spend many hours making sure these newspapers get where they need to go, so please pass this information along. If any of you are in search of a project that will alleviate some of your rage at this everyday totalitarianism, feel free to tear down or otherwise destroy the cameras at each of the listed locations. After all, you have nothing to lose but your (digital) chains.



Just over two years ago, a small restaurant opened in San Francisco's Mission District. The restaurant was named "Local's Corner" but it was plain to see that it was not intended for locals. Instead, it aimed at the influx of wealthy transplants coming to the neighborhood. The tensions that existed between longtime Mission residents and newcomers flared up when last year a latinx group was refused seating at the restaurant, which was followed by criticism and later vandalism. After a quiet autumn, Local's Corner was greeted with a brick through their window on New Year's Day. In the last year, while ACCE led a boycott campaign against the restaurant, it was vandalized several more times. One group, a graffiti crew known as Keep Hoods Yours (KHY) was responsible for multiple instances of graffiti. KHY is made up of San Francisco natives and has been active in anti-gentrification struggles in the Mission as well as the Justice for Alex Nieto campaign.

After being hit with graffiti and other vandalism over half a dozen times, and likely more times that went unreported, Local's announced at the beginning of November 2014 that they were closing at the end of the month. While the owner was quick to cite internal problems and dismiss the vandalism as a primary cause, it is clear the attacks had a significant affect on the closure of the restaurant. With the influx of gentrifying businesses, whether they are artisanal restaurants, boutique stores, or pricey cafés, they can be stopped if people come together and take matters into their own hands. Gentrification is more than a conspiracy of yuppies - there are larger forces of capitalism involved like developers, politicians, and financial corporations. But, small actions like these are concrete ways we can put a halt to the decimation of black and brown neighborhoods by the interests of the wealthy and white supremacy.

Local's Corner is survived by three other businesses in the Local's Empire. There is still Local Mission Eatery, located at 3111 24th Street, that specializes in roasted goat and crispy pig head. All of its ingredients are locally sourced. Get it? There is also the Local Mission Market, located at 2670 Harrison Street, an organic luxury store that sources all of its products from within 100 miles. Oh, so that's what they mean about local. Okay. There is also Local Cellars, located at 2801 22nd Street, a high end boozery where you can buy thirty dollar bottles of wine and cider from locals orchards. You know, really, all of this sounds pretty great, all this local stuff, but there's just one problem: only the rich, white invaders have access to it. While we all dream of a world where we are no longer alienated from our food, as long as we are using money to obtain it, we always will be.

## PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF THE BLACK FRIDAY RIOT IN SAN FRANCISCO

I was very nervous on the way to the demonstration in San Francisco on Friday, November 28th. The last time there was a call for a big demo starting at the Embarcadero, it ended in a mass arrest and a year long legal battle waged by the San Francisco Prosecutor's Office. Over a hundred people were across from the Ferry Building when I arrived, and by the time the first speakers addressed the crowd, there were nearly five hundred people there. A variety of speakers took turns sharing their perspectives, and just before 6 PM we all set off down Market Street.

As we went along our way, our numbers grew, as did the energy in the air. As one, we all took a right towards Union Square and the annual tree lighting ceremony. The crowd flowed past the Apple Store, forcing the managers to lock the doors. Despite the policeman guarding the door, someone managed to tag the window with the letters FTP (Fuck The Police). The sight of this paint terrified many of the shoppers inside, although it is unclear how. Utilizing the pedestrian walkway between the major shops, the crowd was able to make it Union Square, just opposite the Disney Store.

It did not take long for all of the surrounding stores to lockdown and for a fight to break out with the police. It all started in response to someone smashing a jewelry store window, and when the cops moved in everyone became extremely angry. Small groups of cops were attacked multiple times whenever they tried to arrest someone, constantly being forced to retreat. When it was clear a large fight was going to break out, the crowd left the contained walkway and went down Stockton towards Market Street. On Stockton various people began to smash windows at Macy's and Crate & Barrel. When a lone cop tried to stop it, he was mobbed by the crowd and pushed to the sidewalk. The crowd eventually made it to Market but was stopped at Powell by a line of riot police. In panic, the Westfield mall locked down for the next forty minutes.

During the police advance, a smaller group was split off from the march by two lines of riot police. When several cops tried to assault the crowd, the crowd began to fight back. The crowd put its hands up and slowly backed up while the police advanced. Suddenly, two of the cops decided to strangle and then slam a local livestreamer onto the sidewalk. While they were arresting him, one of the cops, a real piece of shit, walked up to the nearest black person he could find and got in their face. While

frantically chewing gum, the cop hissed, "He is under arrest," before returning to confiscate the livestreamer's smartphone. Just before he could glance at the screen, a traffic barricade hit him in the head, knocking him down to the pavement. His partner ran to capture the thrower, but she tripped on the livestreamer's foot and fell face-first onto the sidewalk, bringing much joy to the air. It has been famously captured on a 6 second Vine video which at the time of this writing has been viewed 13,000,000 times.

Forty minutes after being separated, the crowd coalesced and walked down the sidewalk along Market until they were back on the street. A well dressed man tried to get the march to go back downtown, but at that point Latino youth from the Mission began to lead to march to their barrio. Surprisingly, the march left Twitter unscathed. A woman asked why no one was smashing the windows and a person responded that, "They needed a brick!" The march traveled down Market and took a left on Valencia into the Mission. It zig-zagged around before arriving at 24th and then heading through the heart of the Latino neighborhood. Showing a tremendous amount of concern, the crowd did not vandalize any of the local businesses.



When the march reached Potrero, the police attempted to kettle the demonstration, provoking several small fights. It seemed as if it might end, but we all grouped back together and returned to 24th. After that, the energy exploded and people attacked a news van, a high-end wine store, an electronics store, and looted a Radio Shack. At the corner of 24th and Mission, nearly all of the windows at the McDonalds were smashed out. In no time at all, this energy flowed up to Valencia where a few high-end restaurants had their windows smashed while people were eating dinner. The air was filled with anti-yuppie chants until the end, when the police eventually kettled the remnants of the march. Over fifty people were arrested, taken to the jail, cited, and then released.

All in all, it was a tremendous night. SFPD has not had their asses handed to them in a long time. I dedicate this piece to the memory of Ted Gullicksen [Homes Not Jails, SF Tenants Union, who passed away recently] and everyone who has lived and died on the streets of San Francisco.

# PIEDMONT - A MANSION OF ONES OWN

ON THE HISTORICAL ROLE OF  
PIEDMONT AS A LOCUS  
OF HIGH CAPITALISM

During the protests for Mike Brown that recently shook the City of Oakland to its roots, you may have heard various people yelling that the protest should go to the City of Piedmont. Many people did not understand why the tremendous energy of those nights should be channeled to the tree lined city in the hills. But there is a clear reason to do such a thing, and it is quite easy to communicate, especially in a newspaper.

Part of blame for the creation of Piedmont rests on the shoulders of Jack London. While a few bourgeois families had already built large houses atop the hill, most of the land was unincorporated and largely wild. Hoping to escape the misery of the industrial Oakland he grew up in, Jack London and his family moved to a small bungalow at 206 Scenic Avenue in 1902. In 1907, the City of Piedmont was declared to exist, creating a separate municipality completely surrounded by Oakland. As the years progressed, more artists and bohemians moved in around the famous Jack London, giving the hill an aura of culture and freedom. This bohemian milieu was composed mostly of artists and socialists, but soon

enough of the socialists were gone, disenchanted by Jack London's racist and individualist beliefs.

One example of Jack London's descent into bourgeois madness can be found in his short story **The Golden Poppy** (1902). After moving into his bungalow, Jack London was overwhelmed by the hills covered in orange California poppies. On nice days, poor folk from Oakland would wander into the hills, and from his window Jack London watched them pick poppies on what he jokingly called "my property." Jack London called himself a socialist, but after many months of watching the poor pick the flowers, London erected up a no-trespassing sign and guarded the hill like a hawk, only to find that none of the city-folk paid any attention to his boundar-

ies or demarcations. Week by week, Jack London came to hate the lower classes who just wanted a flower for their hair or a distraction from their toil. In his rage against them, he wrote passages such as the following:

*At one time, years ago, these hills were carpeted with poppies. As between the destructive forces and the will "to live," the poppies maintained an equilibrium with their environment. But the city folk constituted a new and terrible destructive force, the equilibrium was overthrown, and the poppies well-nigh perished. Since the city folk plucked those with the longest stems and biggest bowls, and since it is the law of kind to procreate kind, the long-stemmed, big-bowled poppies failed to go to seed, and a stunted,*

*short-stemmed variety remained to the hills. And not only was it stunted and short-stemmed, but sparsely distributed as well. Each day and every day, for years and years, the city folk swarmed over the Piedmont Hills, and only here and there did the genius of the race survive in the form of miserable little flowers, close-clinging and quick-blooming, like children of the slums dragged hastily and precariously through youth to a shrivelled and futile maturity.*

Such were the beginnings of the flight of the rich to the hills, replete with cynicism, high culture, and total selfishness. The artists that hung around Jack London's bungalow were soon scooped up by wealthy capitalist patrons such as Frank C. Havens, a real-estate baron and one of Piedmont's founders. Havens would go on to build an art gallery in 1908 that was

curated by one of the town's famous bohemians. Jack London himself was patronized by the Bohemian Club, a group of powerful capitalists that required 10% of their membership to be artists. The rich have always loved to be entertained, and Jack London amused them until he died in 1916. After his death, the number of wealthy people began to dramatically increase. The isolated cabins of the bohemians were soon surrounded by stately mansions filled with servants. By the 1920's, dozens of millionaires moved to the cultured city in the hills, enchanted by the mystique of the artists and bohemians. During that intoxicating decade, Piedmont became widely known as "the city of millionaires."

and poverty of the new industrial landscape. For the past 100 years, the upper-classes have resided on the hills of Piedmont, smug and content inside the cocoon of their accumulated wealth.

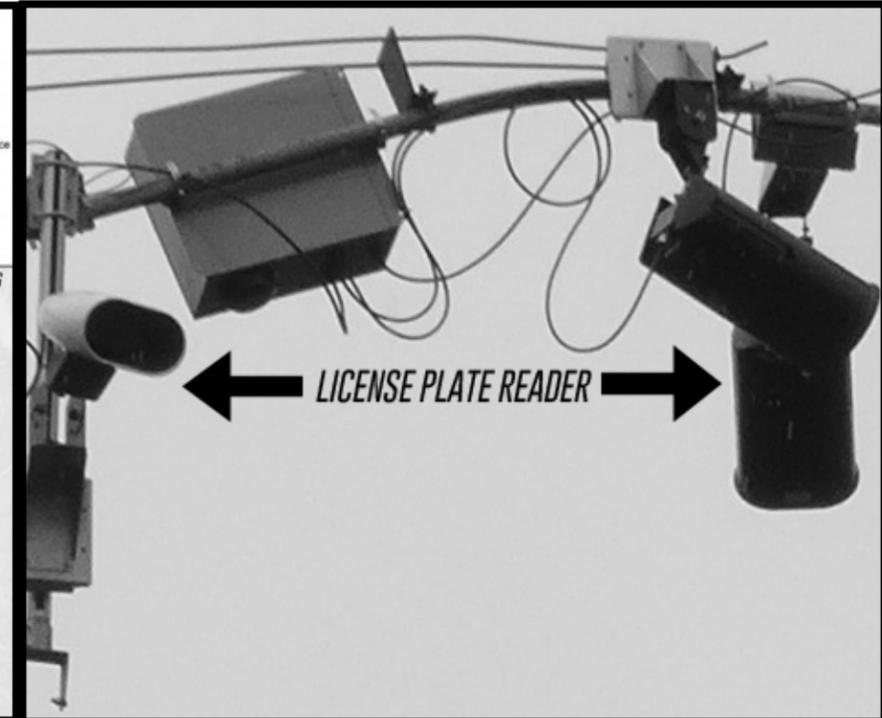
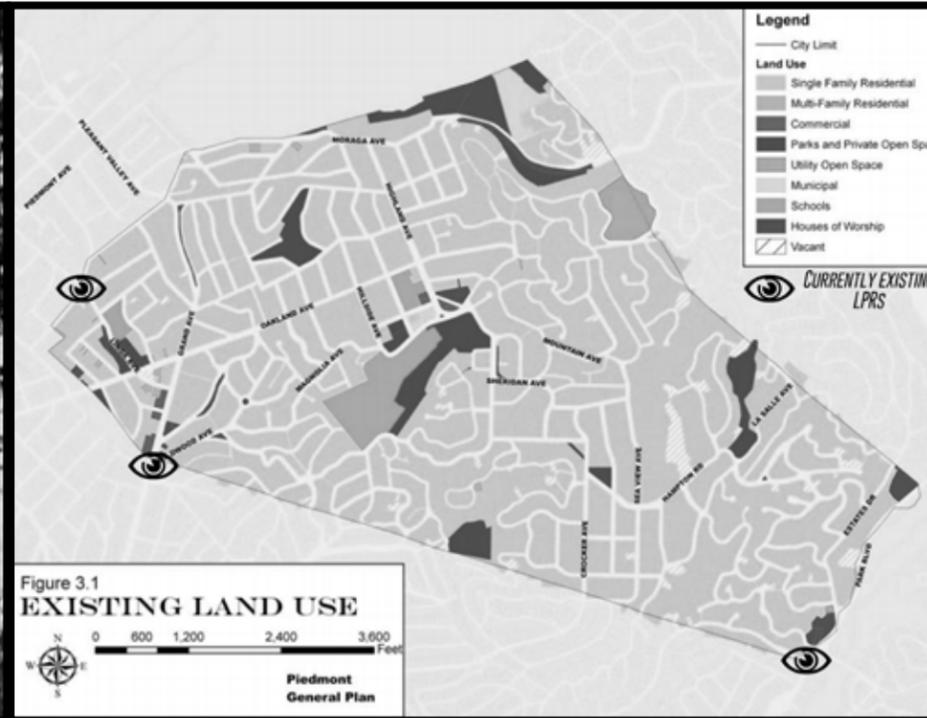
Today, almost 30% of the Piedmont population are corporate executives, corporate lawyers, or corporate managers. The cheapest price for a house hovers around \$1,000,000, the public school district is one the best in California, and the median household income is over \$260,000 compared to Oakland's \$50,000. The population is also over 70% white. There are approximately 140 black people out of a population of over 10,000. The Piedmont Police Department (PPD) has

28 employees for a city that is only 1.7 square miles large. The concentration of capital in Piedmont is so acute that crime literally **MUST** penetrate its borders.

The crime rate has risen only twice since 2000. The first increase occurred in the middle of the housing bubble and peaked in 2006. In that year, there were 71 burglaries, 75 car thefts, and 4 arsons, among many other crimes.

After 2006, the crime rate dropped until 2012, when it quickly began to rise. During that year, there were 134 burglaries as compared to nearly half that in 2006. This upward trend continued into 2013, with dozens of people sneaking through Piedmont to case and then crack their way into the mansions of the super-rich.

One incident on January 21st, 2013, catapulted the Piedmont crime-wave to local attention. Three black men stormed into one mansion on Estates Drive, detained the residents, and made off with some jewelry and electronics. Less than an hour later, the same men stormed another mansion but were alerted to danger by their driver waiting outside. As the men left the second mansion, a resident tried to follow



The town itself was the project of Frank C. Havens and his business partner Francis Smith. Together, they purchased and sold various plots of land in Piedmont, Oakland, and Berkeley, as well as financing the construction of various buildings. The long tree-lined expanse of Havenscourt Boulevard in East Oakland is an example of one of their real estate developments, as is the enormously white and luxurious Claremont Hotel in Berkeley. Havens was also one of the original owners of the Key System, the electric trolley network that allowed people to commute from Downtown to their new middle-class housing developments along the marshlands.

Piedmont was their shining jewel, an iconoclastic upper-class utopia isolated from the factories, plants, smelters,