

SF MISSION COMMUNITY DISRUPTS MAXIMUS FORUM ON CONDO DEVELOPMENTS

On March 4th, several hundred people disrupted a meeting hosted by Maximus, LLC, a company that is planning to build a huge condo project right in the heart of the Mission District, near 16th street plaza. The event, which was billed as a presentation of the “benefits” that Maximus would bring to the community, was hosted at the Laborers International Union, Local 261, which is hoping to secure contracts to construct what many have deemed, “The Monster in the Mission.” As one person told me while in the meeting, “Its a classic tactic, use the working class against the lower class.”

The crowd was angry and diverse, with many residents in attendance affected directly by the project. These included tenants that are being threatened with eviction and displacement and parents of children who attend Marshall Elementary, a school adjacent to the proposed site. As housing rights organizer Tommi Mecca stated, “If Maximus builds these condos on 16th and Mission, there will be massive gentrification in this neighborhood. New people who move in will call the police to get rid of the poor people”

The rally in front of the Local 261 Hall began at around 5:30 PM and numbers quickly grew as night fell. The street was blocked off as the large crowd listened to speakers and chanted outside of the meeting. Members of Local 261 began to slowly let groups of three inside the building but did not allow any signs or banners. Despite the misguided pleas of protest organizers to adhere to this request, in reality, it did not matter much. It took only several minutes into the power point presentation of Maximus’s hired “community liaisons,” for the shouting to start.

Attempts were made by Maximus and union officials to get the crowd to calm down and save their comments for the end of the presentation, but the pleas were to no avail. Several shouting matches broke out, people chanted and screamed, and various community members broke out in “MIC CHECK!” and the telling of their stories. One woman who’s child goes to Marshall Elementary talked about her opposition to the project. Another reacted to Maximus’ claim that some of their condos were affordable to social workers and teachers. “I’m a teacher and I can’t afford to live in these condos!” she screamed. The meeting was shut down shortly after.

For pictures, video, and more information, see:
www.fireworksbayarea.com.

in Oakland that have been instrumental in this type of culture of resistance. The first lie in the post-Occupy formations of the Foreclosure Defense Group who’s main objective was to keep people in their homes by any means necessary, from filing court motions to housing occupations. Their most successful action being the taking back of Jody Foster’s house in Alameda. This group and the East Bay Solidarity Network have had major contributions in making political space in residential areas.

Another post-Occupy formation that lent itself particularly to the block party was the Ghost Town General assembly. This was an attempt by anarchists of color and long term residents to continue the catalyzing effects of Occupy, from the city streets into the neighborhoods. The assembly was composed of many of the same people who organized the Block Party, it was at the assemblies that the politically minded people in the neighborhood first met one another. The Assembly was widely diverse from older African-American residents who still held strong to the Black Panther Legacy in Oakland. The most notable was a 90 year old women named Marilyn Mackey born on 29th st in her family’s home, who allowed the group to meet in her squatted social center next to the liquor store. Other participants where liberal “99%”-ers who wanted community gardens and of course a few of the anarchists who lived in the area.

This larger narrative is given to illustrate the point that some organizing efforts effects are immeasurable, and that many social ties have rippling effects that can continue far past an initial organizing endeavor. Integrating our “personal” life with the struggle for liberation with our friends and neighbors is a way of forcing social conflict into arenas of society that are normally designated as non-political. These efforts and ones like them have the ability to make struggle a permanent part of our everyday lives, and have social antagonism reach into every level of society.

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They want us to work for money. They want us to spend our money on rent. Whatever is left over, we give to our families, our children, sometimes ourselves. And when it runs out, we have to get more. And so, just like Amilcar Perez-Lopez, we wake up at five in the morning and ride through the darkness to a construction site. Or, like Yvette Henderson, we take a big purse into a department store and steal expensive items to sell on the street. But whether we work a supposedly “legitimate” job like Amilcar or steal from Home Depot like Yvette Henderson did, the risk of being killed by the police still remains.

On February 3rd, Yvette Henderson, a mother of two, strolled through the Home Depot in Emeryville, putting expensive kitchen knives in her purse. On her way out of the store, one of the Securitas employees asked to look inside her bag. But she didn’t want him to look, and eventually there was a confrontation. No one knows why, but the Securitas employees believed Yvette had a gun. When she ran off, this security guard, someone who is paid less than \$15 an hour, called the police and reported what he had seen. Yvette ran as far as she could get before being surrounded by EPD and OPD officers. She died from multiple gunshot wounds for

the crime of trying to make some money. Blood and pieces of Yvette’s head and brains were still on the pavement hours after her body was finally hauled away by an ambulance and firefighters came to wash away the carnage.

People gathered immediately at the scene of the shooting, at the border between West Oakland and Emeryville. After a candlelight vigil that evening, several dozen marched to the Home Depot she was accused of shoplifting from, and a brick was thrown through their windows. Flowers were then looted and taken back to the site where she was killed, placed at the growing memorial of signs and flowers. For the next week, Home Depot was closed early, and some claim that they no longer check receipts on your way out.

Yvette was killed six blocks from a small park on San Pablo Ave that was recently fenced off to the public. There are big plans for this strip of San Pablo, but none of these plans were decided on by the people who have called that park home for years. Soon after, people came, ripped down the fence, and liberated the park. Now the neighborhood people are still there instead of being pushed further away, to neighborhoods in East Oakland that have yet to be hit with these advanced stages of gentrification, or further out in the

suburbs of the Bay Area.

Homeless people are not the only ones threatened with evictions, however. Just blocks away from the San Pablo park, multiple houses sport banners declaring their intention to resist eviction. Station 40, an anarchist social center in the heart of the Mission District in SF, announced that their landlord intended to evict them before selling the building.

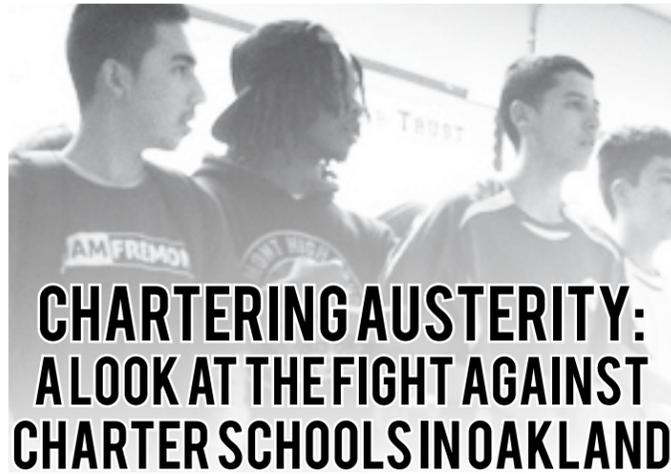
Several blocks away from Station 40, on February 26th, Amilcar Perez-Lopez returned to his home in the Mission after a long day of manual labor only to find that someone he knew stole his bike. To make matters worse, Amilcar and his friends were also being threatened with eviction from their Mission home. As he ran outside and down the street to find the bike thief, a gentrifying yuppie who had just moved into the Mission called the cops on Amilcar. Maybe a bike is nothing to them, but it was something for Amilcar, and he wanted it back. But he never got it, because undercover SFPD officers appeared out of nowhere and executed him in cold blood. They said they were responding to a report of a bike theft, but in the end, 21 year-old Amilcar from Guatemala was dead on the pavement.

Several days after the murder, people took to the streets despite a heavy police presence to rage against his murder. Several days after that, people shouted down the police at a meeting they called to discuss their version of events surrounding the killing. One thing is clear from all this: **PEOPLE IN THE MISSION ARE EXTREMELY ANGRY.** Within a year, four SF residents have been executed by SFPD, 3 in the Mission. To make matters worse, an arson wave (many suspect sponsored by developers) has evicted dozens of residents from their homes. Evictions and police violence are two sides of the same coin and the same system of exploitatoin and State violence.

Capitalism killed Yvette and Amilcar. Whether it be the frightened gentrifier calling the cops or the scared Securitas guard, the effect is still the same. Those who want to protect capital, those who want to keep the “undesirables” out of their neighborhood, will keep doing so as long as there is no resistance.

It is time to lose our fear, locate our enemies, and never allow them to murder again.

**LONG LIVE YUVETTE!
LONG LIVE AMILCAR!
DEATH TO CAPITALISM!**



From fireworksbayarea.com

FW: Why have students been shutting down Oakland Unified School Board meetings?

CS: School communities – school workers, students and families – have been carrying out various actions at their schools and at board meetings due to the neoliberal policy called the “Call for Quality Schools.” This policy is targetting 5 “underperforming” schools and putting them through an RFP process. RFPs, or Request For Proposals, are a way in which the OUSD administrators and school board members can treat each school’s management positions as a commodities to be put on the market. Charter School Organizations, non profits funded by corporate money, and other entities are being put in competition with the school sites to determine who has the “best plan” for running the schools.

They are carrying out this process in a very blunt and aggressive manner – steamrolling their proposals without considering the school community’s own needs and processes, making hasty decisions and putting them out over email prior to being clear on what’s happening.

FW: Why has Oakland seen so many school closures?

CS: The short answer is austerity. School budgets in Oakland have declined for a long time, and though there is a bit more money in the budget now due to some level of economic recovery, it’s nothing compared to what’s been cut in the past years of downturn and crisis. As a result, the OUSD takes the austerity route: cutback on staff, schools, and programs and attempt to do more with less. It’s the everyday means through which the public sector carries out capitalist exploitation.

MORE INFO AT: CLASSROOMSTRUGGLE.ORG

trump the basic needs of the rest of us to simply live.

Then there’s the police state. Not only will the police come and literally force you from your home if you refuse to leave, but they also contribute to the project of gentrification by disappearing working-class and poor black and brown residents. In a city of 6 percent black residents (in 1980 it was 13 percent), the SF County Jail is made up of 56 percent black prisoners. To paint the picture in even more stark terms, in the last year SFPD has murdered Alex Nieto, O’Shaine Evans, Matthew Hoffman, and just days ago, Amilcar Perez-Lopez. These men, three men of color, and Hoffman, a poor man struggling with his mental health, represent the demographics of the folks who are being lost right now in San Francisco.

We gotta say it: the phenomena of rampant police murders, the banishment of thousands of longtime residents from city centers, all those forced to live on the streets, and the increasing number of poor people getting warehoused in jails and prisons—2.5 million people nationwide—signals that our society condones state-sponsored ethnic cleansing that targets black and brown residents.

Adriana Camarena of the Justice for Alex Nieto organization pointed out in a recent demonstration that the new Condo “Vida” should really be named “Muerte” because that’s what condos represent to the people who have lived here for decades. Everyone knows that the people who move into these new developments are quick to call the cops on their Latino neighbors (like Alex) and say that the neighborhood is being improved as Latino residents get forced from their homes. Meanwhile, they gloat about how great it is that they live in a neighborhood with so much culture and taquerias on every block.

All this is happening while mysterious fires are destroying the homes of working-class people throughout the Mission District, leaving the next-door condos completely intact, and the city moves on plans to build an even bigger jail to replace the one at 850 Bryant.

We know that the eviction of our space is a stepping-stone toward the eviction and demolition of this entire block. As of yet, the Jolish family has made no offer that we could accept and still hold our heads high. We want to

maintain, defend, and build collective, autonomous, and working-class space in this neighborhood. We cannot accept any offers that do not make that possible. Even if we were made such an offer, we do not conceive of winning in solely individual terms. The choice to stay and fight is also a choice to fight for this neighborhood as a whole. We want to stay, but we also want everyone else to stay as well.

We believe that by fighting together, we can jointly hold back the system of death and erasure. We are infinitely grateful for all the solidarity we have already received; because of it we are still here. We’re asking for your continued support because we want to stay put in our home and in this neighborhood for many years to come.

The simple truth that the Jolish family continues to deny is also our greatest strength: this is our home. This is our home and we are going to fight tooth and nail for it. We are not millionaires trying to add a few more million to the pile. We are working class people, who against all odds, have built a home here. Having something to fight for makes us strong.

For more info, go to:
www.station40.org

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Several hundred people



PEOPLE TAKE TO THE STREETS IN THE WAKE OF THE POLICE MURDER OF AMILCAR PEREZ-LOPEZ IN SF



STATION 40 IN SF MISSION VOWS TO RESIST EVICTION AND FIGHT FOR THEIR HOME

About a week ago, we received eviction papers (an unlawful detainer) from our landlords, Ahuva, Emanuel, and Barak Jolish. Their legal documents aim to displace the dozen of us tenants from our affordable, eleven-year-old home, Station 40, located at 3030B 16th Street. It is no coincidence that Station 40 is being evicted on the same intersection as the hotly contested proposed development by Maximus Real Estate Partners of a 350-unit luxury apartment building in what is a predominantly working-class neighborhood.

The Mission has already seen many evictions, and much resistance to them. Benito Santiago won his fight to stay in his home, which is now owned by the SF Land Trust. Patricia Kerman and Tom Rapp also won their eviction case against their landlord, but still struggle courageously to stay in their home. Our turn has come, and we don't intend to make it easy for our landlords.

When the proposed Maximus luxury apartments were announced, we all knew that we'd be next. If we were surprised, it was only with how quickly it happened.

Within a week of that announcement, the Jolish family had already begun talking about getting us out.

The truth is that the Jolish family stands to make millions off the fact that 16th and Mission along with San Francisco as a whole are being flipped for the benefit of the rich, while devastating those who have called this place their home for decades. The Plaza 16 Coalition, which Station 40 is also a member of, likes to call the Maximus project "the monster in the Mission." Behind this monster, we see many intertwining monsters—capitalism and white supremacy, to name just two.

Tragically we've seen developers like Maximus Real Estate Partners and their shadowy peons from the "Clean Up the Plaza" campaign look at the community at 16th

and Mission as nothing more than a barrier to their riches. In 2013, we started to see Clean Up the Plaza placards everywhere. This was strange since no one seemed to know who was behind the campaign or what its agenda was. It soon became clear when Maximus announced its intention to build a 350-unit luxury apartment building that would take out a whole corner of businesses, a plaza used by hundreds of poor—mostly black and Latino people—and cast an ominous shadow over the playground of nearby Marshall Elementary. It turns out that one of the political consultants for Maximus, Jack Davis, is one of the main organizers of the Clean Up the Plaza scheme.



Then the police occupation of the plaza began. Day and night, SFPD menaced over those who kick it in the plaza, such as immigrants, SRO residents and people without homes, addicts, working people, multigenerational families, and outcasts of all stripes. We watched from our windows across the street in horror as more and more of these people were targeted, criminalized, and disappeared.

The insidious power plays used to displace people along with their culture at 16th and Mission are happening throughout the Mission District, Bay Area, and in many cities nationwide. There's first the most obvious issue: evictions. Evictions come in the form of lawsuits where losing means potentially being forced to pay for your own attorney and your landlord's attorney (who is likely getting paid \$300 or much more per hour). This process takes months, and necessitates that you are able to go to meetings with lawyers and attend several court dates during work hours, among numerous other tasks that become a full-time job. Everyday people, the very people who make up the heart and soul of San Francisco cannot compete with this apparatus that is set up to work against them. The property "rights" of millionaires

BLOCK PARTY IN WEST OAKLAND RALLIES TO HALT EVICTION

On January 30th 2015 Annette Miller-Johnson held a block party to kick off her and her family's defense of their home against mortgage company Nation Star. Annette lives on 30th street in west Oakland, an area known to local's by the name Ghost town. The **Alliance for California Community Empowerment** who helped organize the event describes the details of the situation:

On Friday, January 23rd, they received notice to vacate the property in 3 days or they will call for an eviction. Her family is one of the few remaining African American families from a neighborhood that's seen a more than 25% decrease of African Americans since 2008 in a historically black neighborhood that has been decimated by the racist, predatory lending practices leading to the economic collapse of 2008. After Annette's grandparents died, the house was left with their son, Annette's uncle, who took out a new mortgage on the home in 2006. Tragically, due to an unexpected massive heart attack, he passed at the early age of 54 with no will to his name. Annette's father, a purple heart veteran who served the US Army for 22 years, and her family continued to live in the home they'd grown up in and pay the mortgage on time and in full for 7 years after her uncle passed. In 2013, NationStar learned that the original mortgage holder was deceased and refused to accept payments. NationStar, which recently acquired \$8.5 billion worth of mortgages in January 2015, put the home into foreclosure and sold it an auction for \$290,000 meanwhile Annette and her family offered to buy the home back from NationStar for \$315,000 with a Veteran's Assistant loan granted to her father. NationStar refused the offer and instead the mortgage was reverted back to Deutsche



Bank the original owner.

Bank the original owner.

This is just one among thousands of stories in the US after the 2008 financial crisis. What may be of significance to radicals and anarchists is the ways in which people can politicize the spaces where everyday life is reproduced. Our block acts as a mirror in which we reflect and see ourselves in, it shapes part of our identity that we take with us as we leave our doorstep into the world. It is important to understand the conditions that can produce these moments of resistance and solidarity if we have a true desire to exacerbate social conflict.

The block party's significance is two-fold. One, is its timing, Oakland along with the rest of the US has had many major social upheavals in solidarity with the Ferguson Rebellion. Antagonism towards the police is at a high, and although the demonstrations have ended for now, the sentiment still resides. Hung outside the house was a "Black Lives Matter"

banner as well as a "30th Fights Back Against Foreclosures." There is a line being drawn between issues of racist policing practices and one of policing's objectives, enforcing property relations; where we have nothing, and they have everything and then some.

The second point of significance is the make-up of the participants themselves. Oakland is going through a process of massive gentrification, among the first wave gentrifiers are large groups of anarchists that live in the surrounding area, mixing with the long terms residents like Annette her friends and family. This heterogeneous group mingled, sharing drinks, food, stories, and Drake sing-alongs.

There are two significant things that have happen

INTERVIEW WITH LINDA GRANT ON THE STRUGGLE AT TRIANGLE PARK IN OAKLAND

In September of 2014, the City of Oakland attempted to displace and remove people in public plazas along San Pablo Ave in the wake of the WOSP (West Oakland Specific Plan) being passed. The clamp down by the police on the plazas is part of a social cleansing of the area. UC Berkeley students mapped out the park and planned where the art would go for a “transition,” and city workers erected fences at 32nd and San Pablo (“Triangle Park”) and near 21st and San Pablo, across from the Greyhound Station. Then, on December of 2014, as the

Ferguson inspired Bay Area uprising was raging, people with bolt-cutters took down the fences encircling the park to the cheers of those on the streets. Soon after, people gathered in the plaza on 32nd street

to share food and supplies and clean up the area. Wanting to know more about the anti-gentrification struggle and how it connects to the battle against police and white supremacy, fireworksbayarea.org talked with long-time Oakland organizer and militant, Linda Grant.

FW: Why did people organize to distribute food, supplies, and also clean up the park at 32nd and San Pablo several weekends ago after the fence around it was torn down?

Linda Grant: We decided that it was important to

support the park because we know there is so much deep African history in that park going as far back as 40 years, some of my family members included. We know that its gentrification that is trying to do its deadly sweep of Oakland and we can't sit back and watch our African sisters and brothers get booted out their park because of greed and fear. Also, we wanted to show the city that we care about our people as a whole. Cleaning the park and feeding the people is what needs to happen every day.

FW: What has been the reaction from the people who hang out in the plaza as well as the surrounding community towards people taking action in the park?

Linda Grant: The reaction from the peoples in Triangle Park has been amazing. They love us because we don't come out there preaching to them, but talk to them and let them know that that park is public space and they have no right pushing people out of spaces that clearly belong to the people. We tell them to stand up and fight back. I recently had people from the park ask me how can they get involved and

help out. Also, lots of neighbors of the park came out each time to donate food and time to support us and tell us it's awesome what we do.

FW: Recently the police have had a higher presence at the plaza. Why do you think this is?

Linda Grant: The police presence is an intimidation tactic used to scare the homeless because they don't know any better. The police have also had an community outreach day at the park. Its gentrification

they are trying to prepare them for.

FW: How are the city's attempts to shut down the park part of the ongoing efforts of gentrification connected with WOSP (West Oakland Specific Plan)?

Linda Grant: Well, if you get rid of the park, you get rid of the people. They already have plans to redevelop the area and redesign the park. My goal is to help the people there understand gentrification there, and stand up to WOSP and the city; to not be driven out of an area that they have been occupying for over 50 years.

FW: In early February, only several blocks away from the park, Yvette Henderson, a 38-year old woman was shot and killed by Emeryville Police. What do you see as the connection between displacement and the gentrification of black residents and police murder and terrorism?

Linda Grant: I see a terrible pattern of violence in our hoods being caused by white people calling the police on black people in our hoods. The worst part of it is that these gentrifiers are moving in our commu-

nities with the idea that they belong here and we don't. The rent has risen sky high in Oakland forcing Africans to move out somewhere else far out, just not in Oakland. I always connect the dots to police brutality and

gentrification.

FW: Is there anything you would like to add? How can people hear more about this ongoing struggle?

Linda Grant: Yes. I would like to say that gentrification is real and police terrorism is too. If you hear a call out to defend a space or donate food, please come support. I will be doing more events very soon and will keep y'all posted on some other connections I'm making too.

