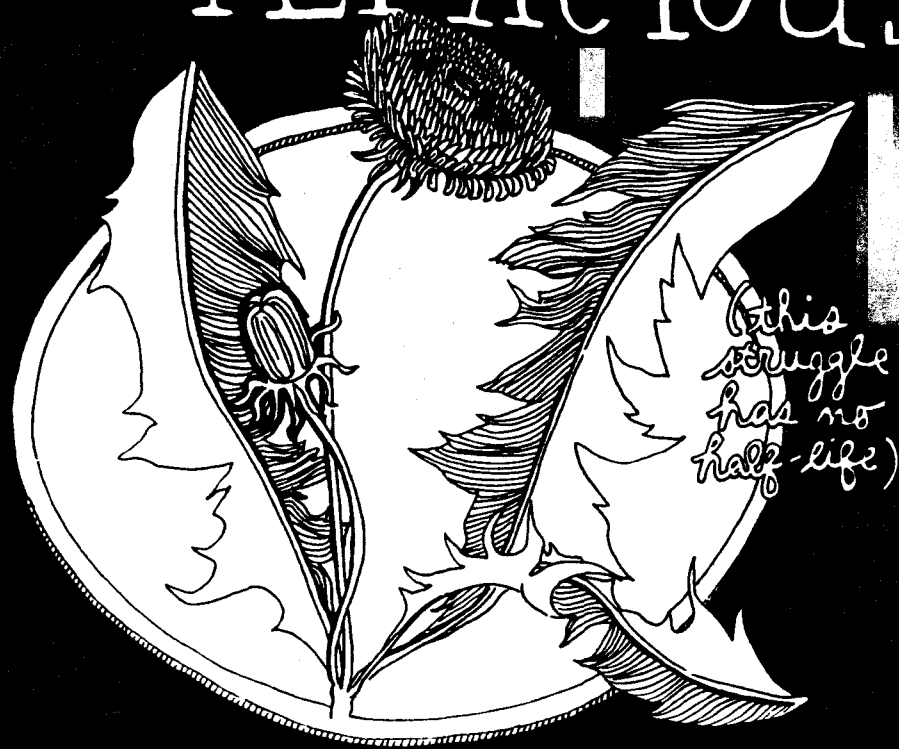


MAY OUR
RESISTANCE
BE TENACIOUS



*(this
struggle
has no
half-life)*

GIANT FLAMING DIRIGIBLE PRESS 2009

OAKLAND

FROM
FOR

3 ACCOUNTS

Military occupation and
endless incarceration do not
make us safe ~ not in Oakland,
nor Palestine, nor Iraq, nor Afghanistan,
nor Greece, nor Aterko or New Orleans...

JUSTICE & OER GRANT

When it is all said and done, I'm proud of Oakland people in general and youngstas specifically for standing up to the occupying army in our community: the police and the city officials that support the system that lets the police kill us wantonly. Like what was being said in the streets of the rebellion, "Oscar Grant is not Sean Bell, and New York is not Oakland." In other words, we are not just taking this police murder sitting down, like other big cities have in recent years.

The rebellion was just the beginning of a longer political education class in Amerikkkan politics and how it fails to meet the needs of its Black and Brown low income dwellers. I will continue to cover how the cops who were involved in the shooting of Oscar Grant are handled by the city, how the protesters who caught charges in the rebellion are handled, as well as see how the police are handled after they were brutally beating people up, framing people at the rebellion and stealing their cameras and telephones without warrants to build cases against people.

Here's what you can do

Demand that the police involved in the execution of Oscar Grant be charged and that the trumped up charges against JR Valrey and all the other arrested protesters be dropped immediately. Call, mail, fax or email:

• **Mayor Ron Dellums**, 1 Frank Ogawa Plaza, 3rd Floor, Oakland, CA 94612, (510) 238-3141, fax (510) 238-4731, office@themayor.org@oaklandnet.com

• **District Attorney Tom Orloff**, 1225 Fallon Street, Room 900, Oakland, CA 94612, (510) 272-6222, fax (510) 271-5157, cc@acgov.org

• **Congresswoman Barbara Lee**, 1301 Clay Street, Suite 1000-N, Oakland, CA 94612, (510) 763-0370, fax (510) 763-6538, for email, go to <http://lee.house.gov/?sectionid=128§iontree=18,128> [9]

Also, all who can are urged to offer your financial support to Minister of Information JR for his legal defense and to replace his camera by donating online at www.SFBayView.com [10]. You can also donate by credit card by calling the Bay View at (415) 671-0789 or you can mail your donation to SF Bay View, 4917 Third St., San Francisco CA 94124.

Email POC Minister of Information JR at blockreportradio@gmail.com [11] and visit www.blockreportradio.com [7]

January 12, 2009

Anarchists, Solidarity and New Possibilities in the Oakland Rebellion

Oakland on Fire

By KARA N. TINA

"I'm sorry my car was burned but the issue is very upsetting."

-Ken Epstein, assistant editor of the Oakland Post, who was finishing an article about Grant's death, watched from the 12th story of his office at 14th and Franklin streets as his 2002 Honda CR-V disintegrated in a roar of flames (Oakland Tribune)

The murder of Oscar Grant by Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) police officer Johannes Mehserle early New Year's morning sent a wave of grief throughout the Bay Area and reminded all that racism and police violence continue to be endemic components of US society. During the following days, that pain transformed into overflowing anger as multiple videos of the execution recorded by witnesses emerged on the internet and in the media. One week later on January 7, over a thousand people from diverse communities across Oakland and the Bay Area gathered to show their anger and be in the presence of others feeling similar grief. This hastily planned rally shut down the Fruitvale BART station where the shooting took place as speaker after speaker addressed the crowd. Without any plan or organization, the vast majority of those who patiently listened to speakers for over two hours took the demonstration into the streets with a spirited march that made its way towards downtown as the sun set.

As the march reached the Lake Merritt BART station and headquarters of BART police downtown, clashes immediately broke out leaving one police cruiser destroyed alongside a burning dumpster. Marchers dispersed down side streets to the sounds of police weapons discharging and the sting of tear gas in the air. The following hours witnessed waves of rioting and demonstrations throughout downtown Oakland that even forced Mayor Ron Dellums to come out into the streets and promise the opening of a homicide investigation in a failed attempt to subdue the angry crowds. Hundreds of businesses and cars were damaged or destroyed and dumpsters were left burning. The next day, a BART board of directors meeting was filled beyond capacity and overwhelmed with community members expressing indignant rage, clearly feeling validated and empowered to speak up by the previous night's rebellion.

In the days since the unrest, rumors have begun to circulate that anarchists hijacked an otherwise peaceful event and were responsible for unleashing the 'violence'. A cover story in the San Francisco Chronicle two days after the rioting quoted an organizer of the Fruitvale rally as saying that he was led to tears when his work was "destroyed by a group of anarchists." This obscures what actually transpired and why, on that evening, the streets of Oakland unleashed such a powerful show of resistance and solidarity that gave many an empowered glimpse of radical new possibilities.

It is true that anarchists were present from start to finish on Wednesday. Counter to some generalizations that assume all anarchists are white, those who were there on Wednesday come from diverse backgrounds. They participated in a wide variety of ways: from spreading the word about the rally beforehand in order to have a large turnout, to spending hours painting banners and signs, to engaging in militant street actions, to being rounded up and at times beaten and arrested. Anarchists are among the over 100 community members who now face charges ranging from misdemeanor rioting to different felonies.

African-American youth made up the majority of those involved in the actions along with sizable numbers of anarchists as well as other youth of color and activist folk who were all there side by side. During the rioting, there was a sense of unity in the air and a defiant mood of solidarity among all who faced off against the police. Anarchists tend to show up at all demonstrations prepared to act should the situation escalate, and this case was no different. Yet it is simply incorrect to suggest that there was some conspiracy of anarchists from the 'outside' who were able to manipulate the helpless youth of Oakland as part of their sinister agenda. This is a paternalistic misreading of what was unquestionably a spontaneous outpouring of rage, led by youth of color. There, temporary alliances were made as those who were motivated to act in the moment experienced a unique cross-pollination that cut across the inhibiting social boundaries of everyday life.

So the allegations of an anarchist takeover are destructively misleading.

There were some moments during which individual anarchists attempted to influence the course of events. At one point a group of black youth smashing the windows of a locally owned business were encouraged to target large corporations and banks instead of 'mom and pop' shops. They proceeded to do just that. Anarchists also un-arrested youth, and encouraged people to push dumpsters and other objects into the streets to prevent the police from advancing, a tactic that was quickly picked up and utilized. Other examples of this type of interchange involved anarchists encouraging youth participating in the riots to wear bandanas over their faces, change clothes during calm moments and other tactics to help avoid arrest or identification. Without question, the exchange went both ways as anarchists took away valuable lessons in mobility, evasion, and more as they worked together with the youth throughout the night.

None of this, however, suggests that anarchists had some sort of control or single handedly determined the events that transpired. The rage and energy that transformed downtown Oakland into a momentary battlefield came from those who are most directly affected by the racist police state regime. No one group had any control over what unfolded. It was a spontaneous rebellion that sprang organically from the streets of Oakland and in retrospect anarchists played an important yet relatively minor role.

The property destruction and rage that burned throughout downtown Oakland was at times undirected and ended up damaging many small businesses and cars along with corporate targets such as Sears and McDonald's. However, some of the most powerful

that they could use this info as evidence in different cases. To add to their reasoning, they also wanted to cover up and slow down the amount of information that could be posted, broadcast and published that was live from the street rebellion in Oakland, where protesters were being routinely roughed up and beaten by the Oakland police, while the mayor, who was on the scene, refused to act in this case, as well as in the case of Oscar Grant. A week later, I still don't have my camera, which I use daily to bring in an income to support myself and feed my family.

When I got locked up, the solidarity was amazing. Blacks, Latinos, Asians and whites were in North County being booked on misdemeanor charges like "inciting a riot," "vandalism" and "failure to disperse." I was reportedly one of three or four who were charged with a felony directly related to the case. A guy that I got booked into Santa Rita with, a Black Puerto Rican, was charged with "felony vandalism."



The truth expressed by the sign this protester is holding as he is interviewed at the Fruitvale BART station rally on Wednesday, Jan. 7, can be attested to by youth of color in every hood and barrio in the country. - Photo: Demondre Ward

Now the truth of the matter is that most people arrested were cited out, but the felony charges were saved for Blacks and Latinos. Me and the brotha were the only ones on our bus to Santa Rita who had to put on the "Yellows," which represent violent inmates, while the rest of the people on the bus with us put on "Blues," which designate a prisoner as general population.

Behind enemy lines, the inmates at Santa Rita put their fists in the air, smiled, cheered and gave us dap when we told them that we were being held captive because we were in the streets during the rebellion. Mexicans were congratulating Blacks, Blacks were congratulating whites, Nortenos (a Latino street organization) were congratulating Bloods (a Southern Cali street organization), who are their rivals, for their participation in fighting the police and the city for justice against police terrorism.

The rebellion did. As a matter of fact, during the rebellion, Mayor Dellums had a secret meeting with many of these suit-types, then proceeded to walk through the rebellion like Black Jesus, with about 50 primarily Black people in suits following him across Broadway to City Hall, where he held a press conference. Needless to say, the protesters he was talking to demanded that he indict all of the officers involved, but the mayor clouded the issue with words like "respect" and "civility" while the city was burning and being trashed in the backdrop due to his negligence in dealing with a police force that has a notorious history of terrorism in the Black community - as if it had not been police who shot an unarmed Black man, Oscar Grant, a week prior.



"This guy was walking with a group of friends about a half block past McDonald's on 14th when police targeted just him and chased him in a circle back around the McDonald's. He then ran across the street and once he saw there were cops running at him from both sides, he just stopped and stood there. Cops pushed him down and immediately began tasing him as he lay there not resisting. They may have tased him for close to a full minute. Since when did using tasers become a standard part of handcuffing someone?" writes the photographer. - Photo: David Id, IndyBay

Once the mayor was booed and run off from his press conference, Round 2 of the rebellion began, claiming Broadway and 17th. This was at about 9 p.m. The Oakland police escalated their attacks on protesters by six or seven of them at one time breaking ranks from the other dozens of officers they were originally standing with to tackle and arrest anyone in the vicinity. Another tactic utilized by the OPD was to roll up to an intersection in a hummer with about 10 pigs hanging off of it, and the cops would jump off, brutally arresting everyone in reach.

I was arrested in front of the Ron Dellums Federal Building, after at least two officers broke out running after me for no reason, tackled me to the cement, injuring my left leg, and bouncing my camera off of the ground. I was charged with the trumped up charge of felony arson. Luckily, a few legal observers from the National Lawyers Guild saw the whole episode.

After I was arrested and in the paddy wagon, I heard a dispatcher say that the police needed to confiscate all cameras and camera phones from arrestees, which they did, so

moments that paralleled the destruction were confrontations with police and spontaneous gatherings of people in the street who refused to be dispersed. It was during these moments that chanting would again erupt from the crowd reminding all who were present that the direct political demands of justice for Oscar Grant and active resistance to the racist police state system in the United States were the motivations of all who took to the streets that evening.

It's important to also remember that not one person was assaulted during the actions and there were no reports of fights or scuffles amongst the groups of youth who resisted police and destroyed property into the night. In this sense, the rebellion was not violent.

On the other hand the Oakland Police Department, who everyday harass, intimidate and beat Oakland's youth, was unleashing its very real violence that night. Police opened fire on crowds with different types of less lethal projectiles and in some cases shot tear gas canisters directly into people's bodies. A Berkeley High teacher had his face bashed during arrest and spent the night in the hospital before being taken back downtown for booking. A man taking pictures was attacked by police and his bike helmet was cracked as he was beaten. During the mass arrest at the end of the night, 80 people were forced by police to lay on their stomachs at 20th and Broadway, including a very pregnant woman who was screaming in pain.

What manifested during the Oakland rebellion was a moment of interchange and revolutionary transformation that rarely happens within the rituals of left organizing in the Bay Area. Between white "community organizers" overtaken by guilt into an impotent politics of servitude, professional activists worried about annual reports and grant cycles, and vanguardist marxist sects continually looking to use the next demonstration as a recruiting drive, many radicals find themselves in a desert devoid of revolutionary activity and thought. Within this barren landscape, it is rare to find new possibilities for radical social change while combating racism and the constant oppression of capitalism. Resisting the police shoulder to shoulder, destroying property (albeit with different emphasis), helping one another evade arrest, exchanging tactics and gestures of solidarity across racial barriers pushes the desire for a multi-racial revolutionary movement ahead, more than any speaker at a rally ever could.

Anarchists are very accustomed to accusations of spoiling carefully managed demonstrations, and in some cases this is true and necessary. The Oakland rebellion was a different story. Those who are truly committed to revolutionary change in this country need to appreciate the significance of what unfolded in the streets that night and move forward without falling into the usual sectarian traps.

This analysis was written collaboratively by a group of anarchists based out of Oakland who together were present at all moments during the rebellion.

January 16-18, 2009

Arrest and Containment Fail to Blunt Anger in the Streets

"Oakland is Closed!"

By GEORGE CICCARIELLO-MAHER

Oakland.

Writing in the context of the Algerian Revolution, Frantz Fanon was a merciless critic of the moderating efforts of self-appointed political leaders. When confronted with mass rebellion, such leaders will immediately use the threat of violence as a bargaining chip in negotiations with the oppressors, promising to pacify the masses if reforms are made. As Fanon describes it in *The Wretched of the Earth*,

Nonviolence is an attempt to settle the colonial problem around the negotiating table before the irreparable is done... But the masses, without waiting for the chairs to be placed around the negotiating table, listen to their own voice and begin committing outrages and setting fire to buildings...

Of course, between colonial Algeria and postindustrial Oakland, there are undeniable differences. But while Fanon's context is not our own, the acuity of his understanding of revolutionary political dynamics is unparalleled, and two weeks on from the police murder of Oscar Grant III by transit police officer Johannes Mehserle, his words bear heeding if we are to avoid succumbing to the divide-and-conquer strategies of the oppressors.

"An Intentional Act"

The rebellion which shook the streets of Oakland a week ago has irreversibly changed the political equation surrounding the murder, as rebellions tend to do. The Midas touch of popular action leaves little intact. Several days ago, rumors swirled that California Attorney General Jerry Brown was leaning hard on Alameda County District Attorney Tom Orloff to conclude his investigation and charge Mehserle quickly in order to head off any potential disruption at a scheduled Wednesday rally. This pressure yielded quick results: Orloff issued a warrant for murder, claiming that "the evidence indicates is an unlawful killing done by an intentional act, and from the evidence we have there is nothing that would mitigate that." Moreover with the Grant family claiming that he and other officers used racial slurs the night of the execution, many will no doubt push for a hate crime enhancement. Mehserle was duly arrested, not in California, but across state lines in Nevada. While this was ostensibly for security in the face of death threats, state lines are more effective against police jurisdiction than death threats.

It would seem that all was well in Oakland, but it's worth asking how such pressure came to bear on the Attorney General and D.A. in the first place. Protest organizers insist on

surrounded by at least three more, yet no one was charged with murder, manslaughter or as an accessory to murder. After a few hours, this demonstration ended peacefully, with the remaining protesters marching to downtown Oakland.

I left and went and hung out with some of my friends that were at the Fruitvale BART protest. About an hour later, I got a call telling me that I needed to cover what was going on in the streets of downtown. When I got there, I saw dozens of police in a huge circle on 14th and Broadway, occupying the intersection in front of City Hall. The Oakland hummer, the tank-like armored vehicle that was shown on the news, had just shown up.

On one block, the militant activists were shouting slogans face to face with police. Behind them, a few bands broken up into racial groups were smashing car windshields and storefronts on 14th, using their feet and their skateboards. Many of the white protesters, who had their faces covered up, were involved in setting cars on fire. I was photographing this historic time, where the people's patience ran short on city officials, including the mayor, who refused to indict any of the officers involved.

Since this day, I have seen many reports talking about white invaders taking over the rebellion, which is b.s. Yes, they played a part, but so did everyone else. They didn't take over anything, and the Black, Brown and Asian youth involved were taking leadership from themselves, not the white people.

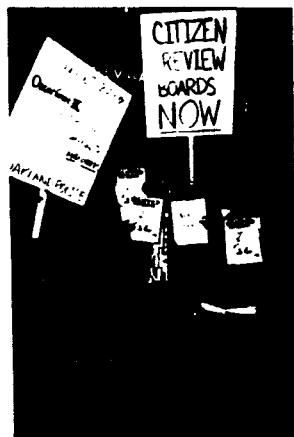


After the peaceful though spirited rally at the Fruitvale BART station on Wednesday, Jan. 7, protesters marched downtown, where they were met by walls of police in riot gear, sparking a rebellion that forced the powers that be to recognize the rage stirred up by the New Year's execution of Oscar Grant and official Oakland's complicity by silence. — Photo: Demondre Ward

I've also heard some criticisms of the rebels, because of the fact that they tore up innocent people's property. But the reality is that the peaceful protest outside of Fruitvale BART as well as the meeting of ministers, reverends and local politicians that took place that morning demanding an explanation from the D.A. did not put the mayor, police and city officials on notice nor did those actions have the energy behind them to make the police execution of Oscar Grant a national story.

When I arrived a little bit after the protest started, I witnessed at least 200-300 people who were demanding justice for Oscar Grant's family at the BART station. BART had shut down the station so that it would slow the pace of protesters who could have used the BART to get to the rally but had to rely on Oakland's slow ass bus system to make their voices heard. People of all nationalities, ages, classes and religions were chanting angry slogans led by the speakers: "Fuck the police!" "No justice, no peace!" "Justice for Oscar Grant!"

One of the things that struck me most about this rally was the fact that it was so many people who were moved to protest in East Oakland, which is rare during a workday. The question that I asked on the microphone when it was my turn to speak was, "Why didn't people come out when Bay Area police officers murdered unarmed Terrence Mearis, unarmed Casper Banjo, unarmed Anita Gaye, unarmed Gary King, unarmed Gus Rugley, unarmed Cammerin Boyd, unarmed Idriss Stelley or when the police terrorized 15-year-old unarmed Laronte Studesville, unarmed Randy Murphy or unarmed Nadra Foster? Is it because these cases were not caught on camera?"



These children, a racial cross-section of Oakland, seem determined to stop the police' open season on young men of color before it's their turn. The sign on the left reads, "Sunset 2008-90 RIP Oscar Grant III, Casper Banjo, Jose Luis Buenrostro, Jody Woodfox, Gary King Jr., Andrew Moppin and others at the hands of Oakland police." -- Photo: Demondre Ward

It seemed to me that people have to see police atrocities on television to believe that they happen in the Black community, when young Black males in the Bay Area and all over the country know from experience that the police have a legal license to kill you, severely beat you or frame you with no repercussions. An example of this is the Oscar Grant case, where he was unarmed and shot point blank, while being restrained by two officers and

avoiding this thorny question, for fear that they may be painted with the brush of violence, but only those in bad faith could realistically deny that it was the street-level resistance of a week ago that led the state to act. Could anyone actually argue with a straight face that Mehserle's arrest resulted from anything but the threat of continued rebellion on the streets?

"Listening to George Jackson"

But it is this most basic of truths that protest organizers from the newly-formed Coalition Against Police Executions (CAPE) have insistently ignored. After the events of last week, the ostensible organizers of the demonstration at Fruitvale BART were among the first to attack the anger expressed later that night. One organizer was brought to tears by the scenes on the television, claiming that his hard work had been "destroyed by a group of anarchists." There is a distinct irony here, as those who peddling the "outside agitators" line were almost without exception absent on Wednesday, admitting that they watched events unfold on television. The insistence that it was "anarchists" who led the youth astray that night has been thoroughly discredited by those actually present, including KPFA reporter and Prisoners of Conscience Committee (POCC) Minister of Information JR, who insists that: "I have seen many reports talking about white invaders taking over the rebellion, which is b.s." He adds:

I'm proud of Oakland people in general and youngstas specifically for standing up to the occupying army in our community: the police and the city officials that support the system that lets the police kill us wantonly. The rebellion was just the beginning of a longer political education class in Amerikkkan politics and how it fails to meet the needs of its Black and Brown low income dwellers.

Where did the "outside agitator" sound byte, with all its paternalistic and racist implications, come from in the first place? As one might suspect, it was the police who first deployed it, the media who followed, and the unwitting organizers who followed. At a "town hall meeting" led by black clergy and community leaders, CAPE organizers and other speakers were tacitly criticized for their criticism of the black youth who took to the streets to express a righteous fury, and for using the "anarchist" line to divide the movement. Representatives of both Baptist churches and the Nation of Islam pointedly emphasized that anger at Grant's murder was justified, with Reverend Kane thunderously insisting that we shouldn't blame the youth in the streets for "listening to George Jackson" and "uncompromising revolutionaries" instead of the prophets of nonviolence.

And another truth was affirmed at that meeting, which it should be noted represented a largely middle-class segment of Oakland's black community: much like at the Fruitvale BART protest, it was these most militant voices who received the loudest applause. But while this was obvious to many onlookers, the lesson was not reflected in CAPE's subsequent organizing efforts.

A Culture of Fear

In the run-up to Wednesday's official demonstration, it became clear that those dissenting from CAPE's strategy of moderation were unwelcome. While the organizing committee said that they welcomed a broad range of participants, all major decisions had been made beforehand, and the politics of reconciliation endorsed by the coalition was hidden behind an appeal to the desires of the Grant family (although a member of that family had expressed a different view at the previous town meeting). Those who dissented from the now-discredited claim of "outside agitators" were shouted down, and efforts to add an amnesty for all those arrested last Wednesday to CAPE's list of demands were rejected out of hand.

Things became more serious on the topic of security, which organizers deemed the "top priority." While you might have thought this meant securing the well-being of the marchers in an atmosphere of rampant police violence, this was in reality more about securing the public image of CAPE from public and media criticism. Security was placed in the hands of a self-selected committee, and headed by a private security officer with a private security mentality: surround the march entirely and intersperse unidentified informants to root out possible troublemakers. A solitary protest, insisting that we not "recreate police structures" or facilitate a "culture of fear," was ruled out-of-order on procedural grounds and met with a deafening consensus of silence.

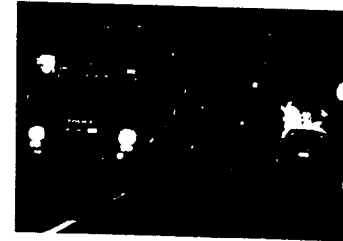
But one error stood out above all others: the organizers' open neglect for the obvious fact that the attention paid by Mayor Dellums and D.A. Orloff to the case, the national media attention it garnered, and the subsequent arrest of Mehserle were *only the result of last week's rebellion*.

"I See A Lot of Warriors Out There"

The official march gathered outside City Hall in Frank Ogawa Plaza, with speakers including Mayor Ron Dellums, rapper Too \$hort, and CAPE leadership, all of whom emphasized the "peaceful" nature of the gathering. Much like last Wednesday night, Dellums was greeted by a mixture of sparse applause and booping, despite being introduced by CAPE leader Dereca Blackmon as an ally in the struggle for change. More than 1,000 outraged Oaklanders then proceeded down 14th Street, walking in the footsteps of those who had taken to the streets in a more militant fashion a week prior. After gathering outside the office of the D.A. and hearing several more speakers, the crowd turned to return to City Hall, led by the roaring engines of several motorcycles blaring hyphy hip-hop for an energized crowd. Police and march security darted here and there, attempting to defuse any disruptions.

Upon returning to City Hall, marchers were corralled by CAPE security into Frank Ogawa Plaza once again, and all remained calm for the moment. But despite the best efforts of the CAPE organizing committee, it was clear that not all speakers shared their analysis of the events leading up to the state's decision to arrest Mehserle. The final speaker insisted that not even arrest or conviction was sufficient, since "that pig was just

Oakland rebellion: Eyewitness report by POC Minister of Information JR



Only when Oakland's rage over the execution of Oscar Grant broke out into a full rebellion on Wednesday, Jan. 7, did authorities, after nearly a week of silence, take this police murder seriously. Still, Oakland youth took the brunt as police used military equipment such as this tank-like hummer to put down the rebellion – while Mayor Ron Dellums promised police restraint. – Photo: Brooke Anderson, IndyBay

During the first Wednesday of 2009, downtown Oakland was physically rocked by the justified fury that the rebellions brought out in response to the police killing of 22-year-old unarmed Black male Oscar Grant, who was fatally shot at the Fruitvale BART station while he was face down, being restrained by two officers, in front of dozens of witnesses New Year's morning.

For me, that day of protesting started at the Fruitvale BART station with a peaceful rally that was organized by members of the Bay Area's activist community. Speakers included Crea Gomez, a community non-profit advocate, local rappers like Zion of Zion I and Mistah FAB, as well as concerned community members like myself who were appalled at the police murder. I was there as a member of the Black community demanding justice for the police murder of Oscar Grant, as well as I was in attendance as a journalist on assignment.



"BART had shut down the station so that it would slow the pace of protesters who could have used the BART to get to the rally but had to rely on Oakland's slow ass bus system to make their voices heard," MOI JR explains. – Photo: Demondre Ward

The events of the last week are but a warning, both to the powers that be in Oakland and the United States and to the self-appointed leadership of resistance movements. To the city, county, state, and nation: arrest is not enough, conviction will not be enough. And to the CAPE leadership, in the Fanonian spirit of unity: don't be so rigid as to be outpaced by the masses in the street, and if you are, accept your obsolescence with grace.

George Ciccarillo-Maher is a Ph.D. candidate in political theory at UC Berkeley. He lives in Oakland, and can be reached at gjcm(at)berkeley.edu.

doing what pigs do." It was police *policy* that needed to be changed, and continued militant action was the only way that this could be accomplished. As he concluded, the speaker added a knowing observation alongside a plea: "I see a lot of warriors out there," he said, "and I just want to ask you to make sure that the babies and the children get home safely tonight."

But this radical message would be redirected and distorted through CAPE's nonviolent lens, as a representative would immediately insist that, "you heard the man, let's all go home with our children and keep it peaceful."

Repressive Tolerance

As the crowd left the plaza, CAPE security cordons sought to direct people across Broadway on 14th and onward toward home, but many had not finished for the evening. As the crowd poured into the street and made clear its intention to remain, a line of riot police formed behind the security cordon. The same chants heard a week ago made an encore appearance, specifically, "No Justice, No Peace, Fuck the Police!" In an ingenious display of pageantry the security force channeled this unrest into a gesture of victory, convincing the police to stand down momentarily.

But this symbolic victory was to be short-lived. The street remained crowded with even more protesters than a week prior, and those gathered had clearly not been pacified by Mehserle's arrest. When it became clear that the crowd would not disperse voluntarily, it was announced that the police would return in 10 minutes, and that the streets needed to be cleared. And when this still didn't work, march security took it upon themselves to move the crowd, forming cordons, linking arms, and physically pushing the angry demonstrators off the streets. If Herbert Marcuse was concerned with "repressive tolerance," here was a case of repression under a scarcely tolerant veneer.

Not all of the security team agreed with these tactics. Some had even broken from the "official" security orientation in disagreement, and when the streets were being cleared, others removed their vests and refused to participate in this policing of the streets. The clear irony of the situation was this: here were representatives of those same "community leaders" who had a week prior denounced the "manipulation" of the city's youth, physically pushing those same young people off the street.

"Security" Withdraws

If the effort required to physically push peaceful demonstrators off the street was not proof enough that the self-appointed security apparatus did not represent the will of those angry youth present at the rally, then what happened a moment later would make this astonishingly clear. After a conflict between protestors and fundamentalist Christian provocateurs, the security force made the amateurish mistake of leaving unattended those whom they had just put so much effort into moving off the streets.

Without a minute's delay, the crowd returned to the street, this time at 13th and Broadway. A few more sweeps with security cordons proved ineffective, and seemed only to agitate some of the protestors, who entered into open conflict with the security team (with the mainstream press claiming that there was even a physical confrontation at one point). As a last-ditch effort, some security officials were seen consulting directly with police and a city councilperson, but toward what end it remains unclear. Realizing that they had clearly lost control of the situation, and in an effort to publicly wash their hands of the rebelliousness, CAPE's security detail made a very public retreat.

To be clear: the internal security team were neither infiltrators nor police (as some had suggested last week), but merely an unfortunate example of what happens when well-meaning, nonviolent organizers adopt a police mindset and step in to play the role of the oppressors in an effort to blunt popular rage. And to be even clearer: there is nothing wrong with popular security or revolutionary discipline, but when imposed on those most affected against their will, popular sentiment will either prevail or suffer repression.

"Oakland Is Closed, Go Home"

After the security team withdrew, it was only a few short minutes before a young black protestor took five flying kicks at a bus stop window, thereby setting the tone for what would follow. As the first glass disintegrated onto the pavement, a crowd of youths of all colors rushed in as if on cue, venting its rage on a nearby Wells Fargo. Within seconds, a half dozen teargas canisters landed in the vicinity, and the crowd scattered. Either by design or sheer contingency, most ran into the City Center Mall, demolishing a number of storefronts, but these were not the "mom and pop" businesses that had borne the brunt a week ago, but instead mostly large chains. (The press, never above even the most ridiculous of contradictions, would later refer to the destruction of "Oakland landmarks, like Jamba Juice and Radio Shack").

The best among the security volunteers had remained, encouraging the crowd to stay smart, to stay in groups, and to avoid arrest. After the police had enforced a degree of calm, heated debates broke out on the sidewalks, which clearly reflected the class cleavages that divided the majority of the marchers from those who took to the streets afterward. One man was enraged by the efforts of well-dressed black onlookers to disarm his anger: "you can't tell me shit! These motherfuckers sent me to the hospital, I had tubes coming out all over my body! We're the ones that are suffering!" Another, who identified himself as a close friend of the late Gary King, confronted an apparently middle-class black woman who attempted to restrain him. Infuriated, he singlehandedly confronted an entire line of riot cops, cursing and spitting on their visors, and was very nearly assaulted in response.

If age and class clearly distinguished those who attended the march from those who remained in the streets, then we are right to wonder which of these groups has a more acute awareness of police violence. While many in "the community" more generally certainly hoped for a peaceful response to the murder of Oscar Grant, those who voted

with their feet for militant action were largely those most affected by police repression in Oakland.

OPD again decided to make a tactical withdrawal, hoping a hands-off approach would defuse tensions, circling the city in cruisers with their right rear doors slightly open for easy deployment. But when the remaining protestors refused to disperse, police returned on motorcycles, one making the apocryphal loudspeaker announcement: "Oakland is closed, go home." A small group of police gathered near a crowd of young black men, and when the signal was given they advanced into the crowd, dividing it in two and arresting a young man for no reason whatsoever, in what appeared to be an open provocation. The rest of the night, small lines of riot police physically pushed small groups of protestors up the street, back and forth, until one-by-one they relented and decided to call it a night. Some 18 arrests have been reported in total, with some bystanders claiming to have been arrested for no reason.

"The Bullet or the Bullet"

In a written response to the murder of Oscar Grant, revolutionary Bay Area rapper Paris had the following to say on the subject of a "peaceful" response to police murder:

Hopefully we won't see the same course of events take place that always seem to happen --brutality/murder, then outrage, the protest, then acquittal, then more outrage... followed by a cooling off period and eventually back to business as usual. That's why I don't fuck with protests--the powers that be do what they want to do regardless of what the people say.

Rather, Paris insists that only militant action will be able to create any change: "I've heard the calls for calm after our brother's murder and to stop the violence...and I disagree... If an eye for an eye will make the whole world blind, then I guess we'll all be bumpin' into shit, 'cause this has to stop now." Whether we agree or not with Paris' strategic prescriptions, at the very least he has grasped better than many the political dynamics that have unfolded in the case of Oscar Grant. The city only responded when threatened with continued militant action in the streets: it is this that explains the sudden interest that Mayor Dellums, the District Attorney, and the state Attorney General showed in the case, and it is this alone that explains the hasty arrest carried out Tuesday.

There is little that the moderate leaders fear more than "this impatient violence of the masses," and they will go out of their way, according to Fanon, to dismiss and discredit it: "The official leaders, draped in their years of experience, will pitilessly disown these 'adventurers and anarchists'." Fanon himself was no friend of anarchists, but nor did he approve of a self-appointed leadership that would kidnap the popular will. While initially effective, those leaders promoting the strategy of moderation and conciliation would soon find themselves obsolete, outpaced by the action of the masses, who discover their own strength by using it. "The consciousness of the people rebels against any pacification. From now on the demagogues, the opportunists, and the magicians have a difficult task."