

# FREE EDUCATION

*Newsletter for Bay Area education struggle*



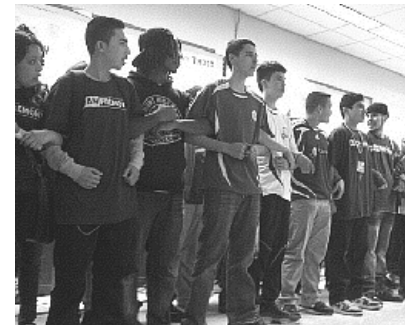
In our work as educators and students in the Bay Area, we come across a significant number of people in various schools in the region who are having similar conversations around budget cuts, gentrification, police terror, and the strategy and tactics we need to win against the capitalist government and their armed enforcers.

Despite the differences in how we experience and struggle against these attacks, we face a common enemy in the state and the wealthy corporations they cater to. Imagine the possibilities for organizing and winning if we tapped into the social power of a united and organized education industry - teachers, students, workers, and families! Our capacity to shut this institution down gives us the social power to send shockwaves throughout society, reach broader layers of workers community members, and force the state to concede to our just demands.

Last December, students and teachers at various schools in Oakland organized a walkout against police brutality and in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. They left their campuses and marched to Fruitvale BART station - where pig Mehserle gunned Oscar Grant down in 2009 - and temporarily shut it down. In doing so, they showed superior strategic sense by paralyzing their schools and halting the flow of a critical transportation hub. In generalizing our militant tactics from our institutions to the rank-and-file of other workplaces, we form connections with the workers of those institutions and increase the fighting capacity of the working-class.

At City College of San Francisco, students have fought to keep their school open and to defend their ethnic studies programs from attacks by organizing marches and student occupations; in Oakland and San Francisco, teachers elected new slates of radical educators to the teacher's unions, symbolizing a shift in consciousness and a willingness to mobilize. This recent activity signals a new period in the struggle against capitalist attacks.

This newsletter highlights the struggles from those directly involved. It seeks to fulfill the necessary task of organizing our forces into a mass movement of students, workers and community members against the budget cuts, police violence, and gentrifying forces that endanger our access to intellectual development and hinder the strength of our communities.



This newsletter is produced by **Advance the Struggle**

We are a communist collective operating in the Bay Area. We seek to organize with workers, students, and community members to challenge capitalist domination of our workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, and our everyday lives. For more info, please see our blog.

[www.advancethestruggle.ml](http://www.advancethestruggle.ml)

We are accepting submissions from all people for the newsletter. To inquire about writing a piece or getting involved in the project, please email [bay.strikes@gmail.com](mailto:bay.strikes@gmail.com)

## SAVE CCSF

For 80 years CCSF has been providing accessible education in many occupational disciplines; it's also a pathway for higher learning to the working class of the San Francisco Bay Area. It has a distinguished Ethnic Studies program that discusses the historical and current struggles of the unique cultures that make up "The Bay", and boasts many famous alumni and supporters. Securing and maintaining this resource has never been easy, but it's also never been under the kind of siege it's been enduring for the last few years. Since 2012, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) has been working to dismantle the unique and distinctive services that CCSF offers by suggesting that in our time of economic crises and recessions, the strong unions of CCSF professionals and workers is unnecessary, that the class expectations of the students should be lowered, stating that the answer instead lies in an assembly-line model of education producing nothing but degrees and debt. The ACCJC has begun this process by dissolving the democratically elected board of trustees and replacing it with their own hand-selected "Special Trustee." We need to recognize that whether or not we've gone to this or any community college, CCSF's existence is vital to the intellectual and material well-being of the working class. It remains a racially diverse, working class-based learning institution in a rapidly gentrifying San Francisco, and the organizers who've taken the lead in the struggle against the privatizers are at the front lines of the class war to define the class and racial nature of the City. Keep CCSF open and fully-funded!

## COPS AREN'T WORKERS!

In light of the recent Black Lives Matter protests, the United Auto Workers (UAW) local 2865, representing University of California graduate student-workers, passed a resolution calling on the AFL-CIO, the largest federation of labor unions in the U.S., to end their affiliation with police unions. The union federation currently houses police unions alongside other trade unions. Rather than seeing police unions as workers' organizations, the resolution argues that police and their organizations have historically played the role of the armed extension of the capitalist state; a state that has historically targeted working people and people of color in particular. Police and their unions have defended killer cops, advocated for laws and practices that criminalize black and brown people, blocked the passage of laws and reforms to hold police accountable, not to mention their long history of smashing labor militancy and movements for racial equality.

UAW Local 2865's resolution should be praised for taking a stand against police interests that are entirely opposed to the interests of the majority of working people. Other student groups, community organizations, and unions should follow our fellow workers' call and adopt the slogan: "Cops aren't part of the working class!"

## PERALTA COLLEGES UNDER ATTACK

In early July, Peralta Colleges of Alameda County were threatened with punishment by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. This is the same group that has tried shutting down City College of San Francisco for the past few years. This is ridiculous since this group, the ACCJC, was itself threatened with being shut down in 2013 by the US Department of Education for violating federal regulations on how to assess colleges. The ACCJC is known nationwide for being the strictest agency of its kind and one that favors private, well-connected colleges over public ones. So far, the process has put 2 of Peralta's 4 colleges' accreditation status on the middle warning level and the other 2 at the lower level. But this is also how they started attacking CCSF. The Peralta colleges, like all community colleges and universities, need improvement, but threats from an increasingly rogue outside organization are not the way to do it. These developments only further highlight the need for broad organizing to defend our public colleges against these privatizing attacks!

## DO BLACK LIVES MATTER TO OUSD?

Barhin Bhatt, the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) police sergeant who shot & killed 19 year old Raheim Brown in January 2011, is paid between \$130,000 - \$140,000 in total compensation yearly. The district recently settled with Raheim's family and the mother of his child (unborn at the time of his murder) for \$497,500, and then shelled out another \$550,000 in hush-money to Jonathan Bellusa, the other officer involved. It was Bellusa that blew the whistle in a sworn deposition for what he outlined as an execution by Bhatt and then an attempted cover-up by then Superintendent. Tony Smith and OUSD lead attorney Jacqueline Minor; both threatened Bellusa with perjury charges if he didn't match Bhatt's version of the murder. In response to the settlement the district's PR spinster Troy Flint was quoted in the San Francisco Chronicle as saying, "We're pleased with this settlement," "Obviously, we don't feel that the district is at fault in any way."

This is laughable as later in the same article Flint noted that the district, "may have had to pay out much higher damages at trial." With this settlement the district clearly wanted this murder of an unarmed young black man to go away quietly. But with the murderer (Bhatt) still drawing a six figure salary and a new superintendent Antwan Wilson describing how these killings of unarmed men by those who protect and serve as "maddening" and issuing a call to action against these injustices, one is left wondering: will Bhatt be held accountable by Wilson and relieved of his duties of "protecting and serving" the students of OUSD, or will we have to start referring to the new superintendent as Uncle Twan? Time will tell, but, regardless, we must start a movement calling for the termination of Bhatt and the end to the presence of OUSD police in our schools.