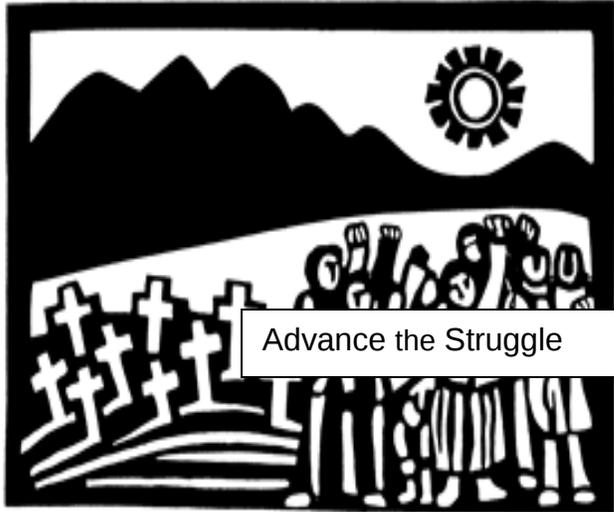


Beyond Arrests, Beyond Protests & Beyond Riots

Everyone is furious about Oscar Grant's murder by BART police, and on January 13, the BART officer Mehserle was arrested. Now there are different views on the matter. Some say we have won. Other say we should fight to get the police to take sensitivity training. Others say we should start shooting at the police.

Right now, it's undeniable Mayor Dellums and the rest of the Oakland political elite are on the defensive precisely because of the "riots" that took place on January 9. *And the threat of more militant protest pressured the system to arrest officer Mehserle*. Politicians have proven time and time again that they will only react towards movements that threaten their power.



Advance the Struggle

One of the most common demands you hear – deemed the most “realistic”- is for increased police accountability. *The problem is that the police are already accountable . . . to the rich*. The police are here to enforce the domination of the richest 1% over the rest of us. Asking the cops to be accountable to us is like the slave asking the overseer to be accountable to her and not the plantation owner.

We have to get beyond negotiating with the political elite, and accept their bones. We need to become conscious of the fact that the “democracy” we live in is a democracy for the rich and powerful only. *That's why we must reject all politicians* – including the likes of Ron Dellums and Tom Ammianno. They are not allies to the movement; they are obstacles.

The arrest of officer Mehserle is to deescalate the situation. Why? Lets look at Greece. The police murder of a 15 year old triggered reactions which went from protests, to riots, to a general strike. Within days the killer cop and police accomplices were arrested. Even this didn't trick the movement into subsiding. The police murder set off the uprising, but the participants connected the murder with unemployment, neo-liberal economic measures, political corruption and a failing educational system. Aren't we facing similar problems in Oakland and in the US?

So what type of struggle would it take to fight against these *systemic* injustices? Imagine synchronized shutdowns of downtown Oakland, the port, the transit systems, and Bay Area schools. This type of synchronized shutdown is called a *general strike*. In fact, Oakland is the home of the most recent general strike of US history, in 1946.

20 years later, Oakland gave birth to the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. Would they be asking the mayor and OPD for mercy, accountability, or celebrate after one arrest? Or would they be calling for “All Power to the People!”? Organizing shouldn't be about appointing paid spokespeople from nonprofits to negotiate with politicians. *Organizing should be about building councils based in workplaces, neighborhoods, and schools that can empower working class people to lead struggles that directly affect us*. If a network of such councils existed, the people would have the means by which to launch a powerful resistance to any and all abuses by the capitalist system, its police, and its politicians. Not only would the state have to respect our lives, but *such organizations could both directly fight against oppressive conditions and for a better world- at the same time*. These organizations could be a base from which to actually overthrow the ruling class and their police, and not just survive in their midst . . .