

# WEAR BLACK!

December 2010

**The Newsletter of the National Office of the October 22nd Coalition for a National Day of protest to STOP police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation**

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## OVERVIEW

The 15th National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation was infused with a spirit of youthful energy and determination to STOP the epidemic of police brutality and murder in this country. Outrage at the murder of 7 year old Aiyana Jones killed sleeping in her bed, anger over the shooting of Oscar Grant in Oakland, resistance to the reactionary racial profiling laws targeting immigrants in Arizona, brought out many new people for the events across the country. High school and college students were part of the organizing cores in many areas, along with families of people killed by law enforcement. Homeless activists, prisoners' rights groups, neighborhood people, along with revolutionaries and reverends and many others, came together in nearly two dozen cities and towns across the U.S. and in Montreal, to say, "NO MORE!" Many, many people wore black that day. People on the sidelines of the marches shouted their encouragement. People stepped up to the mike to tell their stories. In several cities, press coverage reported the national scope of the activities.

On the following day, October 23rd, there were actions across the country for Justice for Oscar Grant. San Francisco Bay Area ports were shut down by the ILWU (Longshore and Warehouse Union). In Oakland, 1000 people attended the demonstration. In New York, people held a follow up strategy session to the October 22nd protests, focusing on what is the cause of police brutality and what is it going to take to stop it.

October 22nd, 2010, exposed and opposed the laws that criminalize a generation. In New York, the STOP and FRISK policies that mainly target Black and Latino youth, were denounced, and plans for a neighborhood patrol were announced.

At the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland, the October 22nd Coalition, The African American Institute on Policy Studies and Planning, and the Ida B. Wells Media Institute submitted a position paper on "The Continuum of Domestic Repression in the U.S.," stating that "today, police still routinely make unfounded mass arrests and detentions to keep people off the streets and out of the eye of the media which tends to be accommodating".

October 22nd, 2010, made these issues visible in the public spotlight, and strengthened people's ability to come together from many different backgrounds to fight.

## Reports from local areas

### **Albuquerque, New Mexico**

About 70 protesters gathered outside the Albuquerque Police Department Headquarters, then headed to Robinson Park downtown for a vigil in memory of the twelve people fatally shot by Albuquerque police this year. The group walked down Central Avenue with their signs. Copwatch had video cameras in hand. Many in attendance were family members of police shooting victims. The protest was organized by Copwatch, Vecinos United and Albuquerque Answer Coalition. The brother of one of those victims, Andres Tellez spoke at the rally.

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### **Asheville, North Carolina**

Michael Novick spoke on October 22 at the Firestorm Books and Cafe info shop in Asheville, NC on the theme of "Resisting White Supremacy, Colonialism and Police Abuse" to a group of about 25. The group discussed the case of Oscar Grant as well as local incidents of gentrification and police abuse, signed post cards to Judge Perry and Eric Holder, and initiated the formation of a chapter of Anti-Racist Action and a Copwatch project.

### **Atlanta, Georgia**

In Atlanta about fifty people wore black and held signs in Woodruff Park, a busy downtown park that serves as a networking area for many of the city's homeless (many of whom are victims of police violence). The demonstration consisted of many different organizations: FTP Movement, CopWatch, Progressive Student Alliance at Georgia State, the Revolutionary Communist Party, and Malcolm X Grassroots Movement. The event consisted of a speak out which gave voice to many victims of police brutality. Victims of police brutality shared their stories to hundreds of passerbys. The demonstration ended in a short march up to the MARTA train station, people cheered as demonstrators chanted "NO JUSTICE,

**NO PEACE, NO BRUTAL POLICE!"**

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### **Chicago, Illinois**

Oct 22nd, Chicago. Noon – Students, teachers and staff from an alternative high school came, carrying signs they had created in class, Families of people killed by police, revolutionaries, religious activists, and people from Chicago's southside gathered for a rally that started with a roll call of stolen lives followed by the recognition of Stolen Lives families in attendance. Students read poetry and a representative of the Chicago branch of the Revolutionary Communist Party delivered a powerful speech on "fighting Police Brutality and transforming the people for revolution".

75 to 100 people held an enthusiastic march that surged down State Street and back up Michigan avenue—drums pounding and chants echoing through the canyons of the Chicago Loop in the midst of lunch rush hour. Led by a banner with the pictures of 22 people murdered by the Chicago police, the mainly young and predominantly Black march received a strong response from people along the route.

On October 22nd evening, a rally was held at Corey Harris Park on Chicago's Southside. About 50 people, mainly friends and family of Corey Harris, come out to protest police brutality and to remember Corey. Corey was shot by police September 11, 2009.

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### **Cleveland, Ohio**

As people assembled in downtown Cleveland, black armbands were passed out along with the October 22nd Calls. Then parents who lost young Black men spoke about the horror they feel. Alesia Kirkman, who lost her 17 year old son who was unarmed, said, "We have to do something to stop the police from killing our young men and harassing our young daughters. We have to do something." Tina Bronaugh, mother of two high school students who were viciously beaten and charged for protesting

school cuts and layoffs, spoke passionately about that case.

Sixty-five people, mostly youth, came out for a march to the "Justice Center", where prisoners waved from the windows when they heard the chanting. Then the march went through an entertainment district in which Blacks have been repeatedly profiled and then harassed, and arrested. Along the way, "Killer cops in every town, We won't forget, We won't back down!" was shouted loudly for everyone to hear.

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**Detroit, Michigan**

Detroit organized a protest themed "War Zones to Peace Zones", focusing on JUSTICE for Aiyana Stanley Jones and Imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah.

Hundreds of people from around the country marched in Detroit to express their pain and outrage at the police shooting of seven-year old Aiyana Jones, killed during a police raid while she was sleeping in her home.

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**Freehold, New Jersey**

22-year old Amit Bornstein was beaten to death by officers in Monmouth County Jail.

The victim's Family to held a rally on Wednesday, October 27, 2010 at the Monmouth County Library in Manalapan, New Jersey 125 Symmes Drive at Intersection of Rte. 9, Manalapan, NJ

On July 29, 2010, Amit Bornstein, age 22 of Marlboro was arrested at his home by Monmouth County Sheriff's Officers on a bench warrant for failing to appear in Court for traffic infractions. Seven hours later Correction Officers dropped Amit's dead body at CentraState Hospital. Little is known about what happened while in custody, as surveillance tapes were seized by the Prosecutor's Office and have not been released. Two months after Amit's death, Sherriff Shaun Golden has yet to make any statement about the incident; now the Bornstein family is demanding accountability

for the death of their son.

According to investigators at least eight (8) Correction Officers were involved in the incident. Though the CO's initially claimed Mr. Bornstein "tossed them around like dolls," autopsy photos show that Amit was shackled and beaten to death after asking to make a phone call home. Amit's family and neighbors are demanding the release of the county jail video and audio tapes, and a fair and full investigation into his death, with appropriate disciplinary and criminal charges filed against his killers. The Warden, Sheriff and Corrections Officers' Union have been silent or have stated that "they followed procedures" and the no one "can prove any wrongdoing" - Then how did he die? And is it standard procedure to shackle and beat prisoners to death?

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**Fresno, California**

A Guerilla Street Play "How to Protect Yourself From the Biggest Gang in Town, The Fresno Police" was organized in Fresno, California. There was a testimony from victims of police brutality as well as a vigil for the 48 victims who have died under "El verdugo reatatero" (noose holding executioner) Chief Jerry Dyer.

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**Greensboro, North Carolina**

About 2:30 a.m on Friday, October 22nd, Cpl. M.W. Chandler shot and killed 28-year old Marques Ra'Shawn Burnett a while responding to a disturbance call.

Scott Trent, an organizer for October 22nd Coalition, spoke at the October 22nd rally: "We're very sad that they have to join this growing group of people that are going through exactly the same thing that Oscar Grant's family went through — that all these people went through — because these cops know that they can get away with murder every single time."

The protest began at the new Guilford County jail site at Edgeworth and Washington streets. Neon-colored picket signs with "No More Stolen



Lives” and “Stop Police Brutality” bounced up and down with the syncopated rhythms of a drum corps at the jail before the protesters moved to Freeman Mill Square.

Jessie Barber wore a poster around her neck with the faces of young men who were killed by officers, including her 22-year-old son Gil, who was shot by a Guilford County sheriff's deputy in 2001. She calls police use of lethal force an epidemic and wants the community to become more involved in stopping it.

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**Houston, Texas**

Houston's protest took place at the site of Yates High School. After the march with signs to Yates High School there was a speakout/demonstration followed by another march and another rally in the evening.

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**Humboldt/Eureka/Redwood Curtain, California**

October 23rd is the memorial day for Chris Burgess, who at age 16, was shot to death by a Eureka cop. On October 22nd the local community organized a march with food, music, sign-making, speak-out, group bike/skate/wheelchair ride and vigil to be joined by people from all over the region, including people from outside of Humboldt County.

On October 23rd a breakfast was held at Highland Park followed by a People's Memory March Against Police Brutality, rally at the courthouse and dinner and music at Labor Temple.

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**Los Angeles, California**

About 500 people, mainly youth, carried pictures of Oscar Grant, Manuel Jaminez and

others killed by police, as they marched from downtown LA through the immigrant neighborhood of Pico Union. Several dozen black students from four University of California campuses came because of the murder of Oscar Grant. A group of high school students from Watts brought a sign pasted with pictures of Oscar Grant, Manuel Jiminez, Aiyana Stanley-Jones and others which said, “Stop Police Brutality, No More Criminalization—Fighting for those who are gone!” There was a rally at the end of the march. Family members were joined by the Arikon Black Coalition, the coalition of Black Student Unions and Afrikan Student Unions, teachers from the Association of Raza Educators, and Michael Slate of Revolution newspaper.

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**Minneapolis, Minnesota**

Minneapolis marked the 15th Annual National Day of Protest Against Police Brutality with a march that started at the very busy intersection of Lake Street and Nicollet Avenue. Led by the family of Fong Lee, murdered in 2006 by Minneapolis police, a diverse group of about 75 marchers took the street a short distance to the Minneapolis Police Department's 5th precinct, where speakers reminded us of why we march and why we continue to fight to end police brutality. A unique Stolen Lives ceremony was held. A placard for each of the 142 Minnesota Stolen lives over the last decade was read and then laid on the plaza in front of the precinct. The result was a stark visual representation of the handiwork of

brutal policing in our state. After the stolen lives ceremony, the march returned to Lake Street to take over the major east-west thoroughfare of Minneapolis.

Chants from the marchers could be heard for at least 3 blocks and large numbers of people came out of shops and businesses along Lake Street to join the march. Unseasonably beautiful weather and the excitement of taking to the street to demand justice in a town that has experienced an epidemic of police abuse brought many people out. The march wound down Lake Street, growing larger, followed by a phalanx of squad cars and a police helicopter overhead. Despite the police presence and the fact that we held the street for a long distance, there were no arrests. The march terminated at Favor Cafe, the only Black-owned business in uptown and the site of a fundraiser to benefit Communities United Against Police Brutality's fund to assist people dealing with the effects of police brutality. The fundraiser featured well-known local hip hop performers, spoken word artists and a DJ. Everyone in attendance had a great time and a good sum of money was raised. Many stated that it was a wonderful way to end one of the best October 22 events ever held in the Twin Cities.

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#### **New Haven, Connecticut**

United in one voice dozens of people in New Haven joined together outside New Haven City Hall on October 22nd and marched to protest police brutality. Helping to break the silence are dozens of Yale students who have filed some 30 complaints of alleged police misconduct following a raid at Elevate Lounge on Crown Street. Steven Winter was one of those students arrested.

"It's about changing the entire system of policing in this city and making sure police inside these concrete walls hear us", he stated.



**New Haven, Connecticut**

Others spoke of a more diverse board of police commissioners where civilians will know that their concerns will not fall on deaf ears. "It needs to have individuals who will effectively hold police accountable and you need activists on that board," said Michael Jefferson of New Haven.



**New Haven, Connecticut**

#### **New York, New York**

New York's National Day of Protest kicked off with the Unite to Fight Teach-In, timed to reach high school students as they got out of school. Organizations brought tables with literature and visuals illustrating the ways in which police brutality affects homeless people, immigrants, LGBT, youth, families of police brutality victims, and more. A local artist has painted dozens of portraits of Stolen Lives throughout the last few years, and high school students at the Teach-In held up the portraits so that people on the street could see them, many stopping to take pictures. At the table of the Alliance of Conscious Documentarians, one could leaf through a portfolio of photos of Families of





**New York, New York**

Stolen Lives and their fight for justice or put on headsets to hear their stories. Music and poetry was provided by the Haitian drumming group Kongo, Frankie Lopez of the Peace Poets, and Spiritchild of Movement in Motion.

The Teach-In was followed by a short rally before the march. Speaking at this rally were Families of Stolen Lives: Juanita Young (mother of Malcolm Ferguson, killed by NYPD), Nicholas Heyward Sr. (father of Nicholas Heyward Jr., killed by a housing cop), Margarita Rosario (mother of Antonio Rosario and aunt of Hilton Vega, killed by NYPD), Allene Person (mother of Timur Person, killed by NYPD), and Jennifer Gonzalez (mother of the son of Kenny Lazo, killed by Suffolk, NY police). Aidge, formerly of O22-LA, spoke as the representative of October 22nd Coalition-New York, rousing participants with a series of chants.



**New York, New York**

The very spirited march of about 350 went through heavily populated areas at rush hour. The chants, banners, stolen Lives portraits, and leaflets

reached hundreds of people. The march ended up back at Union Square, where the rally continued with Carl Dix of the Revolutionary Communist Party, and speakers from the Free Mumia Coalition, Families for Freedom, Picture the Homeless, Rights for Imprisoned People with Psychiatric Disabilities, a representative for Lynne Stewart, Safe OUTside the System and a representative from the Harlem People's Neighborhood Patrols. Nicholas Heyward Sr. closed out the event, leading the crowd in reciting the Pledge of Resistance from the Stolen Lives book.

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**Phoenix, Arizona**

On October 23rd the Phoenix community organized a showing of the film „Operation Small Axe“ as part of Oscar Grant national activities.

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**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

Pittsburgh held a community teach in and speak-out at East Liberty Presbyterian Church.

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**Raleigh, North Carolina**

In Raleigh a showing of movie "A Huey P. Newton Story" has been organized.

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**San Francisco/ Bay Area, California**

A giant “wall of stolen lives” was brought to U.C. Berkeley, and students wrote messages on an October 22nd banner. People gathered at the BART station where Oscar Grant was murdered by BART cop Johannes Mehserle, and later in East Oakland near where Brownie Polk was murdered by the Oakland police.

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## Seattle, Washington

In Seattle O22 was built off of widespread outrage over seven murders by police in a two week period from August 25th to Sept 7th including seven killings in Washington state. The rally was held at Seattle Central Community College where posters of the Stolen Lives were put up everywhere and students were challenged about whether they would be out on O22.

People at the rally were visibly affected by moving testimony from family and friends of Richard Sims, David Young, John T Williams, James Whiteshield and Michael Ealy who were murdered by police or jail officials. One young man in tears said hearing these stories left him heartbroken, but he was moved to think about what he could contribute to stopping this and to the cause of revolution. One young Black girl held up the printout from revcom.us of Aiyana Stanley Jones, one of the Stolen Lives, and said, "She was seven years old, like me."

Other speakers talked about repression and roundups of immigrants. An immigrant worker talked about ongoing harassment against him for being an organizer by the University of Washington police. A speech from a correspondent for Revolution newspaper put revolution in the air, onto people's lips and helped set a defiant and resistant mood.



Seattle, Washington

Youth called out the police all along the way, and challenged others to come into the streets, which dozens did, and finally some 300 people took the streets. One chant was "Killer cops are guilty, guilty, the system is filthy, filthy". At the site of John T. Williams murder

hundreds did a die-in blocking intersections and dozens carried the protest into the night into the streets of the Capitol Hill neighborhood.

The march reached thousands of people in downtown Seattle and was enthusiastically received.

O22 was big news on all of the local TV news channels. Sympathetic press from Seattle University, KBCS radio, and a Capitol Hills news site made sure that there were photos and audios of a lot of the speeches on the internet.

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## Montreal, Quebec (Canada)

About 80 people and members of those slain during questionable police operations in Canada marched through downtown Montreal to police headquarters as part of the first annual North American Day to Stop Police Brutality and Repression.

"We are asking the government, the city of Montreal, not to protect the rotten apples that are in the police. We have, time after time, suffered from police injustice. ... It's time to act, and I think today you've taken a first step by uniting those who have suffered from police brutality," said Mohammed Bennis, referring to the Montreal Police Brotherhood, the union that unsuccessfully fought not to have a coroner's inquest held into the death of Bennis's son, Anas, who was shot by police in 2005.



Montreal, Canada

Bennis was joined at the head of the march by the friends and families of Quilem Registre, who died in 2007 after being tasered repeatedly by Montreal police;



Claudio Castagnetta, who died the same year after being tasered by Quebec City police; Gladys Tolley, a resident of the Kitigan-Zibi Algonquin reserve near Gatineau, who died in 2001 after being struck by a Sûreté du Québec police cruiser; Ben Matson, who died in Vancouver in 2002 after being pursued by five police officers, kicked in the head, then handcuffed and kept on his stomach on the ground; and Fredy Villanueva, whose fatal shooting by Montreal police in 2008 sparked riots in Montreal North. The marchers paraded down Ste. Catherine St., chanting anti-police slogans while those same police blocked off traffic along the route of the protest.

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