

marking bullets brought it upon themselves) this legitimizes the violence of the police, while delegitimizing the violence of the kids throwing bottles. Thus, again, activists show themselves to be doing the work of the police.

What is forgotten every time a well-meaning activist calls for peace in the face of rock throwing at a demonstration is that they are deciding, again, that they are the ones who get to define what violence is and where it begins. For them, disrupting a highway is not violence, but throwing a bottle is violence; blocking police inside their station (physically stopping bodies' ability to move) is nonviolent, whereas slashing tires is violent; and, of course, physically and verbally excluding those who have a different idea of what violence is, in the most spectacular reversal yet, not violence, but telling a cop you'll "beat his ass right now" is violent. Later, the activists play hero because of their own "bravery in the face of arrest or police violence" while again imploring those who also took risks by throwing stones (but perhaps didn't want to throw their bodies into an ineffective gesture), to "stop their violence." Again, the enlightened elite—the religious leaders, activists, and intellectuals—both black and white, know what's best for people who just don't understand what needs to happen. They don't get it that their real solution won't come from self-determined revolt, but from [Insert here: Appeals to the media/Peaceful demonstration/Socialism/Anarchism/Pan-Africanism/martyrdom].

This is not a call for unrestrained and random violence. This is not a call from a hardened militant. This is a call to respect the diversity of tactics, and the self-determined violence that already exists on the streets, to the shame of the professional activists. This is a call for plurality and coordination in a decisive time.

- *Someone standing in the back*

# On Throwing Rocks

Thoughts on the Demonstration  
at the 4th Precinct in Minneapolis  
on 11/18

*“[T]he time of passive resistance has ended, that nonviolence was a useless strategy and could never overturn a white majority regime bent on retaining its power at any cost” – Nelson Mandela*

*“Y’all are some singers. Y’all are just like them, you’re all cops.” – A man at Sunday’s demonstration at the 4th Precinct.*

As the cloud of mace lifted, the same calls for “peaceful protest!”—converted later into a chant—were heard above the thronging panicked crowd. Indignant rants of fury against violence would follow. But what does this righteous rage against “undeserved violence” and “unaccountable police work” presuppose? That there is deserved violence and accountable police work. What does this accountable, correct use of violence look like for a police force tasked with protecting the given distribution of power in a country like the United States, a country founded on the violence of dispossession and slavery; a country kept alive by vicious colonial expansion abroad and precise mechanisms of internalized normality at home? We got to see both sides of this power operation last night when the essential violence of the cops was met with the injunction to be peaceful by many of the protesters.

But who defines what “violence” is? And who decided that being “peaceful” was not only the best strategy, but the only possible one? In short, the cops did, but the cops conceived as a mechanism. The police are really nothing other than a mechanism for neutralizing threats to the state’s monopoly on violence, a monopoly that includes the authority to define it. Hence the activists’ repeated claims that they can police their neighborhoods. They’re right, and in this sense, the angry man at Sunday’s demonstration was entirely correct. The consequences of this “community policing” became immediately obvious when they physical-

ly excluded his body and voice by forming a circle and singing over him.

Let us not forget COINTELPRO’s expressed aims in the 60’s: “Prevent violence on the part of black nationalist groups. This is of primary importance.” And what was their fear concerning a so-called “black messiah?” That he “abandon his ‘obedience’ to ‘white, liberal doctrines’ (nonviolence).” Thus, when protesters, and especially the activists, declare their own righteous peaceful purity, they do so only by excluding the hooded ones near the back who chose to throw water bottles, stones, bricks, and trash cans at the police macing us. Is it really surprising that, after the cops clearly retreated while being pelted with stones, the activists still present the self-congratulatory and yet self-victimizing image of the pacifist protester? When activists make calls to “prosecute the police” and to “have black cops in our neighborhoods,” they are merely expressing rage at the most flamboyant aspects of a fluid power dynamic that systematically colonizes abroad and at home. They just want to pretty it up. As a 16 year old yelled at the black cop who came to replace a white cop: “fuck you too, you can go home as well.”

When activists declare that the stone throwing was merely a reaction to the violence of the police and assure the media that it was quickly quelled, they rob the event of its plurality and exclude those “who don’t get it,” who “were raised differently,” or who “strongly reacted.” It doesn’t matter what race the person is saying it is, this is colonial logic that de facto excludes any form of resistance that doesn’t appeal to the police, the state, and the media. It implicitly, through its own violent exclusion of the resistance of others, supports the world as it is. It is reactionary.” In its simplest form this nonviolence signifies to the intellectual and economic elite of the colonized country that the bourgeoisie has the same interests as they.” (Frantz Fanon) And when they declare that this violence will only provoke the police into attacking us (or even imply that those hit with