

#15

RESIST

OPPRESS

modesto anarcho

the valley's insurrectionary journal of class struggle

choose your side...

REAL E

What We Believe

We want a stateless and classless society. We want to live in a world of autonomous communities without any form of hierarchy. We desire a world where all people have agency and control over decision making and their lives. Where power is spread out horizontally to all, not concentrated at the top. A world in which all resources that people need to sustain themselves are owned and cared for in common and in harmony with the Earth. We want to see human labor and creativity put towards real needs and desires - not profit.

We are against all governments and capitalism. We are against all governments because they are based upon a monopoly of violence. Government is a system of domination that functions to preserve a society divided by class.

We are against capitalism, because it benefits those who own the means of existence, not those who must work to survive. This is a system of wage slavery — in which we trade our lives for wages and then buy back what we need to survive with those wages. Capitalism deforms and contorts all human relationships by turning everything into a commodity, including the Earth, living things, and our very lives. Capitalism cannot exist without government — it needs the government's violence to protect the privileged position of those who benefit from it.

We reject the reformism of the Left — we are revolutionaries. We do not desire a seat at the table of politics; we desire working class power. We believe in people self-organizing for the purpose of taking direct action. Class society can only be attacked and destroyed and we must organize ourselves to carry out this attack and to maximize our own power. We believe that class society can only be done away with through the collective mass revolutionary action of all working, poor, and oppressed people that creates an international human community through social revolution.

Modesto Anarcho is a quarterly journal produced in Modesto, California by Modesto Anarcho Crew (MAC). MAC is a street-based organization that exists to create revolutionary propaganda and participate and engage in class and community-based struggles in our area. This publication is free to all. We also run a social center, Firehouse 51, in downtown Modesto.

We have no demands for this system; we seek only its destruction.

Managers of daily life are everywhere. Why? Because every aspect of our lives needs to be controlled and managed for the sake of keeping us going to work and following orders. To keep those on the top in power, and those who own all the wealth in this world rich. This is true at work, at school, on the streets, and even within the movements for social change. At work, we are monitored and kept in line with surveillance and other forms of technology. The machines, we were told, that were supposed to make our jobs easier, in fact just allowed the bosses to make us toil harder and faster. Also, the organizations which are supposed to “fight for our interests,” the unions, divert any sort of anger against the bosses into dialog and compromise. At school, we are encouraged to run for student office, and allow student government to “represent” us and our problems with those that run the university. In the streets, we are controlled and monitored by cameras, and of course, the police.

It is important to understand how much like the police the rest of the managers of everyday life are. We can see it in the student activist who tells us to get out of the street during a protest. The union bureaucrat who demands that we not go on strike because it is not in our contract. The social worker at the welfare office who determines the amount of free money and food we get. The priest on the pulpit who tries to dictate our sexuality. The politician on the television, who calls for more cops and jails. Police everywhere; freedom nowhere. In much of this issue, we deal with this reality. The tension that exists between those that want the abolition and end to the way things are, and those that simply want a different version of it.

The managers of social revolt exist to make sure that the strike does not get out of hand, that the calls for freedom do not move beyond the ballot box, and that our struggles do not move into full blown revolt. Most importantly, the Left is designed to make sure that the battles that we are involved in, either at school, work, or in our communities, stay isolated and within the bounds of the law. Often the people who try to call the shots in these situations will be “well educated,” and “well connected.” They also often come from the upper classes, and work jobs in which they manage and tell people what to do. Thus, it will appear natural to them to try to direct and control us. They will claim that those of us who seek to push resistance out of legal and political means are “stupid” and “uneducated.” They will try and paint us as outsiders and “provocateurs,” as we fight harder to organize ourselves and expand our struggles. They will tell us that by being militant, angry, and confrontational,

that we only make it harder to create the change we want to see. But power and wealth love lapdogs, not rabid wolves. This is why the rich tolerate those who seek to control and direct everything in struggles for change. Remember, not all police wear badges.

Within these pages, we thus talk about how various Left groups impact and deform struggles for liberation. We will talk about the student movement and the struggle against the police. We report on actions at PRIDE, and how event organizers tried to diffuse conflict when right-wing bigots showed up. Looking at the legal and political avenues of resistance to the police that many have engaged in the Central Valley, we discuss how we might leave such tactics behind. Also, we look at the recent shooting deaths of Francisco Moran and Rita Elias, who were shot and killed in Modesto in September. Hopefully both of these stories will lead to action and people becoming more aware of the realities of the police and what they represent. Enjoy this issue and analyze it's contents. Don't just let it wash over you as if it was just anything else you consume online or in print form. This is a call to arms. A call to get organized and link up with others. To refuse to settle simply for what the police of revolt or the police of the streets have in mind for us. To push the associations we have with neighbors, friends, and co-workers to their most subversive end. To confront and attack the present conditions that impoverish our lives, and create the associations that will allow us to build a new way of being.

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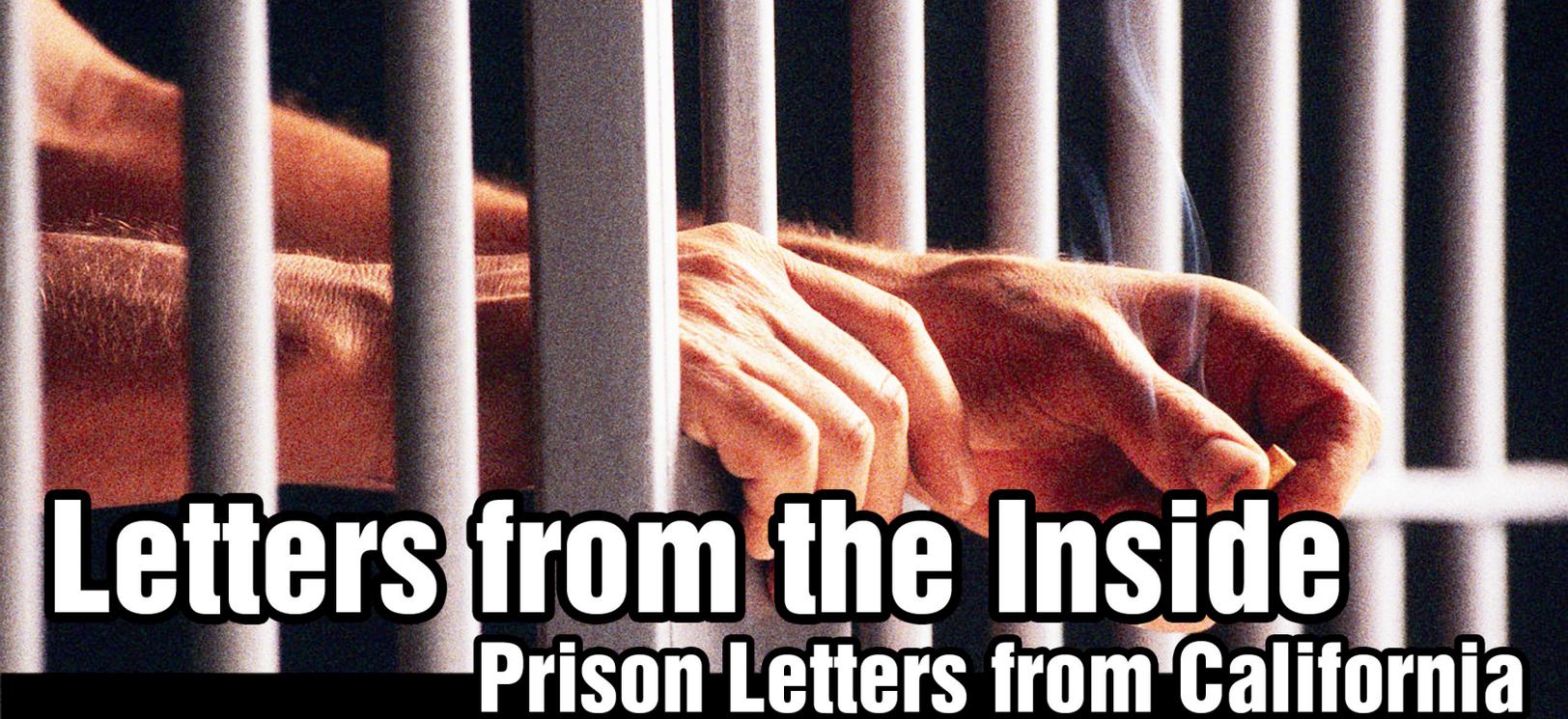
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Letters from the Inside

Prison Letters from California

Dear Folks

I am an anarchist whom is locked up in California. I write and study zines and anarchist news. I got stuff from you guys last year and I admire your organization. Your whole get down is real friggin cool.

I'm writing to see if you have any more stuff for me to read. Theory or rad news. Thanks.

Bradley

Supreme Greetings,

I hope this letter finds you all you righteous and beautiful people doing well. I dream that this well be our year, our year for freedom! But let me be very clear, the true freedom of this country will not come because of the false enlightenment of Obama or any of the rest of those who have so perverted our land. That destroys the face of the earth and wishes for our destruction. Even if we are few in number, we are the people who will save our beautiful land. I love all of you because you are the best that we have. We are on the right side of this struggle, and we will win. I am with you until there is no more breath in my body. Forever your brother.

Zero

Anarcho,

First and foremost I send my love and upmost re-

spects to all of you. I enjoyed reading the material you send me and I passed it around to all the people that I run with on the yard and they liked it a lot. Keep up the good work. There's not much going on here and they keep us on lock down for dumb ass shit. I got 20 years in the system and I'm one mad motherfucker about how it all works. If you're poor and get caught up out there you're coming here. But anyways, you know the story. I do have a lot to say but I'll keep it short and real. I came here to Susanville years ago and I went to fire camp to fight fires as an inmate firefighter. I hiked every mountain in the state fighting fires for one dollar an hour. CAL Fire and CDCR: working a motherfucker like a dog and treating us like shit. I did two full fire seasons and fucked my back up real good and now I'm here on the yard looking at a back surgery in here. YIKES!

In here there's the Crips and the Bloods and the skinheads and the Sureños and the Norteños. We got the border brothers and of course all the Woods from all over California. All of us peckerwoods have our own clicks and counties we run with and we try not to seperate the State or county when it comes to the white man because we have to stick together. The system keeps everyone set trippin on each other for their own needs and power. It makes me sick to my stomach to watch it all go down. There will never be racial unity on the inside because of all the hatred the system breeds and keeps us hating each other. If we all stuck together the system would lose the battle and they won't have it that way so it is what it is, for now. My friends call me Kenny and my homeboys call me "Oooh-Weee" and ...

Continued on page 8...



When they kick down the door... Repression in the Valley

May-August: Stanislaus County suffers even more layoffs and cuts. From increased classroom sizes in schools, to pay cuts, layoffs, and furlough days for all state workers, it seems none of us are safe from the budget cuts. One report by the Modesto Bee found that in Stanislaus, Merced, and San Joaquin Counties more than 2,300 employees have been fired “since the recession slammed into the Northern San Joaquin Valley.” Government agencies in the region expect to spend \$618 million less on services this year than they did two years ago. Of 6,900 workers missing 81,288 work days this year, over half are from Stanislaus County. All but one of its 3,639 employees must take off 13 unpaid days.

To all state and public sector workers: why wait for the union to “negotiate” for us? They’ll only betray us. What we need is a general strike across all sectors that takes a kidney punch right to the rich. Walk out, strike, demand no pay cuts, no furloughs, no layoffs! We need a strike that is in our hands, not those of bureaucrats, and across all sectors.

June: Modesto Police, San Joaquin County Sheriffs, and other agencies got special training from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) prior to a protest of Sarah Palin at CSU Stanislaus. While authorities didn’t mention the former über-conservative governor by name, they did say the techniques could “come in handy in a little more than two weeks.” In addition, the police stated that they would be watching “Modesto Anarcho” at open meetings before the protests happened.

The DHS is in the business of financing repression, and business is good. In addition to trainings like this, and a similar training for crowd control and managing unrest last October, DHS commonly provides monetary grants to local police forces, such as to local cities like Ripon and Modesto for closed-circuit television surveillance systems in business districts like 10th & J downtown. The Merced Police Department recently purchased a 2010 Lenco Bearcat: an armored vehicle with a \$300,000 price tag. The state understands that recession leads to rebellion, and is banking on repression to defend itself.

June: In Stockton, the police officers’ union launched a billboard campaign, ostensibly in response to city-wide budget cuts which have affected the police department’s pay, and may lead to laying off 15 percent of the city’s cops. Billboards read: “People Are Being Murdered in Stockton - Stop Laying Off Cops!” “Murder Rate Is Up in Stockton - Body Count 24,” and “Welcome to the 2nd Most Dangerous City in California.”

This spectacular media campaign is designed to instill fear into the hearts of the people of Stockton. They say, “If you don’t like murder, if you don’t like being robbed, then don’t cut cops.” In reality, the cops don’t do much to stop any of these things from happening in the first place, and hiring more cops won’t solve the problem. When was the last time you called the police and they did anything to help you? It is mostly upper-middle- and upper-class, mostly white people who could answer that question with anything

positive. For the rest of us, our sole interactions with the police consist of running, being afraid of, or being beaten and/or arrested by them. Police already get paid close to \$100,000 per year, and these scare tactics are simply an attempt to preserve such massive salaries.

July: Two years into the foreclosure crisis, and it just keeps getting worse. Modesto, Merced, and Stockton are still topping out the list of hardest-hit areas in the country, at third, fourth, and sixth, respectively. According to the Modesto Bee, "Households across a majority of large U.S. cities received more foreclosure warnings in the first six months of this year than in the first half of 2009... More than 1 million American households are likely to lose their homes to foreclosure this year..." As more and more of us fall victim to the banks and have our homes taken away, it becomes more and more important that we resist and take back what is rightfully ours. Especially in cities like Modesto, where it is now common to find several vacant houses on a single block, it is ridiculous to accept any family being kicked out of their home with nowhere to go.

July: CRLA, California Rural Legal Assistance, is threatening to sue Stanislaus County over the lack of low-income housing available, particularly in the county's predominantly-Latino rural areas. As one lawyer put it, "There are serious fair housing and equitable land use issues raised by the county's disproportionate lack of infrastructure in minority communities." In recent years, other lawsuits have been launched by CRLA along similar grounds, such as the lack of sidewalks in working class, largely-Latino neighborhoods like South Side / Crow's Landing.

July 9th: 15-year old Traveon John Avila is shot and killed by two officers in Bakersfield. Witnesses say that after a short chase, Traveon's car stalled on a dirt ramp and

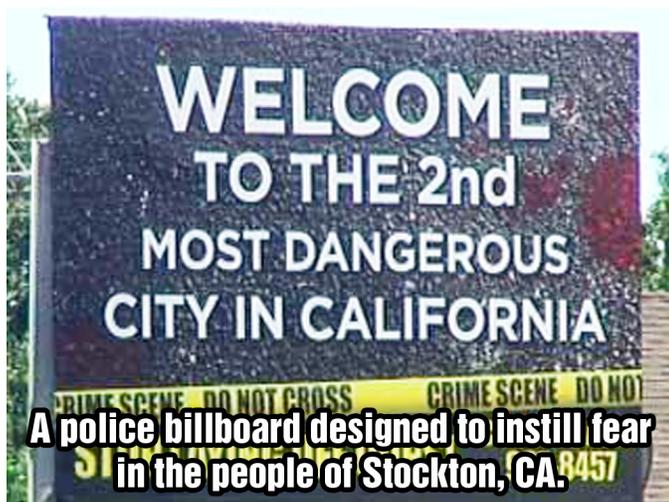


Friends, family, and community members sign a banner in memory of James Rivera at his murder site the day after.

began rolling backwards. Officers claim the car was accelerating backwards, and opened fire. One witness stated: "They shot at the suspects for no reason. The people in the car really didn't have a chance to surrender." Police arrested one passenger, while another escaped on foot. This was the first on-duty killing for 26-year-old Noah Landers (who's been a cop for three years), however Timothy Berchtold, 33, has been involved in three fatal shootings in the past two months. A review board was formed after the killing, to see if the two police were at fault at all. According to Bakersfield.com, "The Review Board consisted of Assistant Chief Lyle Martin, Capt. Kevin Stokes, Capt. Robert Bivens and Capt. Joe Bianco." It is no surprise that these pigs found their "brothers of the badge" to be without fault. The only justice is in our vengeance on the street.

July: The California State University Board of Trustees has raised school fees by 5% in 2010, (on top of the 32% last year). The President of CSU Stanislaus, Hamid Shirvani, states clearly that he does not believe in "free" education, nor does he believe that it is a "right." Instead, he wants to raise fees, cut classes, and revamp the entire institution. Shirvani was also in hot water recently for bringing former Vice Presidential Candidate Sarah Palin to the campus, which drew large protests. Now, President Shirvani has chosen a new rep for the Foundation Board, which directs grant funds for students. The new candidate is CSU Stanislaus' own President of the College Republicans (who also received free tickets to go see Sarah Palin), Marie Brichetto. Just the person you want handing out student aid, right? — someone who thinks that only the rich should attend college. As a banner read last year at a demonstration outside of Shirvani's home, "Shirvani out! Hella Class War!"

July: In Merced, roadside fruit vendors are now facing citations and fines for selling their produce unless they obtain "proper county permits," according to the Merced Sun-Star. On July 2nd, local sheriffs began



A police billboard designed to instill fear in the people of Stockton, CA.

“Operation Fruitbasket,” a sweep targeting fruit vendors throughout the county. In the first day, it took ten deputies and a helicopter to cite two vendors, and confiscate “about \$1,500 worth of goods.” These sweeps are an obvious attempt to target those of us without identification or citizenship. Indeed, on the first day of the operation, a 31-year-old immigrant received a citation. According to the Sun-Star, he broke into tears after being issued a citation, saying he’d like to get the proper permits, but doesn’t have the proper legal identification. He said he obtained about \$600 in fruits and merchandise from someone in Los Angeles, and was hoping to sell the goods in order to feed his family. “I don’t know what I can do here in the U.S.,” he said.

July: On July 4th, Fresno Police drew shotguns on a group of young copwatchers who wore bandannas while filming police interactions in an attempt to stop and document abuse and harassment. Many of those participating in the copwatching were young Latinos.

July: In July, Governor Schwarzenegger, citing the fragile economy, vetoed a bill that would have entitled farmworkers overtime pay after working 40 hours a week or eight hours a day. He said that farm owners would attempt to hire more workers and cut hours to avoid overtime pay. This is clearly another example of the state serving the interests of the rich rather than us, taking advantage of the fact that farmworkers have few options or legal recourses to defend themselves.

July: Modesto Irrigation District (MID) and Valley BioEnergy (VBE) are planning to build a new bio-mass incinerator (a wood-burning power plant) in the Beard Industrial Tract just off Yosemite Blvd. Readers of Modesto Anarcho and many others in the area are familiar with the horrible problems associated with incinerators, such as the Covanta Waste-to-Energy Plant on Fink Rd. near Grayson and Westley. The biomass plant would release chemical toxins such as nitrogen (nOX), “a precursor to ozone (O3).” While MID/VBE say that the plant would produce twelve-times-less nOX emissions as other similar plants throughout the country, this is likely impossible according to Voice of Modesto, a local blog. Airport, La Loma, and Downtown residents are likely to be the worst-affected, some of the same areas that had to deal daily with the Tallow Plant until it was shut down. The plant was pushed through with a very small window for public comment, which means that we have no legal recourse. The only way to stop this is to fight back and resist!

July 22nd: 16-year-old James Rivera is killed by Police in Stockton, one day before his 17th birthday. Police hunted him for days, and ended up chasing him into the residential neighborhood in which he lived. Police rammed James’ vehicle, forcing him to crash into the side of a residence. Police then approached the vehicle and opened fire, giving little or no warning, depending on the witness you hear. Witnesses also comment that, given the impact of the crash, it was probable that James was unconscious, and unable to respond.

August: Stanislaus County supervisors approved a new 60-bed juvenile rehabilitation facility, adjacent to the 158-bed Juvenile Hall on Blue Gum Avenue. The new facility is supposed to house court-committed minors, that is, youth who are wards of the court, who would otherwise be placed in group homes or kept in Juvenile Hall. The plan describes a facility which blurs the lines between prison and school, including “classrooms, a multi-purpose gymnasium and visitation area, kitchen, culinary program classroom, and recreation yard,” in addition to dormitories. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the county is building more detention facilities while closing more schools, as we’ve covered extensively in the past. This trend is continuing across California.

As if this weren’t enough, “County officials are working on funding the long-term operating costs for the center, but money should be available to run the center for the first few years,” according to Jerry Powers, the county’s chief probation officer. So, while county officials can’t come up with the money for our children’s schools, they are perfectly comfortable spending money that they don’t have on prison projects. It’s perfectly clear what they have in mind for us.

August: Merced County Sheriffs arrested 19-year-old Robert Rojas on suspicion of graffiti. Cops wasted no time in painting him as a vandal, miscreant, and linking him to a larger conspiracy. He is currently being held on \$75,000 bail. Cases like these show where the interests of the police lay; they are ruining this kid’s life over allegedly changing the color of a surface; for allegedly committing a “property crime.” The investigation has been a priority for Merced Sheriffs for two years now, going back to an incident where a tractor drove through a field of potatoes, causing around \$50,000 in damage. Police claim that Rojas was part of the group who did this. As a great rapper once said, “Graffiti is a Freedom Crime!” Free Robert Rojas!

August: Turlock lifeguards and swim instructors face a retroactive paycut at the hands of new City Manager Roy Wasden, former Modesto Police Chief. The retroactive cut is part of a larger city-wide pay cut affecting all recreation staff. According to the Modesto Bee, Turlock City Council decided in June that wages would be dropped \$1 per hour for all recreation staff making \$1 or more than minimum wage. According to Wasden, a "personnel issue" resulted in lifeguards and swim instructors being paid normal wages, and he now wants to take that money back. But the lifeguards aren't having it. "I'm paying for my own apartment, this isn't movie money," said Kelsey Martinez, 18. "We're trying to fight back." Wasden is a manager like any other, only now his business is the City of Turlock.

August: Another inmate was found dead in the county jail. Richard Taylor, 27, of Salinas, was booked into jail on June 24, and was found dead around 5 a.m. on August 5th.

According to the Turlock Journal, "This is the sixth death of an inmate while in the custody of the sheriff's department, in a year's time span. The first death was that of Craig Prescott, 38, of Modesto on April 11, 2009. Prescott died after struggling with deputies and being shot with a Taser. A cause of death was determined to be hypertensive heart disease with a contributing factor of moderate cardiovascular strain from heightened physical activity. Prescott's family has filed a \$10 million lawsuit against the county. On Aug. 26, 2009, Manuel Dent was found dead at the jail. Dent had been shot with a Taser by Modesto police officers during his arrest in an attempt to keep him from swallowing a bundle of narcotics. A cause of death was attributed to an overdose of narcotics. Weeks later Alton Warren Ham, 45, of Oklahoma was found dead in his cell on Sept. 16, 2009. Ham was shot with a Taser when he fought with deputies who were trying to move him to another cell. A coroner's report stated Ham had an enlarged heart which may have contributed to his death. His family has filed a claim against the county. On Jan. 17, jail staff found Ronald Schade, 53, of Modesto dead in a cell he shared with other inmates. Schade's body had no signs of a struggle and no force was used against him during his arrest. A month later Leslee Gutierrez, 37, of Modesto was found dead at the Public Safety Center. A cause of death was attributed to a methadone overdose. Her family recently stated they are planning to file a lawsuit against the county."

September: People on the street aren't the only ones tweaking or selling drugs for that matter. A worker

at the Crime Lab in Ripon was arrested, according to the Modesto Bee, after "A four-month investigation... [showed that] methamphetamine samples that he handled at the Central Valley Crime Lab weighed less than first reported." The worker is reported to have stolen drugs from the lab and then sold them on the street.

September: Francisco Moran, 45, is killed by Modesto Police. Police, responding to a supposed domestic dispute, enter the home, find Francisco, and shoot him. While police at first claimed he had been armed with a knife and attacked them, it was later discovered not only that he was not armed (he had a wooden spoon from the kitchen in his waistband), but he did not attack the officers.

September: 31-year-old Rita Elias is shot by an off-duty Stanislaus County Sheriff's Deputy, Kari Abbey, in West Modesto. Abbey's father owned the building, and she was apparently trying to evict Elias for him, which is illegal. Rumors abound, but many witnesses mention an hour-long dispute, a fist-fight, and some even believe that other off-duty deputies were involved in the shooting, and that Abbey arrived later.

Continued from page 4...

... the system calls me "E-98126. Please take real good care and put my name and hook up out there because I want some mail and a pen-pal. My release date is 9/17/2012 and I'm from "Co-Co County" but I'll be here for now.

Much Love and Respect,

Kenny Nelson E-98126
PO Box 2400 SD - 4701 LOW
Susanville, CA 96127

Anarcho,

My name is Clayton Howard #F-59609. I'm currently serving time at CCC Susanville State Prison. A.V. 77-19C. I'm from Stockton CA and was kickin back the other day when my homeboy got your newsletter in the mail and was wanting to also be included in your badass paper, so please put me on your mailing list as soon as possible. Thank you for your time.

Clayton



...How you gonna come?

Action in the Valley

Late April: When a touring band playing a house show was shut down by the police, a group of about 50 people decided to keep the show going and took the party downtown, to 10th and J Street. The band played for about an hour, even as police drove by, saying nothing. As more people gathered, the crowd became more and more angry at the police presence, shouting “fuck you.” Concert-goers and passers-by moshed and chanted “fuck the police” together.

May 1st: Hundreds took to the streets in South Side Modesto on May Day. Many people were angry over immigration and border issues in California, as well as recent proposed racist anti-immigrant laws in Arizona. Such laws are also being proposed for California.

Early May: In Modesto, the McHenry Mansion was attacked with paint-filled condoms. Security cameras on the building were destroyed, and graffiti slogans were left reading “The Rich Can’t Keep Us Out,” and “We Kill Yuppies.” The action came right after a decision by the Modesto City Council to privatize the park, giving control to the Mansion, due to a growing homeless presence.

Mid May: In Fresno, students angry over the closure of the library during test time, decided to take matters into their own hands and keep the building open. According to a post on indybay.org:

“In protest of reduced hours 11 students stayed in the Fresno State library after it closed on Saturday. This was

in protest of the fact that finals are next week and the school has done nothing to increase library access to students. Friday night, students were also asked to leave early so that donors could have a “Wizard of Oz” conference, this also was protested by students.

At Saturday’s occupation, nearly a dozen campus police and FPD (who are not allowed on campus) came in along with Dr. Coon to threaten the students with a judicial review and delayed graduation. This is absurd since the budget cuts have led to cut classes and overcrowded classes which is already leading to delayed graduation for many students.

After 2 hours the students had their names taken down by the PD and were escorted out of the building. None of the law enforcement were willing to answer any questions, this includes FPD who were asked why they were there when they weren’t supposed to be there, they were also asked for names and badge numbers but refused this as well.”

Late May: In West Modesto, people took over a section of Cesar Chavez Park to hold a “Graffiti Festival.” People ate BBQ, live music was performed by a hip hop group, and sheets of plywood were placed up around the park for people to paint on. Graffiti writers and locals took their turns decorating the boards with their own creations. Speakers talked about police repression of street artists and ways to organize.

Early June: Homeless people and local residents gathered in Paperboy Park in response to threats by the city to shut it down and make it private. The event was organized by word of mouth and through flyers. Over 100 people came out to the park throughout the day, enjoying BBQ, picking up free literature, and talking about what was happening in the local area. Several banners were put up on the outside of the park reading, “No Gentrifying, No Foreclosure: Defend Public Space!,” and “This Space is for Everyone!”

Late June: People gathered in Turlock, to protest the homophobic, anti-choice, capitalist, imperialist, and all-around rich piece of shit, Sarah Palin. The local police did their best to keep those attending the protest out of the campus by constructing a huge fence, flying helicopters over the area, and trying to contain the crowd. People blocked the street entering campus off and on for several hours (much to the dismay of the bureaucrats in Socialist Organizer) and for an hour hurled insults and profanities at the upper crust who shelled out \$500 to hear Palin talk. Bottles were also thrown at members of the Tea Party.

Late June: A fire starting in the bathroom at the honor farm facility in Stanislaus County ripped through parts of the prison. Several inmates used the opportunity to escape. It is widely suspected that inmates started the fire in the bathroom.

Early July: In French Camp, nurses and their patients held an informational picket over the laying off of 14 workers at San Joaquin General Hospital.

Early July: In Modesto, a large wave of graffiti appeared in the downtown in relation to police and the Oscar Grant case. Slogans read, “Justice for Oscar!,” “Get Ready!,” “Fuck Pigs,” and many more.



Banner signed in memory of James Rivera, at the site of his murder, July 2010



Vandalized Fresno County Peace Officers Memorial, July 2010

Early July: In Fresno, residents protested on the streets against the court ruling finding the BART police who killed Oscar Grant only guilty of involuntary manslaughter. That night in Fresno, an officer’s memorial was vandalized. A communiqué posted online read:

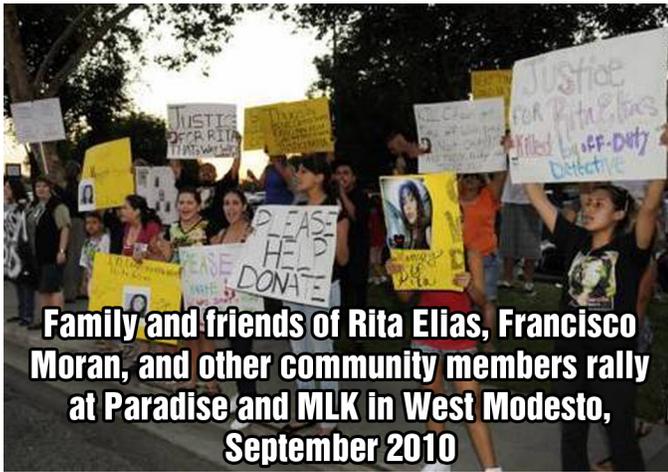
“Because Police show so little respect for the life of the people they so viciously gun down, i.e. Oscar Grant, concerned citizens in Fresno vandalized a police Officers Memorial in Fresno’s courthouse park tonight. If the cops aren’t going to show any respect for the people they are supposed to “Protect and Serve” we are not going to show any respect for their fallen.”

The actions of the Police in Oakland tonight also show their disrespect for justice in General. Their heavy-handed violence towards protestors just reinforces their total disconnect with the people of Oakland. Talk about outside agitators. No Justice, No Peace, Fuck the Police!”

July: Residents in Stockton held several community BBQs at the residence where James Rivera was shot and murdered by local police, after he crashed into a home while being pursued. The gatherings served not only as a places for people to come and mourn, but also as meeting spots for people to discuss other plans for action. A banner at the site read, “Community BBQ, Reclaim the City!” and was signed by neighborhood residents and James’ family, with messages such “RIP James,” “Fuck the Police,” and “We’ll always miss you.”

In late July, local residents packed a city council meeting, and began chanting “No Justice No Peace!” as the guards attempted to kick the group out. A small group also protested outside of the Stockton Mayor’s business.

Early September: In Modesto, a banner was dropped next to the jail that read “Six Dead in One Year. Fire to the Prisons!”



Family and friends of Rita Elias, Francisco Moran, and other community members rally at Paradise and MLK in West Modesto, September 2010

Early September: Modesto residents protested against the shooting death of Francisco Moran, displaying a banner which read “Disarm MPD,” and holding spatulas.

Mid September: Fundamentalist Christians were again confronted at the yearly PRIDE Festival in Modesto. Bigots had their signs blocked and were pushed out of the park. Many people also stood up to event organizers who wanted the group to leave without a confrontation. People formed a large circle, which expanded, pushing the bigots out. The protestors left soon after.

Late September: In Davis, banners were dropped at the UC on the first day of classes, against fee hikes and budget cuts. Banners read “Welcome to a Failing System,” and promoted upcoming actions on October 7th.

Late September: In Modesto, residents protested the shooting death of Rita Elias, killed by an off-duty Stanislaus County Sheriff. People rallied on Paradise and MLK Jr. Blvd in West Modesto, holding banners reading “From LA to Oakland to Modesto, Resist Police Terror, 209 Rise Up!” and “RIP Francisco Moran, RIP Rita Elias.” People also marched, chanting “Cops, Pigs, Murderers!” and “Fuck the Police and the Modesto Bee!”

Late September: In Modesto, people again protested the shooting deaths of Francisco Moran and Rita Elias outside of the Modesto Police station. People then marched through the downtown and rallied outside the County Jail.

Early October: According to the Modesto Bee, sometime between Friday night and Sunday night, people broke out the windows to the Democratic Party headquarters in Modesto. According to one commentator, “*The vandals*

made several attempts to break out every window, but were only successful breaking four of the windows completely. The viciousness of the attack is evident by one window that suffered 7 strikes but failed to shatter.”

Some at first speculated that Republicans were to blame for the attack - or even that Democrats themselves caused the vandalism. Perhaps, some thought, they had carried it out in an attempt to gain some press. However, graffiti left at the scene spelled out simply “RAAN,” and a post on a website claimed responsibility for the attack. RAAN, or the ‘Red and Anarchist Action Network,’ is a “lose network of anarchists and anti-state/anti-Leninist communists” across the United States and the world.

The communique reads:

RAAN Rolls on Democrats

So the other night a very, VERY large mob of RAANistas smashed the fuck out of the Democratic campaign office in Modesto.

We did this 'cause, like, FUCK liberals.

*“Keep on keepin’ on oh yeah!
K-e-e-p I’m keepin’ on yeah!
Like a red machine”*

*Like a motherfucker <3,
Red & Anarchist Action Network*

In 2006, another RAAN action took place in Modesto, targeting the “Tittz Salon,” a ‘gentleman’s club’ with accordingly sexist imagery.



Broken Windows and Spray Paint at Democratic Party’s Campaign HQ in Modesto, October 2010



Conflict in Turlock

Sarah Palin at CSU-Stanislaus

We live in a society that is primarily divided by class. This was made very apparent on June 25th when Sarah Palin spoke at CSUS. The audience was composed of those who can afford to drop 500 dollars to hear some bullshit (the ruling class). The organization responsible for getting Palin to speak is private, although it consists of members of the CSUS administration. Palin receives around 100,000 dollars per speaking event, and for this particular event, the money came directly from the university. This is a ridiculous misuse of money during any state of the economy, and given the crisis we are currently facing, it really makes you question the motives and sanity of the administration.

The protest that was organized by students of CSUS, teachers, and community members was met by a heavy police force, security guards, and fencing that was reminiscent of G20 summit security. All of this, of course, was paid for by the school and state. The composition of the protest itself was extremely interesting. Of course, there were the typical sign-waving liberals present, with slogans that were apologetic to anti-worker ideas (*"Whose country? Our country"*). And of course the scum bags in Socialist Organizer were there too, despite the fact that they seem to be pushed more and more to irrelevance. However, most of the people there were just regular, broke-as-fuck students/teachers/workers. These people did not bring their politics. They didn't give a shit about the Democrats, and I only heard one instance of someone talking about reforming the

administration. No, the only thing these people brought was venom for the system. Pure rage at the fact that a bunch of rich assholes were wasting their money to hear some stupid douche bag talk. It's interesting to note that while people were open to yelling *"Racist, Sexist, Anti-Gay — Sarah Palin Go Away,"* they were just as open, if not more-so, to yell *"Eat the Rich!"* I don't think this says anything about the intelligence of working people; it really just shows how alien these conflicts are to people in the Central Valley. That a group of 20 regular people were super down to yell "fuck you" and "eat a fucking knife, you scum" at rich people as they parked their fancy SUV's speaks volumes about the nature of this protest.

The Central Valley is not, however, a bastion of militant workers. There were people present that have an interest in the continuation of a society stratified by class, and there were people there who, regardless of their intentions, helped strengthen the state. The first group of people was the Tea Party Patriots, an extremely silly, but extremely reactionary group of people whose entire political agenda consists of knee-jerk reactions and a Red-Scare-like obsession with communists. It was extremely enraging to see obviously broke people screaming, rather un-creatively, "Palin Yes!" alongside people who had probably never had to really worry about putting food on the table or not having medical insurance. In fact, the Tea Party is composed primarily of people who don't actually have to worry about having their jobs "taken" by illegal immigrants (although

jobs aren't taken by "illegals" – they are given away by the bosses who are only looking to turn a profit) or those who almost viciously oppose single-payer healthcare because they have no idea what it's like to have a family with no way of insuring their health. These people showed up to counter-protest those that were pissed-off at having to see their tax dollars wasted on Sarah Palin. Ironic that people who hate taxes so much would support such a thing. The only thing they accomplished was coming off as total dickheads. The second group of people mentioned are the sort of people who want to direct any resemblance of a movement for their own interests or because they feel they know what's best. These people, like Socialist Organizer and union reps, only strengthen capital and the state by trying to head off any attempt at effectively resisting. Socialist Organizer were the first to try to tell people to get out of the street when people tried to block cars from entering the campus. Even if these people have good intentions, they are enemies of working people.

What needs to be taken into account here is that this is just another example of how the interests of the administration are in direct conflict with the students and working people. Even if there was a more liberal administration, events like this would still happen at the expense of working people, although they might try to dress it up a little nicer. The education system directly mirrors the sort of society we live in. There are those at the top who are going to make a shit-ton of money off of us at the bottom. School administrators, workplace bosses, whatever you want to call them — they are the same people.

We should also look at the police, and what they were doing: their jobs. The notion that police are out on the streets fighting crime and keeping us safe is a farce. The fact of the matter is, crime still happens and is growing, despite the increasing prison population in America. The true role of the police is to protect the social relations that keep us working people slaves. How many tax dollars were spent on the increased police presence at CSUS on the 25th? Why were there Highway Patrolmen present? Why were people who are justifiably angry subject to intimidation and the

threat of arrest for stepping foot on the campus (the same campus, need I remind you, that is paid for almost entirely by working class tax dollars)? The idea that cops are our friends, especially at events like the 25th is a lie.

This protest was a beautiful example of working people acting in their collective class interest. It's really simple: when something happens, no matter what it is, that effects our material conditions in a negative way, then there needs to be an immediate response. How much sense would it have made to organize a day of action several weeks down the road, as has happened with the state-wide education crisis? Instead of waiting, people took to the streets when the shit went down.



Sarah Palin with CSUS President Shirvani at Dinner Fundraiser

One last final note, so that our "comrades" in Socialist Organizer and in the unions can't try to pin anything on us: when people got in the streets and tried to obstruct the flow of traffic and police trying to put up fences, they were at first told by people like Socialist Organizer to stay off the streets. They may try to say that they were only looking out for other people, and that we hooligans are only trying to get people arrested. Neither of this is true. We recognize two things here. First, that if people are truly interested in disrupting things, then standing on the corner yelling boring chants and waving signs isn't going to accomplish shit. The ruling class does not listen to us when it's not in their interest to do so. It is time we start acting in our interests. Second, we

see the people that come out to these protests as intelligent and mature humans. None of us need the paternalistic behavior of movement cops.

"...if people are truly interested in disrupting things, then standing on the corner yelling boring chants and waving signs isn't going to accomplish shit. The ruling class does not listen to us when it's not in their interests to do so. It is time we start acting in our interests..."



Modesto Bashes Back!

Bigots Confronted at Pride Again

Pride may have originally been canceled this year, but its resurrection rocked. The new organizers got San Francisco Pride out to represent. Finally. Central Valley Queer Coalition (CVQC) had our first booth, distributed our first magazine, and put flyers out letting people know about the previous day's hate crime in Santa Maria where a gay waiter was stabbed in the throat just for being "out" and gay. We met a lot of new people who came by to "BASH A BIGOT!" as we had a martial arts dummy dressed up like a Mormon bicycling religious salesperson a.k.a a bigot. Even a good number of children angry about how their gay parent/s are treated came to knock the bigot around and let out frustration. From the popularity of our booth's bigot bash, we can see just how many of us still feel powerless in this struggle, and desperately need a productive outlet for our rage.

HRC and other mainstream groups sent salespeople to our event, but those groups still fight only for gay assimilationists' rights and mostly all they do is gather money and send out masses of emails pretending they are making progress with the (in)justice system, and the political lemmings. They protect with their money those of us clean enough and nice enough looking to pass as human beings to politicians and bigots in charge of making and enforcing discriminatory laws against us. What about everyone else though? And what about all of those queers who brag about

being "totally non-violent?" Apparently they don't realize how stupid they sound, or how lucky they are if they truly live in a world where violence doesn't ever touch them — but that's too good to be true for most of us.

On the entertainment front, Modesto Pride had its first Drag King, Freddie Prinze Charming, who travelled all the way from Arizona to entertain us. The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence came too and were fabulously magnificent and demanding of attention like always. Love or hate them, you're not going to be able to ignore them and they don't give a fuck what you think anyways. This seems to be becoming a much more popular sentiment in the queer community, as was witnessed when our usual local hate-mongering circus troupe of fundamentalist bores showed up at our Pride to threaten and attempt to intimidate us.

Local community groups such as Modesto Anarcho, Modesto Copwatch, Stanislaus County Radical Mental Health and others joined us in intercepting these fascists before they even managed to get their hate signs hoisted, and their duct-taped bibles out. A banner reading, "Reclaim Pride: Bash Back!" was marched through the park in pursuit of the fascists who were attempting to remain incognito while taking pictures, and documenting all of the queers in celebration. What do they use all of this information for? It scares me to even try to imagine, though over half of it is

likely for the miserable, guilt-filled masturbation fantasies of these fucked up closet-cases. One organizer who had originally asked us to stop bigot-bashing as we were just fueling their fire eventually broke down himself and shouted to a closet-case, "Don't I know you? I fucked you in the park last year. Get the hell outta here hypocrite!"

Cameras were rolling on both sides as a well-known bigot, 'Joaquin' (anyone know which church this fool is with?) threatened to call the cops after being "assaulted" by a queer woman. The alleged assault consisted of being touched on the shoulder and being told, "...get the fuck out of the park. Bigots aren't welcome." The pathetic threat he made was quickly laughed off as the wimpy fascist making it didn't even believe his own bullshit, and at least 4 pigs were already present and watching everyone carefully. We were also able to use our "Reclaim Pride" banner to block cameras and "herd" bigots away from people they were zeroed in on and trying to intimidate.

The event organizers, who had been tediously continuing to insist we "let the situation go," finally joined us in fucking with the bigots. None of us can afford to ignore these people who are so ruthless in their campaign to exterminate the queer community. As more and more Pride-goers gathered in solidarity, we were able to join hands in a huge circle, and exclude the bigots, pushing them further and further back, out of the festival. We chanted over their rants while The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence blessed our circle with glitter and love. We followed this up by posing and taking some glamour shots with a bigot who had mistakenly, we assume, brought a big cardboard sign stating he was a "GAY PERVERT."

The bigots were outnumbered and overpowered the entire time they were out at the park. Queers kissed, danced, and continued to have fun. Some even tried "killing them with kindness" and told the fascists, they too, might find actual love and happiness if they stopped preaching hate and violence. Other queers let these fascists know that it wouldn't be their first (or last) visit to jail if they got taken in right then for kicking fascist ass (my personal favorite). People also "fell" and "stumbled" back into bigots to knock their signs down.

We got our final frustrations out about not really being able to have a Pride without bigot presence — since they got full police protection as usual — by having a water balloon fight amongst friends. We also witnessed and got footage of parking pigs ticketing the Dykes on Bikes for

parking in their official, designated area, BEFORE the festival was even over. Yet, we continue to pretend that the police are indifferent and there to protect both sides.

A local dyke I met that day while protesting against fascists kept telling me to "just ignore them." But I can't ignore them. "These people are the reason my partner and I get chased when riding bicycles in the evening, and that I get yelled at when I walk alone and called "dyke," as if that's a bad thing. I've been lucky-SO FAR- that I've only experienced getting shit thrown at me from cars instead of people stopping to gaybash me. Or rape me, cuz these religious bigots have a special term for that: Corrective rape. This supposedly fixes us and forces us into liking dick," (the reasoning and logic are about as sound as all other fascist theory).

We told this dyke stories of local queers being bashed, then left on the street by the police who found them after being told, "If you want to play the victim and go to the hospital, then you're gonna play the criminal first and go to the station for being drunk in public," all to no effect. Her response: "I'm not afraid of them. If they beat or kill someone they get arrested and go to prison."

Well, some of us are still very afraid and have every reason to be. This kind of apathy from a fellow queer is a major reason we can't afford to rest for one second in showing resistance to oppressors of all kinds.

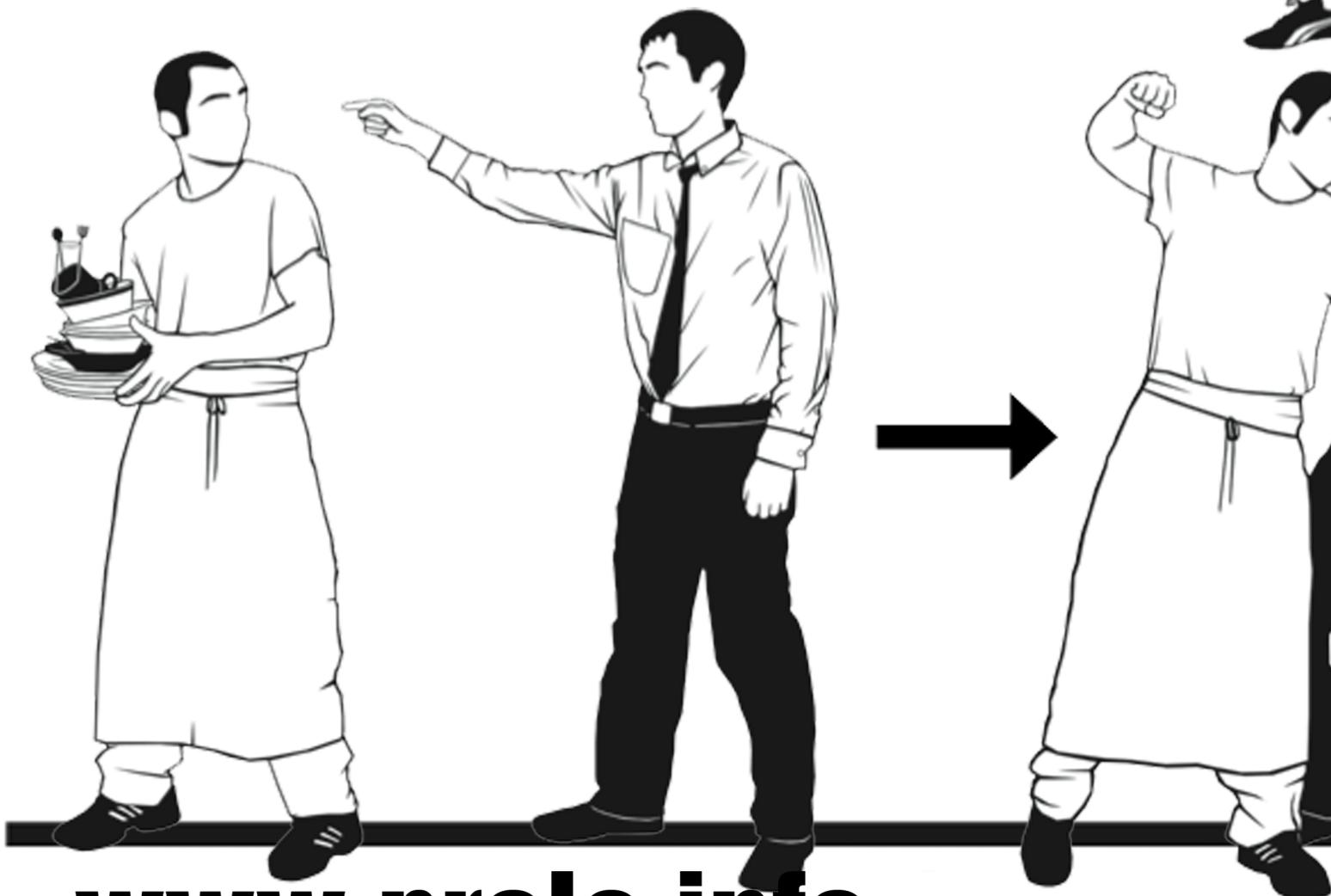
Fundamentalists are gathering and organizing and preaching to their followers about the need to rob us of more and more rights. Where are we organizing for ourselves? Too often, in little isolated cells throughout the country. They want us "cured" which is double talk for locking us up in internment camps, and doing whatever they want to our bodies and minds, all with god's blessing.

Well fuck that and fuck them! If you want to stay as "free" as we are today it's time to drop your non-violent, indifferent, sit-on-ur-ass talking but never acting, routine. It doesn't work in case you haven't noticed. These people want to see us annihilated and destroyed and for once I'm not being dramatic!

So, don't be naïve! Join together and continue to resist bigots and the police protecting them! Fight back in every way you can, every chance you get!

-CVQC: centralvalleyqueercoalition@gmail.com

We grow more daring and more aggressive in pursuing our own class interests. These do not lie in forming a new government, or becoming the new boss. Our interests lie in ending our own way of life—and therefore the society that is based on that way of life.



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pamphlets a



We are the working class who want to abolish the working class. We are the community of people who want to tear the existing community apart. Our political program is to destroy politics. In order to do that, we have to push the subversive tendencies that exist today until we have completely remade society everywhere. This has at times been called "revolution."

and online texts for the angry wage worker

Left, Right, but Which Way Forward?

On the Paternalism and Stupidity of the Left

The crises that capitalism creates often leads to movements that desire to change the world we live in. This can be seen throughout the history of capitalism, dating all the way back to the Paris Commune of 1871. When living conditions are under attack, we as working people naturally come together to collectively struggle against those in power. However there are those who have no interest in us taking control over our own lives. Throughout history there have been those who seek to use the momentum we create to launch their own destructive crusade for power. The Bolsheviks that co-opted the Russian Revolution; the Spanish Communist Party during the Spanish Civil War that gave land back to bosses and reversed victories made by the working class; the Communist Party of France that sided with the police against the students and workers occupying factories and universities; the list goes on. There are those out there that follow the anti-worker rhetoric of Lenin, claim to be on our team, and do everything they can to weasel their way into positions of power, only to fuck us over when we decide that we know what's best for us, not them.

We are lucky in the Central Valley to not have any real organized Left, because when we do come together as workers, it is on our own accord, realizing ourselves as real-ass human beings. However, there is a branch of Socialist Organizer based out of CSU, Stanislaus, that is attempting to sink their vampire teeth into our struggles. After the wave of student strikes that rocked the education system of California, SO attempted to make a name for themselves as

students in CSUS decided to fight back against the administration. They quickly showed their true colors as they took complete control over discussion at a general assembly. Their brand of decision making does not allow individuals to participate in the struggle how they see fit, essentially putting us right back in the roles that the ruling class has created for us: pawns.

At multiple events put on by students of CSUS and workers from the Central Valley, SO proved themselves to be the paternalistic, authoritarian pricks that every single Leninist organization has been. When people felt it necessary to go a step beyond peaceful sign waving, SO was there immediately to rein things in and assert their dominance over us in the way that a shepherd might herd his sheep. Do we want people to end up in jail or face academic probation (or worse)? Of course not, but we do stand beside every single person that feels they need to take their life into their own hands. We saw this same behavior again when Sarah Palin came to speak at CSUS and people wanted to block the entrance of the campus. What this means is that the very people who claim to represent us are doing the jobs of the police who, in turn, act in the interest of those in power. Throughout history, we have seen such Leninist organizations go a step further, eliminate the middle man, and directly cooperate with the ruling class. During many of the student mobilizations, SO was also more than willing to work with union bureaucrats whose interests lie entirely in the preservation of the status quo as mediators between us

and the bosses. Such blatant hypocrisy and disregard for the lives of working people speaks volumes about the sort of disgusting opportunism employed by Leninists and the broader Left.

A look closer at the organization reveals just how goddamn ridiculous these people are. They follow in the Leninist tradition of identifying with the tendency that was kicked out from one Party which in turn was a split from another Party that used to identify with the political continuity of some dead man that was killed by some other asshole. These people are more concerned with their political purity and dogma than they are with the actual emancipation of poor and working people from shithole conditions. But even their political dogma makes little sense and is not relevant to the working class. From their About Us section on their website: *“We fight for the independence of the working-class from the bosses and their twin parties, the Democrats and Republicans, and call for the formation of a mass Labor Party, based on the trade unions, and linked to the independent political expression of Blacks, Latinos, and all of the oppressed.”*

Essentially what they are saying is that somehow the working class has separate interests than people of color, women, and queer people. We think this is an absurd notion, and that anyone who seeks to continue to separation between White people and people of color, or men and women, or straight people and queer people, is not on our team. What does the rich White man have in common with the broke-ass White family that lives in a trailer park? Now what does that same broke-ass White family have in common with a Black or Brown family that lives in the ghetto or the projects? These stratifications are social constructs that are built to keep poor and working people in separate battles that can easily be co-opted and recuperated by the Left and the ruling class. This is not to say that all these people don't face different problems in society, but that the only way we can win is by bridging the gaps created between us, not focusing on preserving them.

The SO branch in CSUS, like all SO branches, gets its orders from the National Committee... which isn't even located in the Central Valley. What this means is that a group of geographically and politically removed people are trying to make decisions that affect our conditions. This

is not a genuine interest in working class struggle, but an attempt at gaining some position of power on the backs of working people, which doesn't sound a whole lot different than the situation we are in now.

The second organization, the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), is an organization that has a long and interesting history. In recent years in Modesto, we have seen the NAACP behave in a certain way that always hinders any sort of organic, and popular ground sweep against everyday conditions, especially against the police. In the past decade, the NAACP has acted as a mediator (again, like unions and other Leftist groups in society) between an often angry population and the police. From setting up “fire-side chats” on the radio to organizing speaking engagements for the cops to “explain themselves” to those they beat and murder, the NAACP has in effect, giving the police a platform. All the while, they can appear to be taking a hard line with the police, and gain legitimacy in

the community. But in the end, they actually provide a great service to the police, as the pigs can appear to be interested in hearing community concerns — when in reality they have no intention of changing their ongoing policy of repression.

Throughout the years, the NAACP has used the public forum as a way to bring members of law enforcement together with the public,

to talk about police brutality issues. Often, these forums come in the wake of high-profile cases of the cops beating and murdering people. Thus, we have been to forums after police kill people, after claims of brutality to the homeless, and after such incidents such as when police beat high school kids coming out of a concert in Downtown Modesto in 2006. This such incident is worth discussing, because it shows how stupid the police actually are, and why we should never take any bullshit excuse for them attacking us as fact. In 2006, high school youths attended a DJ event in Downtown Modesto that was promoted at local high schools. The event was to feature hip-hop music. But, on the night of the event, as police responded to reports of a robbery in the same area, they came to look for suspects (who were reported to be black) in the crowd of young children coming out of the concert. Police then began to sick dogs on the youths, attack them with weapons, and use batons. Some young people were arrested, but all had their charges dropped. Later, as more people became outraged

“...They follow in the Leninist tradition of identifying with the tendency that was kicked out from one Party which in turn was a split from another Party that used to identify with the political continuity of some dead man that was killed by some other asshole...”

“...Thus the NAACP, instead of creating a space where people could come together and talk about how they could resist the police, had us sit through hours of the police explaining, in their completely racist logic, why they had the right to beat the shit out of young people...”

at the actions of the police (and still to this day, police have refused to release footage of the attack), a forum was called to talk about the incident. And, the police were only happy to attend.

The pigs used the forum to their full-on advantage. Police seized on the opportunity to paint a gripping portrait of how the concert was a “hyphy” event, a style of music coming from the bay area. “Hyphy” we were told, was all about drugs, crime, and out of control car seshes. The Modesto Police Chief at the time, Roy Wasden, a white Mormon man that moved to Modesto for the job in the early 2000’s, said that he was “sickened” that his son received a flyer for the concert at his school. Hidden within the talk about hyphy music however, is the underlying racist logic that “black people from Oakland” are a group of people that needs to be controlled. According to the police, it was their duty to rid the Central Valley of the hyphy menace, and that if they didn’t, soon our pristine community would look like Oakland. This is interesting, because the event was not even promoted as a “hyphy” event, the flyer only stated “...come out and get hyphy!” However, this reasoning was used to justify brutalizing and attacking a group of high school kids. Because, after all, such a mob could get out of control at anytime.

The media ate this story up, running piece after piece about the hyphy terror, and even actual real life “hyphy” music artists’ concerts were shut down, in fear that kids would riot. Thus the NAACP, instead of creating a space where people could come together and talk about how they could resist the police, had us sit through hours of the police explaining, in their completely racist logic, why they had the right to beat the shit out of young people. People left feeling that they had given the police a piece of their mind, and the police walked away appearing that they gave a shit what anyone thinks. In these forums, members of the NAACP police the crowd, telling those that get rowdy and angry at the police to be quiet. Thus, those that are angry at

the police and want action outside of the creation of Police Review Boards are foolish and stupid, and those that want to work with the police are clear headed and have the right approach.

What’s important here is to be able to look beyond the content of what people are saying, and to focus on the forms these things take. There are plenty of people out there who say nice things and try to convince us they’re on our team, but in reality their interests are nefarious at best. If we are truly going to have any chance of winning and creating a better world for ourselves, the first step is to kick Leninists, politicians, cops, and bureaucrats out of our struggle.

Within both of these organizations is the idea that poor, working, and oppressed people are too stupid to organize themselves and represent their own interests against their enemies. That the “masses” need leadership from a small and well-educated minority, and must fight to put them into power for their own benefit. Moreso, these groups also believe that the masses of the exploited are better left dialoging with those in power than fighting them, thinking that a dialog between power and those who it fucks over will result in a “kinder, better” system. As if power simply needed to know the truth. Of course, this is just what the bosses and those that control this system want the most — to appear that they are interested in a democratic and open dialog with the poor and the broke. They are not. They may ask us to select a new member of the ruling class every four years to lead the government, but they don’t want us occupying our homes and schools, going on strike at work, and taking food from stores for free. No, and the police are there to make sure that this does not happen. There can be no dialog with those in power, because in the end, we have nothing to say to them. We don’t want to chit chat, we want them gone, and we want popular control returned to the places where we live and work. The time for being treated like children by groups that want us to settle down is over. This is our time now.

“...The media ate this story up, running piece after piece about the hyphy terror, and even actual real life “hyphy” music artists’ concerts were shut down, in fear that kids would riot...”



Oscar Grant and Militant Action

“My son was murdered. He was murdered, he was murdered, and the law has not held the officer accountable the way that he should have been held accountable.” - Wanda Johnson

These are the words of Oscar Grant's mother, Wanda Johnson, after Johannes Mehserle was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter with a likely sentence of 2-4 years in jail. This verdict is seen as an outrage by the Grant family, the people of Oakland, and people everywhere whose lives are stolen by killer cops, especially Fresno. On January 1, 2009 Mehserle had pulled his taser out twice before he pulled out his pistol and killed 22-year-old Grant who was face down with his hands behind his back with a cop's knee in his neck. I find it very hard to believe that Mehserle somehow forgot where he put his 7 oz taser only a moment before and mistakenly pulls out his pistol which weighs 3 times as much and is a different shape. He looks at it and then shoots a man in the back who presented no threat to his life. His partner Pirone had yelled "Bitch Ass Nigger" twice in Grant's face before he threw Grant to the ground to be executed. It's hard to believe that anyone could commit this heinous act of violence, have it caught on tape and then get away with involuntary manslaughter. But cops get the best lawyers and getting crooked cops off was nothing new for Mehserle's attorney Michael Raines. Raines got the Oakland Rough Riders, a gang of cops who would regularly beat down, arrest and plant drugs on the people of West Oakland, off back in 2003. For the Mehserle trial, first Raines got it

moved out of Oakland down to L.A., then he managed to create a jury without a single African-American on it, then he twisted the rule that cops and family can't be on the jury by saying his client was assured a "jury of his peers" so the judge allowed 4 cops' friends and family to sit on the jury. Raines stacked the deck and the judicial system failed to do justice. Again. As if it were designed to.

There was nothing unique or special about this murder. Poor people are gunned down, harassed, and intimidated by police every day all over this country. The only thing different about this case is that due to the video of the murder and the inaction of mayor Dellums and the D.A., the people took to the streets and rebelled against a system that had shown no interest in justice. Due to the actions in the street on Jan 7, Mehserle was arrested and charged with murder; this never happens and if not for the rebellion in the streets it would not have happened. The people took to the streets once more on Jan 14 and Mehserle's openly-racist partner Pirone was fired. If not for the people's actions, none of this would have happened and the status quo would be maintained. The people's action on July 8th rejects the injustice of protecting a murderer because he is a cop. This verdict sends the message that it is okay for a white cop to murder a black man in cold blood.

The defacement of the "Peace Officer" memorial that night in Fresno was an attack on the idea that when a cop kills somebody it is okay and we all just have to accept



it. As Oscar Grant's memory was defaced by this verdict, so were the memories of the officers on that memorial defaced. If we look at the way the media deals with deaths by cops vs. death of cops we see a disturbing trend. In Grant's case and in every Fresno murder by cop we see the chief and media coming out, demonizing the victim, saying how this person was in a gang, had a criminal history, was on drugs, was armed, etc. etc. even when it ends up these things were untrue or that the person had turned their life around or had mental health issues that the officer was unable to recognize and deal with. When an officer is killed they are instantly made into a saint, it doesn't matter how often they beat their partner, how many drugs they sold, or how many people they killed; the dirtiest cop becomes an angel once they die on the job. Not all cops are bad, but many are, and the system that protects them is corrupt. Mehserle was a bad cop. Several months before he executed Grant, Mehserle and fellow officers had beat up Kenneth Carrethers, a 40-year-old black man. Carrethers was charged with resisting arrest but this charge was dropped when the D.A. realized they'd have to release Mehserle's personnel files. How much did this guy have to hide?

We are told that we need cops and that without them there would be complete chaos and rampant crime. In reality the cops are here to maintain the status quo which benefit's the wealthy over the poor. They "serve" the rich and "protect" the social order which maintains inequality. FPD doesn't even pretend any more, their cars say "professional, effective, timely" labeling them as the mercenaries they are. From grade school we are taught that cops are our friends. Johannes Mehserle was not Oscar Grant's "friend" as he pulled the trigger that ended Grant's life. Tony Pirone was

not Oscar Grant's "friend" as he screamed obscenities and racial slurs in Grant's face before holding him down to be executed. These officers were doing their job, serving the rich and maintaining the status quo where the life of a black man living in poverty has no value except to his employer.

This problem is systemic and as present in Fresno as it is in Oakland. In a recent article in Colorlines, it was found that between 2002 and 2009, FPD had 27 officers with multiple shootings. Of these, 22 are still on active duty, some with as many as 4 or 5 shootings a piece. Oakland only had 5 repeat shooters for this period. FPD has no respect for human life unless that human has money. Crime happens when people have a lack of resources and legal opportunity, throwing them in jail only makes this problem worse. Cops protect this inequality of resources; and with over half of the city budget going to PD, we see that they are a drain and part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

Real social change and justice goes against the interests of those in power. The police serve those in power and are on the front lines of maintaining injustice. We cannot just stand around with signs and petitions begging for justice. We must stand up and seriously challenge the system and its agents of injustice. Historically it has been because of militants like Malcolm X that power has conceded to the reforms of MLKs. The uncompromising militant demands total justice and is willing to fight for it. The system would rather maintain their control and injustice by making concessions to the reformist than to see their power stripped away and given to the people. When the people of Oakland took to the street last January, they forced the system to act and arrest Mehserle. "No Justice! No Peace!" needs to be more than an empty threat, that phrase has power and meaning and we need to be living up to our end of it. There is no justice, the only peace is people not fighting back against the police, a.k.a. occupying forces.

"...Real social change and justice goes against the interests of those in power. The police serve those in power and are on the front lines of maintaining injustice. We cannot just stand around with signs and petitions begging for justice. We must stand up and seriously challenge the system and its agents of injustice...."

Justice for Oscar Grant?



From redanarchist.org

Let's face it, the idea of "justice" for Oscar Grant isn't what we need. It sounds good as a slogan for an easily co-opted movement, but it ignores several important factors when looking at the murder of Oscar Grant at the hands of Mehserle and when looking at the entire system of police.

The movement so far, and the responses at several points in the history of the movement, show exactly what "justice" means for the movement. That is, a "proper" trial within the judicial system. Obviously, this does not do anything for Oscar Grant or his family in any real way. It does create a sense of fulfillment, I'm sure, for his family and friends, but it stops there. A longer sentencing for Mehserle will put one murderous cop behind bars, but it will not bring back Oscar Grant, nor will it raise Oscar Grant's son, or fill the void that is left within that family. Just as importantly, this only serves to recreate the system of police and prisons and judges and jails that murdered Oscar Grant and so many others. It only serves to recreate the same system that continually destroys families and lives and keeps the ruling class in control.

In a broader sense, the slogan "Justice for Oscar Grant," ignores the fact that this is so much bigger than just one dead person and a murderous cop. It is so much bigger than just police brutality. The entire system is the problem, and you can't bring the system to trial. A society that is based around the accumulation of capital and private property requires police. And a society that is based around these things is going to create the antagonisms within itself that lead to crime and murderous cops. It is impossible to talk about ending police brutality without also talking about ending the existence of a police force and the existence of

class society. The police exist to ensure that we stay poor and keep going to work. That is why they deport those without papers, evict those that default on their house payments, and arrest us for taking food without paying for it.

The call for justice in any situation in which poor and working people are under attack only removes any semblance of struggle from the realm of everyday life. It creates a spectacle where we remain the passive machines of production, while the proper agents go through certain motions to create a false sense of accomplishment, and the system remains unchallenged. The call for "justice" is exactly what the ruling class and the managers of struggle (the Left) want and need. If we see the problem of police brutality to just be a problem of a couple of bad apples instead of a whole rotten tree, we will continue to see bodies pile up in our communities. As long as we allow the logic of capital to dictate our struggles we will never break free from this society, and more people will fall at the hands of those that claim to serve and protect us.

Vengeance for Oscar Grant!

Vengeance for James Rivera!

Vengeance for Francisco Moran!

From Modesto to Greece to the Bay Area!

RAAN Nation

Who Runs Downtown?



Paperboy Park, La Loma, & Gentrification

In the last several months, the City Council in Modesto ruled that the small downtown Paperboy Park was to be turned over to the McHenry Mansion. The Mansion is an old Victorian style home that hosts parties and weddings. The park was then closed for a short time, sectioned off by a flimsy plastic fence, only to be reopened to the public between the hours of 11 AM - 1 PM (conveniently coinciding with lunch hour for many who work downtown). If people are interested in using the park outside of these times, they will have to pay a fee to the McHenry Mansion and get a permit. The park, which was once public, has now been “privatized,” closed off to the public and left unused. The idea to close off the park was brought to the City Council by a committee that includes District 4 (La Loma, Airport) representative Joe Muratore. The committee claimed that the park had become a haven for the homeless who have run it into the ground through drug dealing, public drunkenness, and human waste. The homeless population has also become a nuisance to the surrounding business community, which lobbied the City Council to shut the park down. According to the Modesto Bee, the night that the decision went into effect, “Paint-wielding vandals” attacked the McHenry Mansion with paint-filled condoms, broke surveillance cameras, and left graffiti messages that read, “The Rich Can’t Keep Us Out” and “We Kill Yuppies.” Several weeks later, a large BBQ was held in the park with about 100 people, against the closure. Several large banners were placed throughout the park reading, “No Gentrifying, No Foreclosure: Defend Public Space,” and “This Space is

for Everyone.” However, soon after, the park was shut down, only to be re-opened under the new hours and permit process. Although some people still choose to loiter in the park outside of the set times, most people have moved onto other spots to relax since using the park now carries the chance of getting a ticket. To add insult to injury, the nearby public library is now shut down on certain days, and police are now able to ticket people who hang outside of the facility during off hours. All of this combines to give people, especially the homeless, less places to go and more power to the police. But who benefits from this? What are the forces that give power to this process of removal?

In recent years the La Loma Association, an organization made up of residents and business leaders in the upper scale La Loma neighborhood, has waged an ongoing battle against homeless people. It is of no surprise that Joe Muratore is a key member of the organization, which desires to push homeless people out of the area and criminalize sleeping outside. Many homeless people sleep in the Dry Creek area at night and use La Loma Ave. to go between the Airport District (where the Gospel Mission is located) and the Downtown (where the Salvation Army and the Homeless Shelter is located). The La Loma Association in the past couple years had helped pass a variety of anti-homeless initiatives. These include the anti-dumpster-diving ordinance in 2007, which the group lobbied the City Council for along with the police. The ordinance gives police the power to stop people digging through the trash and if they are caught,

they face up to a \$500 fine and six months in jail (see Modesto Anarcho #6). In 2008, the group pushed for the installation of video surveillance cameras throughout the local parks in an effort to drive out homeless people who camp in the area. Also in 2008, the organization publicly called for the punishing of five homeless men arrested for sleeping in the La Loma area to the “fullest extent of the law,” (see Modesto Anarcho #7). In 2009, the La Loma Association also removed bamboo located in the Dry Creek area in an effort to aid law enforcement in stopping homeless squatters who camp by the water. All of these actions were an attempt in part to keep the La Loma area upscale and pristine, and help the police criminalize basic non-violent activities such as sleeping outside.

It is of no surprise that people like Muratore and others within the La Loma Association leadership are also large movers and shakers in the Modesto business community and involved heavily in real estate deals in the local area. Muratore and his ilk profit from the removal of poor, homeless, and working class people from the downtown. As the area becomes more developed, business leaders looking to invest in the area want to make sure that their investments will be worth it. One of the biggest things standing in the way of downtown developers and business leaders is the presence of poor and homeless people. This process of development, and removal of people who “upset” the process, is known as gentrification. Such a thing is a threat to all broke, poor, and working people, as it pushes us out through higher rents and shuts down spaces that we once had access to. When the businesses around Paper Boy Park complained about the homeless, the City Council bent over backwards to make sure they were accommodated. But when poor working families in South Side Modesto ask for sidewalks, or more low income housing, the government is silent. Money talks and the rest of us can eat shit, and everyone knows it. The government directs police powers and controls public space for the sake of upper-class interests. This shows the current power structure to be exactly what it is: a system of violence that protects the divisions between the rich and the poor. The question is, can we overcome our own divisions and start to fight back?

It is important to keep in mind the role that the media has been playing in all of this, pumping up the fear of “homeless drug dealers,” to non-homeless people. For many in the downtown especially, there is a real fear of homeless people, especially those on drugs. The fear is that they will rob and attack people in the area, often to support their drug habit. While sometimes homeless people may

steal from those in homes, and some do use drugs regularly, these fears are often unjustified. And, as one homeless person pointed out to Modesto Anarcho in an interview, *“If I was a drug dealer, I would have money and I wouldn’t be homeless!”* Anyone who has hung out at Paperboy Park knows that largely people go there not to sell drugs, but to sleep. While the media was quick to run with stories of public urination and human waste flooding the park, the area is quite clean. The main complaint at the park comes from the homeless people themselves, who were harassed, sometimes daily, by police. Trying to avoid tickets for having glass containers, many homeless people interviewed stated that they take care of their own areas, asking people with glass bottles to put them away and go elsewhere. Just as the elites drum up fears of terrorism in order to justify going to war, the elites of our city drum up fears of the homeless in order to justify shutting down a park. But do we really have that much separating us?

The interests of working people who rent and own homes in the downtown area, really are not that different from those of the homeless. First, we want to be safe where we live. We do not want to be attacked or be stolen from. We don’t want our property taken away, or our children living in fear. We realize that, by-and-large, the police do not exist to protect us; safety comes from the ability of those in our neighborhoods to look out for each other and to have each other’s backs. Second, we want to avoid removal from where we live. Whether this means eviction or foreclosure, or being kicked out of a camping spot or park, the end result is the same. We want to hold on to what we have and the space that we all need to live and survive. Third, we want to live without having to fear police violence. The harassment and abuse that is felt by the homeless mirrors that which working-class people go through as well. We know that the police can freely murder and abuse those on the streets on those off of them. Lastly, we want access to basic services that should be free to all. This includes parks, which we all enjoy freely. Thus, our interests in this city are not so different. If we can look past the fears that the media, the police, and the city government shove down our throats, we can see that we actually want very similar things. We can also see that the forces that desire the closure of public space are threats to all of us. It also means that we can come together as people who live in the same area and begin to resist as a collective whole. Fighting police violence, coming together against crime, and working to keep public space open for all. We can begin to serve our own interests and attack theirs.

Local Police Murders



CRIME SCENE

Rest in Peace to James Rivera, Francisco Moran, Rita Elias

On July 22nd, 16-year-old James Rivera was murdered by the Stockton Police Department. That night, around 11:30 p.m., police chased James into his own neighborhood and rammed his van into the garage of a triplex. Witness accounts vary slightly, but what is clear is that police then proceeded to approach the van and open fire with pistols and an AR-15 (the civilian/police version of the military's M-16) assault rifle. Cops say that they ordered James to put his hands up and exit the vehicle, and fired when he did not respond. However witnesses say that they asked only once, and opened fire seconds later. Witnesses also note that considering the impact of the crash, there is a good chance that James was unconscious in his seat, and was unable to respond even if he had wanted to.

Stockton Police have a long and sordid history with the residents of this predominantly-black neighborhood, and even with James, as we would find out. According to friends and family, the Stockton PD had been hunting him down for several days. Officers visited the house of his aunt around 2:30 a.m. the previous night, pointing guns in the faces of children, and threatening that if they didn't find James, they were going to come after his aunt and his small cousins. They also visited his mother's house, threatening that they were going to kill him when they found him, and even that he was "already dead," in addition to letting them know that the family would be "going to a funeral soon."

In addition to the murder of James himself, Stock-

ton police endangered the lives of countless others in their hunt. They chased him at high speed through residential streets, slammed his car into the side of a triplex where six young children and their parents lived, and then proceeded to spray the whole building with gunfire. After they were done shooting, police removed James' body from the van, rather than waiting for emergency medical services to arrive on the scene. If he wasn't dead already, he was by the time an EMT got there. With all of this in mind, it comes as no surprise that members of the community have called James' killing premeditated murder.

Comrades from Modesto Anarcho Crew, Modesto Copwatch, and others went to the Stockton site of the murder, the day after James was killed, as soon as we heard the news. We spoke directly with witnesses, residents, James' family, and others who came out to the scene. We built real and honest relationships with the residents of the neighborhood. We screamed along as everyone chanted "No Justice! No Peace! Fuck the Police!" As the situation heated up, a "chaplain" appeared, trying to calm the crowd. It was quickly discovered that rather than a community member or leader, he was simply an agent of the police. While some took his line, his power quickly disappeared when people found out he was a cop. Realizing this, he left.

On Monday, September 11th, police murdered 45-year-old Francisco Moran, in front of his wife and family. While responding to a domestic disturbance call, police

entered the home and found another man on the floor. When they encountered Moran, they first fired a taser, which proved ineffective, and then proceeded to shoot him at least seven times. Police at first claimed that he was armed with a knife and began attacking them, however it quickly became known that Moran was “armed” only with a wooden spoon which was in his waistband, and he did not attack. This closely-echoes the story of many other police murders such as Sammy Galvan in 2004, and even the recent killing of Manuel Jimenes in Los Angeles. In each case, officers invent a story that places them in a position where they are “afraid for their lives,” and lie through their teeth to defend themselves until they are forced to do otherwise.

Several of us went to speak with witnesses and neighborhood residents, and later held a protest outside of MPD headquarters on G St. Some of Moran’s family members saw us and came to speak with us. They were surprised that anyone would come out to show support for their loved one, and returned with several car-loads of family supporters.

On Friday, September 24th Kari Abbey, an off-duty Stanislaus County Sheriff, shot and killed Rita Elias after an hour-long argument in West Modesto. Abbey’s parents were Elias’ landlord, and she had just been served with an eviction notice. Then, after a long argument, the Sheriff’s Department claims that Elias brandished a weapon and Abbey feared for her life, forcing her to shoot. Elias’ family claims otherwise, and states that Rita did not present a gun.

Several things are clear. The Modesto Bee and other mainstream media will continue to toe the line of the police. We’ll have to go out and talk to other people if we want to know the truth. The police will continue to lie. Lastly, the courts and the legal system will always favor the police. It is in our streets and communities, and to the degree that we have control over them — against the government, anti-social elements, and the wealthy — that we will find justice.

“...if we are to understand the phenomenon of police brutality, we must get beyond particular cases. We can understand the individual police officers if we understand the institution... its origins, its social function, and its relation to... capitalism and white supremacy.”
- Kristian Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue*





Bullet in Our Heads

The System Can't Fight the Police

"In this crazy world, where you get more time for selling dope than murder..."

- Young Jeezy

In the Central Valley, community-based struggles against the police are often faced with a decision. We either fight the police head on, outside of politics and the legal system, or, we can choose to try and reform the police with the tools that the system encourages us to use. We are critical of legal and political means of fighting the police because they exist in part to uphold the political and legal system. Police themselves are protected by the courts and face little reprimand or penalization for their actions. Throughout history, the judicial system has shielded the police from any sort of punishment, ensuring that police are protected from the public and that these patterns of abuse, control, and murder continue. We see many clear examples of the courts and legal systems working exclusively in favor of the police right here in the Central Valley. With this protection, police are able, throughout their careers, to brutalize and take the lives of many people, all without ever having to fear that their actions will be challenged.

Recently, the shooting of 15-year-old Traveon John Avila of Bakersfield, as well as other cases, have brought to light several officers who have been involved in multiple

shootings. In Bakersfield, police chased down the young man, who was thought to have stolen a car, and opened fire on him when the vehicle stopped. One witness stated, "They shot at the suspects for no reason. The people in the car really didn't have a chance to surrender." After the young boy was killed, it was reported in the local news that the officer that murdered him has in fact been involved in two other fatal shootings in the past two months. According to the investigative website, Colorlines, many police involved in multiple shootings are still on the force, despite having committed repeated acts of violence. In an investigation of the Fresno Department, "a California Public Records Act Request uncovered a previously withheld list of 27 Fresno police officers involved in repeat shootings of civilians from 2002 through 2009, 25 of whom, according to an official with the Fresno Police Department, are still on active duty today. Of these 27 officers, four were involved in at least three separate shooting incidents over the same period. One officer, Michael Palomino, was involved in four shooting incidents. In the context of a statewide investigation focusing in on four major police departments, the Fresno Police Department stands out in scale. During the same period, the similarly sized Oakland Police Department had only five officers involved in repeat shootings, although Fresno enjoys a much lower crime rate."

The police also don't have to worry about this information getting out to the public, much, either. Laws which allow the police to avoid disclosing information to the public regarding the nature of these shootings and if certain police officers have ever been disciplined, ensures that officers are protected and that popular anger does not grow. For instance, according to Colorlines, *"The Fresno Police Department's most prominent case of excessive force is that of Marcus Tafoya, a police officer who was fired in 2007 shortly before being indicted by the Fresno County DA for assaulting a returning Iraq war veteran at a party two years earlier. Tafoya was acquitted of criminal charges in February of this year, despite allegations that he had tried to intimidate fellow officers who appeared as witnesses for the prosecution. But prior to his indictment, Tafoya was involved in four shooting incidents, three of which were fatal, all in 2004 and 2005. In a June 2005 incident, Tafoya shot Daniel Mendoza, a 21-year-old suspect in a shooting that had taken place ten days earlier — after Mendoza had begun to lower his hands while surrendering to Fresno Police. The internal investigations into those shootings and records of whether any disciplinary action was taken against Tafoya are not available to the public."*

In short, what we have come to see is that the way police are structured allows them to kill, brutalize, and murder without fear that they ever will be brought to justice. In short, they are given free reign to do whatever they have to do to instill fear and terror in the populations that they terrorize. Think about this: if one of us slips up on the job, we face drug tests, being fired, and possible jail time. If the police do, they are simply put on administrative paid leave, while they are portrayed as heroes in the media. Meanwhile, police rake in salaries of close to, or over 100K, and resist attempts to cut their high pay. Police also receive very special treatment when they do find themselves in court; getting light sentences from judges, and sweet deals from the District Attorney. In Merced recently, when a deputy was charged with assaulting his wife who worked at the county jail, lawyers stated that, *"There's no dual treatment,"* in regards to police in court. However, this claim is laughable. Take for instance, the case of Stanislaus County Sheriff Alfred Huskey. Huskey was found guilty of molesting and raping his step-daughter from the age of 3. For this crime, Huskey got only 1 year in prison, and didn't even

"...Take for instance, the case of Stanislaus County Sheriff Alfred Huskey. Huskey was found guilty of molesting his step-daughter from the age of 3, and also raping her repeatedly. For this crime, Huskey got only 1 year in prison, and didn't even have to register as a sex offender. And, he still gets to collect his pension..."

have to register as a sex offender. And, he still gets to collect his pension. According to the Modesto Bee, this sentence was simply a slap on the wrist when compared to other cases. For example, *"[A] Ceres man who videotaped himself performing sex acts with two children was sentenced to 45 years to life in prison. A Riverbank man got 10 years in prison for molesting several girls he met at church. A Modesto man got six years for molesting a teen who lived in his home."* These are only single acts; what about a lifetime of sexual abuse? Clearly, being a police officer means being above the law, whether be by holding a gun in your face, or standing before a court room.

It is important to keep in mind that every police force is designed to protect an economic and political system, and is thus, corrupt. Each and every one is designed to put down the poor and any revolt that might come from them. This is true for countries that are capitalist and "communist," democratic and dictatorial. Police do not only murder and brutalize, but also use their access to drugs to sell them and make money (such as the police just arrested at the Ripon Crime Lab), force people to have sex with them, and commit a host of other abuses that go unchecked behind the *blue code of silence*.

We then must ask ourselves: what are the means to struggle against the police? The ones that we are frequently presented with are the ones that seek to reform the police from the inside, or *"hold them accountable."* These means are most-often promoted by the institutionalized Left, such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). These include lawsuits against the police, federal investigations into police misconduct, and the formation of Citizen Review Boards (CRBs). As we will see however, while some of these 'tactics' may help families of those hurt by the police, none do anything to actually change the relationship of power between the police and people on the street.

When police murder people in encounters, either on the street or in the jail (as in the case of the Sheriff's Department), some people choose to file lawsuits against the police. Many hope to win back damages inflicted by police to their homes and apartments, their vehicles, and

also in part to get payback for the emotional devastation that they inflict. Many people also hope that by winning a lawsuit against the police, they will force policy to change, making a difference for other people in the future. However, just like a corporation that is sued by a consumer, the police know that they can often settle out of court to avoid a trial. Police did just that in the case of Alberto Sepulveda, 11, who was killed in a police raid of his home in Modesto in 2000. Police raided the home, hoping to find drugs and make an arrest of the boy's father, however, police ended up finding nothing. Although cops involved in the early morning attack knew that school-age children were inside during the time of the assault, when one cop came upon Alberto with his hands over his head, he fired, killing the boy. Later, police would issue several statements. At first, they stated that they thought Alberto was a dog. Then, they claimed that the officer's gun was set off by a knife located on his uniform. Regardless, the incident was ruled a "horrible accident," instead of a tragedy caused by an over-zealous department that saw innocent children as expendable in a drug war gone horribly wrong. After the family of Alberto launched a lawsuit, the police quickly settled out of court, leaving the officer that had murdered the young child still on the force. It later came out that in fact, Alberto's killer started work as a cop with the Stockton police, where he was involved in a similar shooting of a person in a house raid that was "already dead." After that incident, he found his way onto the Modesto Police Force, where he still is employed. And it wasn't just the police towing this line, a representative from the Hispanic Leadership Council stated, "I'm 100 percent behind the police and the police chief...we (the community) have to get rid of these drugs."

It is likely that police decided to try and settle out of court with Alberto's family because they knew that the court would probably find the department at least partially at fault. Another case was not even so lucky. Sammy Galvan was shot and killed by Modesto police in the summer of 2004, as the police responded to a domestic call. They came upon Sammy while he was making food at his home, and shot him to death, in front of his girlfriend. The Galvan's home was riddled with bullets, and police would later claim that Sammy attempted to attack them with knives, while witnesses and Sammy's girlfriend claimed that Sammy was

only holding a kitchen utensil. The family sued, and the police used all their resources to paint Sammy as a dangerous criminal who tried to assault the police when they entered his home. The case was lost, and police also used the incident as a pretext for harassing members of Sammy's family, pulling them over and telling them that "they were next."

We can learn several things from both of these lawsuits. When police know that the evidence seems stacked against them, they will paint police murders as simply "terrible tragedies." When police can, they will settle out of court to avoid paying even more to certain families. Lastly, police will use the media to smear a person's name, and use threats and intimidation to stop people from speaking out against police violence. When in court, police will lie through their teeth, making up any story that places them in

the clear. At the end of the day, even if the police have to pay, they aren't going to fire their officers, or reform their organization. No, they will continue on as they always have, as a force of repression. While we support in earnest and full, 100% the families that choose to sue the police department, and will stand behind anyone who is trying to struggle for justice for their loved ones, we recognize that the police hold all the cards when it comes to the courts. Even if they lose money, they will continue to operate just as before. And so, while we support people engaging in lawsuits for their loved ones, we

also understand that, overall, people suing the police will not lead to a change of what we see on the street. Having said that, as Tupac Shakur stated after he won several tens of thousands from the Oakland police who beat him, "Every dollar from any police department is good money."

Many people often call for federal investigations into the police on top of, or instead of, launching lawsuits. Some people feel that the federal authorities will be able to investigate the police, and thus hold them accountable for their actions, or be able to discover police corruption. In the case of Luis Guitterez, a farmworker in Woodland (by Sacramento), who was killed in 2008 by a gang task force unit, community groups demanded that the feds launch an independent investigation. Guitterez was murdered as he came out of the DMV (he ran, when police dressed as gang members approached him), and ballistic tests show that he

"...They came upon Sammy while he was making food at his home, and shot him to death, in front of his girlfriend... Police would later claim that Sammy attempted to attack them with knives, while witnesses and Sammy's girlfriend claimed that Sammy was only holding a kitchen utensil..."

was shot in the back as he ran from police. After years of struggle demanding that the feds investigate the shooting, nothing has changed in the case. No police have been held accountable by the federal government. In Modesto, Department of Justice representatives at local forums on police violence have failed to rule on their findings, or bring any police to “justice.” Can we expect the head pigs to curtail the smaller ones? We are talking about the same federal government that has their “big cops,” the FBI, work and act in conjunction with various law enforcement agencies. The same federal government who crushed in blood the labor movement, the Black Panthers, the anti-war movement, and many others. Obviously, the needs of the people will always fall on deaf ears for the government, especially when it comes to demands that they curtail the police.

Calls for the creation of CRBs, or Civilian Review Boards, are often purported by many to give people much more power in regards to confronting police abuse. In most cities, CRBs do not exist; instead, people are only allowed to issue complaints to internal affairs, which is made up of police officers themselves. These police then investigate the complaints, finding out if they are “justified or not.” However, in almost all cases, the cops investigating the cops, surprise surprise, find that the claims are unfounded and dismiss them. Furthermore, people’s complaints are often “lost,” or those issuing them are intimidated into not filling out a form at all. In theory, Civilian Review Boards however are supposed to be agencies that are not tied to the police, and are made up of various people that investigate claims of misconduct. What happens next is up in the air. In most places, such as in the bay area, the CRB is made up of “local leaders,” which can investigate claims made by citizens, and then make a ruling as to if they found that police acted in an abusive manner. If the CRB does find the police to be at fault, people can take that ruling to a court which will make their claim appear to be justified. However, the police in court will still have all the backing and power of the Department and the government behind them, whether in the liberal bay area, or small-town central valley. So, even at their most powerful, CRBs do not actually have the power to stop or hold accountable police that brutalize communities that they work in, they simply have the ability to issue findings in regards to certain investigations into the police. In some cities, such as Fresno, people have campaigned for years for a CRB,

only to find that the organization does nothing to actually punish the police when they are caught.

It is of no surprise that CRBs are useless when it comes to fighting the police. Real power comes from the relationships that poor and working people have between each other, in their communities. The police thrive on a lack of solidarity and togetherness in the neighborhoods that they occupy. They need us to snitch on and be afraid of each other; to point the finger, and pick up the phone and call them. They also depend on throwing us in jail and issuing us tickets for a paycheck. Our repression is their luxury. If we begin to see all political and legal avenues of struggle as bankrupt, this does not mean that we think that struggle against the police and the violence that they represent is not possible. It means that we have to look for other means of creating power against the police, and between each other. It means building a counter-force in our communities that can resist the police by any means necessary.

“...increase the bonds that exist between us, helping each other and looking out for each other... stopping broke-on-broke crime, where we prey on other poor and working people, causing many to feel that they can only turn to the police...”

What this means is several things. For one, it means that we need to increase the bonds that exist between us, helping each other and looking out for each other. It means stopping broke-on-broke crime, where we prey on other poor and working people, causing many to feel that they can only turn to the police. It means looking to others around us to help in settling disputes and problems, rather than the police. It also means creating a culture that actually stands up and watches the police when they stop, harass, and go

about arresting people in our communities. Copwatch, a tactic used throughout the United States, is quite simple. Armed with video cameras, people take to the streets, and document interactions between police and the people. This action builds a sense of power between people against the cops, and also crystallizes the tension that exists between the two groups. What we are talking about is more than simply forming a Copwatch group, but creating and maintaining a Copwatch culture. One that looks out for each other, and stands up to the police. Furthermore, as we have seen in Oakland in the last year, and recently in LA, we have to physically fight the police in the street when-and-if we can. Fighting back on the street, taking the fight to the enemy, coupled with strengthening our communities and building power against the police is our way forward to stopping police violence. Anything else is just waiting for more bodies to pile up.



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