

Firestorm

April '09

News from the Valley Class War

Free



Economic Crisis

Resistance to the crisis heats up in the valley.

Copwatch Group Forms

New local organization fights police brutality.

Prisons for Schools

State has money for prisons while it shuts down schools.

Valley Tent Cities

Homeless encampments across valley growing.

Eviction Office Smashed Up

Rebels against foreclosure attack windows.

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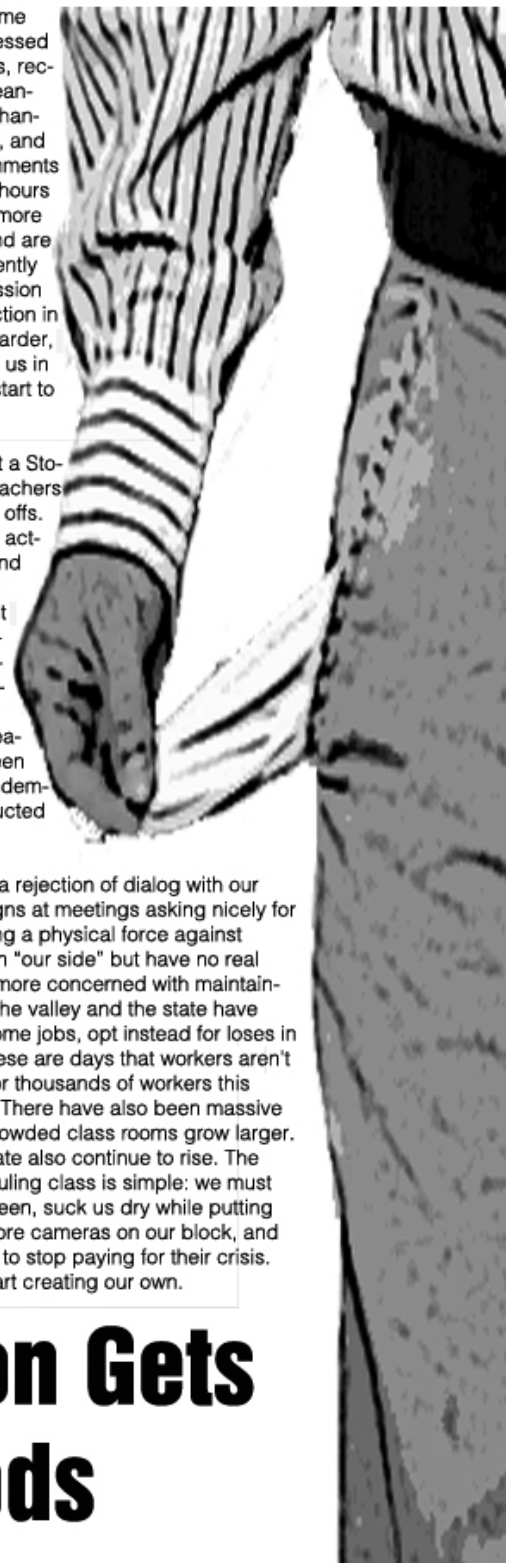
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Don't Pay For Their Crisis

Day after day we hear the same thing, see the same headlines, and walk past the same tired, sad, and depressed faces of those around us. The words foreclosure, lay-offs, recession, and cut backs seem to haunt us on the daily. Meanwhile, the government is busy trumpeting "hope" and "change," as it plans to continue the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond, for years to come. Locally, while the city governments in the area shut down schools, lay off teachers, and cut hours for workers – police are raking in the dough, putting up more and more surveillance cameras to issue more tickets, and are hard at work building more prisons. Modesto police recently received an almost \$400,000 grant for its "gang suppression unit," while a new youth prison is scheduled for construction in Stanislaus County. As life in this capitalist system gets harder, the state knows that it has to beef up repression to keep us in line – or it will simply be a matter of time before people start to take back what is theirs.

There are signs that this is already happening - at a Stockton school district budget meeting in late February, teachers and students gathered to protest proposed cuts and lay offs. By packing the room with people – and taking collective action, they forced the fire marshal to cancel the meeting and have it postponed, thus delaying the decision. While the meeting went ahead a few weeks later and the cuts went through despite massive protests, this type of direct action shows the way forward. Like the recent factory occupation in Chicago at the end of last year, which won severance pay and benefits for laid off workers, this form of direct struggle with our enemies is our most powerful weapon. Besides the actions in Stockton, there have also been numerous protests across the valley at board meetings, demonstrations by teachers in Modesto, and marches conducted by college students in Sacramento.

What is missing from these struggles however is a rejection of dialog with our enemies. We have to stop being the sad people with signs at meetings asking nicely for those in power not to screw us over – and start becoming a physical force against capitalism. We must also resist those who claim to be on "our side" but have no real intentions of fighting back, such as the unions who are more concerned with maintaining peace with the bosses and the rich. Unions across the valley and the state have brokered deals with management which while saving some jobs, opt instead for loses in benefits and force workers to go on "furlough" days. These are days that workers aren't paid for; making them lose up to 10% of their wages. For thousands of workers this simply amounts to having to do more work for less pay. There have also been massive cuts in education, as schools are closed and already crowded class rooms grow larger. Fees and expenses at college campuses around the state also continue to rise. The "solution" to the crisis that has been developed by the ruling class is simple: we must pay for their crisis. Their solution is what it always has been, suck us dry while putting more cops on our streets, more prisons in our towns, more cameras on our block, and making us work harder for less pay. The time has come to stop paying for their crisis. The time has come to stop playing by their rules and start creating our own.



Direct Action Gets the Goods

Firestorm

We want a stateless and classless society. We want to live in a world of autonomous communities without any forms of hierarchy. We desire a world where all people have agency and control over decision making and their lives and 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 controlling people through complete and total violence by means of the police, prisons, racism, patriarchy, borders, military, and borders. Through these systems of domination, governments of the world ensure that working class and oppressed people stay in the roles designed for them: subservient workers and passive citizens. We are against capitalism, because it is based upon class society; a world where a few own everything that we need in order to survive and the rest of us are forced to work for them. 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.

Firestorm is a monthly tabloid produced by Modesto Anarcho Crew (MAC), out of Modesto California. MAC is a street based organization that exists to create revolutionary propaganda, foster class consciousness, and also participate and engage in class and community based struggles in our area. This publication is free to all. We also produce a journal entitled, Modesto Anarcho, which is also free. For more info:

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Copwatch Groups Forms to Stop Police Abuse and Harassment in Modesto Area

Revolutionary youth in Modesto have recently formed a new Copwatch group. The idea behind Copwatch is simple: that people can go out into their neighborhoods and watch the police during their day to day interactions. Armed with video cameras and notepads, Copwatchers document police abuse and harassment. Copwatch was inspired by the actions of revolutionary groups such as the Black Panthers and the American Indian Movement, which militantly patrolled their communities fighting police abuse - often times while armed. Patrols of the Modesto area have been ongoing, and those interested in fighting police brutality and repression are encouraged to help out with patrols. To read an exclusive interview with Modesto Copwatch, check out Modesto Anarcho #11, due out in April. For more information, and to check out the fine publication that Modesto Copwatchers are also putting out, The Revolutionary Hip Hop Report, check out: www.myspace.com/rhhorg.



Closing Down Schools - Building Up Prisons in the Valley



and Take Over!"
-Morrissey

On March 3rd, the Modesto Bee reported that the Modesto School Board had OKed \$11.3 million in education cuts, in spite of public and internal protests. The budget cuts will target "high school counselors, elementary and junior high school music teachers, and elementary school librarians and their assistants." The cuts will not eliminate programs district-wide, but instead "reduce offerings," which we can expect to mean that programs will be cut primarily in poor schools, like those on the West and South sides. Teachers and students are most affected by the cuts: classified employees union President Aaron Castro said that over the last six years the district enrolled 4,000 fewer students, and employed 22 more managers. The cuts will affect between 50-100 workers in Modesto City Schools. Obviously the bosses are more concerned with saving their own asses than helping our children.

In the same issue, the Modesto Bee also reported that Stanislaus county had been awarded \$18 million for a new 60-bed Youth Detention Camp. Neighboring Tuolumne County was also given \$16 million, while four other valley counties received a total of \$30 million. The article glorifies the construction of another prison to house our children which they've stolen, citing that Stanislaus county is ranked only 40th of 58 California counties for juvenile prison size. All the pigs are trying to attach their names to this project, from Modesto Police Chief Roy Wasden, to the county's chief probation officer, Jerry Powers. They claim the new prison will be a vocational training center, and a way to keep kids close to home, but really they're just trying to put a smiling face on oppression.

So, we lose some of the only valuable aspects of the school system: counselors who encourage our kids to hang on, librarians who are often the real people teaching our kids to read, and music teachers who show our kids that creativity is actually a good thing. At the same time, we suffer the building of another prison in our county. The message is clear: the state would rather imprison our children than encourage them to dream, or to be anything else but another wage slave on the assembly line, behind the coffee counter, or in the delivery truck. Children should not aspire to be creative individuals, but instead should submit, be broken, and take on the life that the state gives them. The state doesn't care about our children any more than it cares about us. Fire to their prisons, let's take our kids back!

"All the pigs are trying to attach their names to this project...They claim the new prison will be a... way to keep kids close to home, but really they're just trying to put a smiling face on oppression."

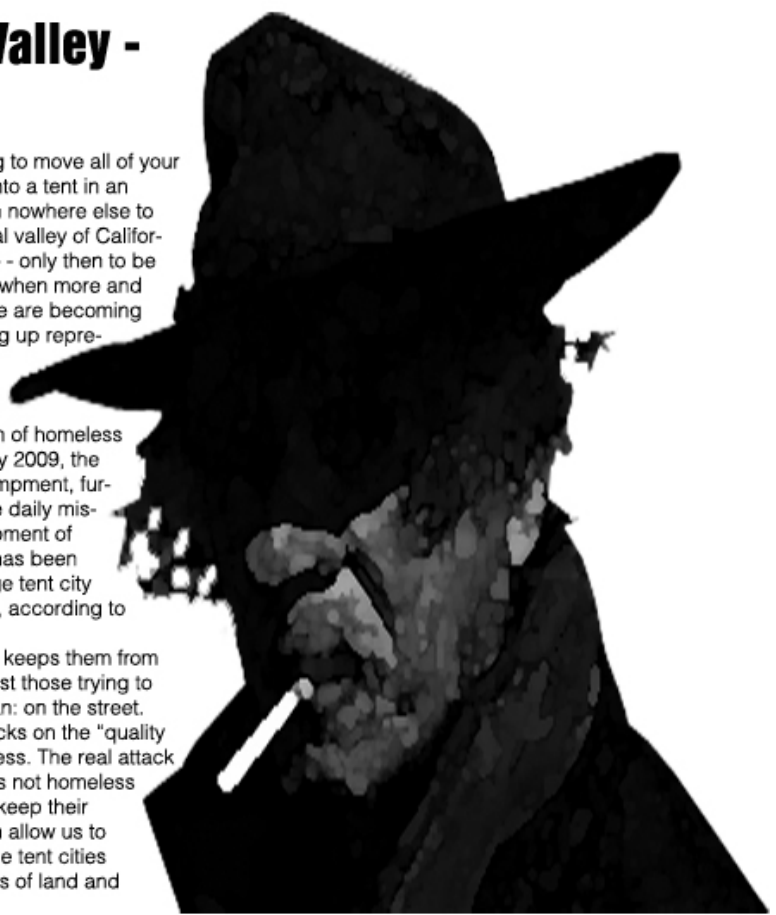


Tent Cities Spread Across Valley - Many Face Removal

Imagine being evicted from your home. Imagine having to move all of your belongings, paperwork, documentation, and valuable items into a tent in an encampment. Imagine next being kicked out of your tent, with nowhere else to go. This is exactly what is happening all throughout the central valley of California as tent cities pop up in Fresno, Stockton, and Sacramento - only then to be shut down by the police and the forces of the state. At a time when more and more homes are becoming vacant and more and more people are becoming homeless due to foreclosure and job loss - the state is beefing up repression against homeless encampments.

In Madera and Fresno, city officials and police have waged an all out war against various tent cities and homeless encampments, including savage beatings and the destruction of homeless people's personal items over the last several years. In January 2009, the City of Fresno made moves to evict the latest homeless encampment, further displacing people in these rough times and adding to the daily misery of life on the street. In Stockton, police evicted an encampment of over 50 people from under a freeway - an encampment that has been used by some people for several years. In Sacramento, a large tent city that is made up of several hundred people has been growing, according to Sacramento officials, by about 10 people per day.

As capitalism pushes people out from their homes and keeps them from being able to meet their most basic needs - it also acts against those trying to find shelter and housing in some of the only ways that they can: on the street. Police and city governments cite these encampments as attacks on the "quality of life" of the city and play on middle class fears of the homeless. The real attack on the quality of life for those of us living in the central valley is not homeless people trying to find places that they can rest their head and keep their stuff, but a system that would rather push us into oblivion than allow us to live for free. While we should all fight against the attacks on the tent cities across the valley, we should also push for greater occupations of land and housing that will ultimately lead to shelter and homes for all.



Eviction Office Attacked As Foreclosures Continues



As foreclosures in the central valley continue to place more and more people out on the street and Obama's proposed housing plan will not even help many facing eviction, we happened to come across this communique that was posted on www.anarchistnews.org. While we think that collective struggle (acting in groups in our neighborhoods, communities, and workplaces) is the best way to fight back, small actions like these show that people can resist in small ways on their own and start to build power.

"the sounds of breaking glass rang out as two bricks dropped two windows owned by the eviction office in downtown Modesto last week. we attacked it because they help the pigs evict people from their homes. we are against the foreclosures in the area and the banks taking people's homes away from them. the feeling that we got from attacking them was great because we know that we hit them where it hurts. this is just the start. the central valley is a front line and we have taken a side."

Upcoming Events

Anarchist Reading and Discussion Group

The Anarchist Reading group meets every Wednesday at 5pm at the Queen Bean Coffee House in Modesto on 14th Street next to Needham Ave. Copies of the readings are available for free at meetings. Discussions usually last for about an hour and current and upcoming events are also discussed. All are welcome! For more info, email: anarcho209@yahoo.com.

General Modesto Anarcho Meeting

Want to know more about the ideas in Modesto Anarcho and Firestorm? Want to know what people in your area are doing to put these ideas into place? Want a space to fight against foreclosure, poverty, racism, and the whole damn system in general? Modesto Anarcho Crew (MAC) meets the last Saturday of every month at Graceada Park in downtown Modesto, on Needham Street. The group meets under the gazebo at 1pm sharp. We meet to discuss upcoming events and what we want to organize around. All are welcome! This month we meet on Saturday, April 25th.

Modesto Anarcho Table at Earth Day

Modesto Anarcho Crew will be tabling at the annual Earth Day celebration at Graceada Park in Downtown Modesto on Needham Ave. Look for the Modesto Anarcho banner! The event will take place on Saturday, April 18th, from 10 AM - 5PM.

Anarchist Cafe' Life Music, Food!

Anarchist Cafe' is a social space that is created by taking over public areas for the sake of creating radical communities. The Anarchist Cafe' will feature performances by local and out of town musical acts, free food, workshops and presentations, and free literature tables. The event is free to all and will be held at 10th and J Street, from 7-10 PM on Saturday, April 25th. For more info, email: anarcho209@yahoo.com.



THEIR CRISIS, OUR REVOLT

Shenzhen, China
11.9.08

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PROLES ON THE OFFENSIVE