

# Finestorm

Summer '09

News from the Valley Class War

Free



**"What is needed then? Destroy poverty, that source of crime, by assuring to each the satisfaction of all needs! And how difficult is this to achieve? It would suffice to establish society on new bases where everything would be in common and each, producing according to their aptitudes and strengths, could consume according to their needs. Then we would no longer see people...crave a metal of which they become the slaves and the victims!"**

*Ravachol*

**Modesto Anarcho  
PO Box 3027  
Modesto, CA 95353  
anarcho209@yahoo.com**

## Police Violence Out of Control in Valley

28-year old Luis Gutierrez took six bullets from undercover cops before he fell on April 30th in Woodland, just outside of Sacramento. The shot that killed him ripped through the back of his head and neck. Luis, a farm worker from a working-class family, is yet another victim of the Central Valley's Gang Suppression Units. Cops originally said that Gutierrez had attacked them, but no one believed them; not even the county coroner, who performed the autopsy. Community members have called for everything from an "independent investigation," to shutting down Yolo County Sheriff Department's Gang Suppression Unit and undercover cops. Recently, people in Woodland have staged protests and marches against the police outside of the DMV where Luis was killed, calling for justice in his case.

In Fresno, police broke a homeless man's wrist in early June, in yet another case of police violence. Randy Johnson was arrested and released several times, without cause. In the course of the arrests, the cops broke his wrist. Officers then entered his wife's home, and attempted to force her to press charges against him. She refused. Johnson, his wife, and an independent witness say the cops were violent, using "excessive force." This latest act of brutality comes on the tails of a video showing Fresno police savagely beating another homeless man, who was then arrested and charged with assaulting the police officers. Videos of both incidents can be found on [www.indybay.org](http://www.indybay.org).

A 75-year-old woman is suing Stanislaus Law Enforcement agencies over the use of excessive force over a year ago, when cops from the DEA and other agencies entered her home with a warrant and left her with full-body bruises and hip pain. Officers were supposedly in search of one of her tenants, who did not live at the house.

In the midst of this ongoing repression, a series of public forums about police violence have been organized in Modesto. These forums have given people the opportunity to come together, however police presence at the events creates a dynamic where people are required to grovel before their exploiters and abusers. Many have called for the creation of an independent police review board that would be able to investigate the police and hold various officers legally accountable for their actions. However, all the local head pigs in these meetings have made it very clear that they do not support any sort of agency that would limit their power over our lives. There is nothing to be gained by dialoging with the police, and these forums have only succeeded in allowing the police to claim that they have an interest in "working with the people." They don't – their power comes from their violence which is sanctioned by the state. With each new atrocity, their role in this society becomes more and more clear: they are our enemies.

## Surveillance System Gives Police More Power Over Downtown



Taking a walk through the downtown of Modesto, you may notice some new signs that read: "Notice: Monitored by Video Camera." Taking a closer look, you will then find that the cameras stationed up about two stories off the ground peer down at the street below. Like other Central Valley cities such as Fresno, Ripon, Manteca, and Livingston, Modesto (according to the Modesto police at a recent public meeting), now boasts about 70 surveillance cameras throughout the city. According to a press release from the Wi4Net Corporation, "Wi4Net...[has] implement[ed]...a wireless video surveillance network for the City of Modesto, California. The first phase of the project implements cameras throughout the downtown section of the City and features a full-scale monitoring center at the Police Department." The new camera system cost the City, according to the *Modesto Bee*, "\$340,000 for 10 cameras."

According to the police, this surveillance system is part of an effort in "redeveloping" the downtown and making it safe and attractive for business interests and upscale establishments such as the Gallo Center. As Lieutenant Ron Cloward stated, "After significant redevelopment efforts in our downtown area over recent years, we are extremely proud to add this safety tool to further spur economic development and improve security in this part of our City." In other words, the surveillance system makes the downtown safer for businesses interests and acts as a tool for the police against the poor, the youth, the homeless, and those who would use the downtown to congregate without buying and selling. This same logic also lead the police to install a substation in the downtown area after people started using the 10th and J Street area as a hangout space on weekends. Lieutenant Ron Cloward even stated in the *Modesto Bee* that the substation was instrumental in kicking youth out from the downtown area.

While the papers are quick to lap up reports from the police that surveillance make us safer, in reality, surveillance systems do not reduce crime. In a recent study reported in the *Modesto Bee*, it was found that in the small Central Valley town of Ripon, despite the massive amount of surveillance cameras placed throughout the city, crime actually rose by 4% in the last year. In countries like England where surveillance cameras are even more prominent, similar statistics exist, with crime not being drastically effected. At the borders, in the workplace, and in our communities, surveillance has nothing to do with keeping us safe, and everything to do with keeping us in line.

# 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, 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 in Modesto California by Modesto Anarcho Crew (MAC). 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:

Modesto Anarcho  
PO Box 3027  
Modesto, CA 95353

anarcho209@yahoo.com  
myspace.com/modanarcho  
www.geocities.com/anarcho209

## Man Takes Rage Out Against Merced Police

In May, a brave man was sadly arrested after he attacked the Merced Police Department's north area substation. The man launched a barrage of rocks at the pig pen, breaking and damaging several windows. According to the *Merced Sun Star*, "[Police] didn't know if someone was shooting at the facility or throwing rocks." When asked why he assaulted the police station with rocks, the attacker stated that he did not have a reason. However, we ask, with the rise of police violence in the Central Valley, do we really need a reason to attack the police and their infrastructure? Those that stand up to the police and the violence that they represent in our communities are working class heroes.

## Robert "Civil Rights Activist" Stanford Calls Cops on Downtown Youth

In a recent video recorded by Modesto Copwatch, Robert Stanford, who refers to himself as a "civil rights activist" and (according to Stanford) is involved in groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), called the police on a group of youths in the downtown of Modesto. Stanford claimed that the group of youths were gang members, based on their dress. He also claimed that one of the youths had a knife, were "throwing gang signs," and were about to get in an "escalation" with a rival group of youths. Police detained the youth and took pictures of them and their clothing, but did not find a weapon. Police told Copwatchers that the youth were out past curfew, but when Copwatch members responded that it was in fact before 10pm, the police let the youths go.

When asked why he called the police, Stanford stated on camera that he "knows what gang members look like" and that he "deals with them everyday." He quickly became hostile with the Copwatchers behind the camera; pulling out his NAACP card and stated that the Copwatchers should be "grateful" for the "work" that he does. He then left the conversation by stating that, "You guys are fucked up," then returning to tell them to "suck my dick." Anyone who works actively with the police to further push youth into prison does no service to the cause of freedom and liberation - they hinder it. It is no surprise that Stanford is running for a City Council seat currently; as he seems most interested in cozying up to the police in order to score political points. Do you really want someone who tells people with cameras asking questions to "suck his dick" telling you what to do? To watch Modesto Copwatch videos on youtube, go to: [www.youtube.com/user/rhhrorg](http://www.youtube.com/user/rhhrorg).

## Former Police Chief Gets Over 200K For New Job While Others Get Pink Slips

Former Modesto Police Chief Roy Wasden has recently left his job in Modesto and has now taken a position as the Turlock City Manger. Wasden, who lead the Modesto Police during such atrocities as the police killing of 11 year old Alberto Sepulveda during a drug raid, the police murder of Sammy Galvan, and the beating of youth of color in 2006 after a DJ event in downtown Modesto, is now making over \$200,000. Wasden will also get cash allowances for cars, cell phones, and other "expenses." Meanwhile, less well connected folks are getting laid off. In June, at least 23 people were laid off in Turlock as the city cut back on spending by getting rid of some of "the little people." Workers should not stand by while pigs like Wasden rake in the cash and working class people are laid off. Occupy your workplaces now against layoffs, cuts, and attacks on pay.

## California Valley Miwok Tribe Occupies Foreclosed Home

Members of the California Valley Miwok Tribe have barricaded themselves inside their foreclosed home after they could not pay their mortgage on the house. The home which is located in an upscale neighborhood between Stockton and Lodi, is the only thing that the tribe owns, and contains an office and the living quarters of various tribe members. Tribe members have stated that they are not moving, and will stay until the eviction is called off or they can find other living arrangements. We find this act of resistance inspiring, as foreclosure rates this summer are about to shoot through the roof; leaving hundreds more people out of their homes and possibly on the street. Solidarity with the occupiers - resist all evictions and squat all foreclosures!

## Court Proceedings for Modesto Needle Exchange Members Begin

In June, court proceedings began for two volunteers of Modesto Needle Exchange, a grassroots group that exchanged dirty needles in Mono Park in the Airport District for clean ones in an attempt to limit the spread of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C. Modesto Needle Exchange volunteers face misdemeanor charges of distributing drug paraphernalia. No one should face jail time for putting themselves on the line to help out others - especially while across the state basic services are being drastically cut. Drop the charges against the Mono Park 2! For more info email and how to help: [wingnutrefugee@yahoo.com](mailto:wingnutrefugee@yahoo.com).

