

# Modesto Anarcho

the valley's insurrectionary journal of class struggle



Solidaridad #16

# 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.

## An Introduction...

The winds of revolution are blowing. While putting this issue together we watched as Tunisia exploded, then Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Algeria, and then... Again and again people took to the streets, striking, taking over buildings, and fighting with the police. One Egyptian commented: "I don't know why we have police in the 1st place. We seem to be taking good care of each other, organizing traffic, cleaning streets." Many in the media and on the Left were quick to describe the protests as "peaceful," in an effort to downplay the violent working class nature of much of the uprising. However, one can't look past the pitched battles with police in riot gear (armed with American-made weapons) and the burning of police stations, and claim with a straight face that this was a 'non-violent revolution.' At the same time, this also wasn't a revolt brought about by a group of specialized armed street fighters — but every day, ordinary people. And, when the Egyptian President did finally step down, bowing to the protesters' demands, many applauded as the army stepped in to take control of the country. However, many workers kept on striking, many kept on occupying buildings and space. As we write this, the Egyptian working class is in a fierce struggle with "their" new government, one that they hoped would lead them to freedom...

Half a world away, protesters in Wisconsin at the state capitol in Madison, read a statement of solidarity from Egyptian protesters. They are gathered together in the tens of thousands; public and private sector workers who have occupied the capitol building. They are responding to Governor Walker's bill that would destroy collective bargaining, attack their health care, and stifle wages. In only a matter of weeks their protests have become massive. Students walked out of school. Teachers called in sick. Protesters refused to leave the capitol. The Republican Party office was briefly occupied. Talk of a general strike filled the air. The Democrats and the labor union leaders that supported them did back flips. Quickly they demanded that the strikes and occupations end. That people go back to work. They sat down with the Governor and agreed to most of his demands, except those that would hurt the power of the union — the power to control working class action. In Wisconsin, as in Egypt, our revolt is not only against the upper class, but against those that would manage and control our resistance.

The upper class is united — they demand that we pay for this crisis. This is true across the board for union leaders and Republican Governors. What's more is that they

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are afraid. They are afraid of a working class that is aware of itself; aware that they are the contradiction in this society; aware that while we work and create profits for the elites, we are exploited at the same time. We are becoming aware that we have the power to destroy this system. We have the power to go into the streets and fight with the forces that keep us in our place. We have the fortitude to take over and occupy everything around us; taking empty buildings and turning them into something useful, or simply seizing police stations and setting them on fire. We have the ability to strike, now, tomorrow, and forever, as we create a new world where human labor goes towards needs, not profits. A world in which we make the decisions which define and govern our lives, one where we have power to control our neighborhoods, schools, and communities; not the government or their police.

We are at a crisis, yes. Things are bad. But this horror show has brought us together. In line for EBT cards and in the schools as our teachers cry over their pink slips. We have started to push, but so have those in power. They call for attacks on immigrants and mass round ups. They cry out for assaults on health care, wages, and benefits. Another park is shut down and another person is shot by the police. At work we whisper of revolts far away, and then closer, and then even closer... It is time to confront every incursion and assault by capital and it's governments in the most collective and mass ways possible. We are at a point where people stop being afraid and start taking action. And we have been scared for, far, far too long.

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# Action in the Central Valley

**Late October:** 25 people marched in Modesto against the ongoing murders and brutality of police, both in the streets and in the local jail. The march was organized by Modesto Anarcho and Modesto Copwatch, with many families representing Francisco Moran and Rita Elias. In September of 2010, two people in less than 20 days were shot and killed by Modesto Police and Stanislaus County Sheriffs. Francisco Moran was killed in east Modesto, as police responding to a domestic call killed Moran and later claimed he was brandishing a knife. The knife turned out to in fact be a spatula, which Moran had in his waistband. Rita Elias, a West Modesto resident, was shot and killed by an off-duty Stanislaus County Sheriff, Kari Abbey, who was trying to evict Elias from her home. Abbey's parents are Elias's landlords. After an argument ensued, Elias was shot dead. Police claim that Elias brandished a realistic-looking toy gun, which she aimed at the Sheriff, who killed Elias in self-defense. Family and witnesses dispute this claim. Also, in the last year, 6 people have died at the Stanislaus County Jail. Half of the families of those murdered are launching lawsuits on their behalf for wrongful deaths. By the Sheriff's own admission, half of those who have died in the past year also had tasers deployed on them inside the jail.

Protesters marched to the spot downtown where Richie Robles was shot and killed by Modesto Police in 2009, the Modesto Police station, the County Jail, and ended at Paperboy Park, which was shut down last year. The park closure is part of an effort to force the homeless out of Downtown and redevelop the area. People also marched through the downtown bus station, handing out several hundred copies of the new *Timeline of Ongoing Police Repression in the Central Valley* and the newest issue

of *Modesto Anarcho*. Marchers then discussed where to go next with the movement to fight police repression in the local area.

**Early December:** A banner was dropped off the 99 Freeway in Southside Modesto on the 6th. A message left on [www.indybay.org](http://www.indybay.org) read:

*"On Monday, 06 December 2010, a banner was dropped in Modesto over a busy freeway during the morning commute hour. The banner read: \\\\"From Modesto to Greece, Cops Kill. Revolution, Not Investigation!\\\" This was done in solidarity not only with comrades in Greece, as December 6th is the two-year anniversary of the murder of Alexis Grigoropoulos in the Exarcheia district of Athens, but especially with those resisting police violence and murders locally.*

*The investigation of the Modesto Police Department will not change anything. It is in resisting the police on our streets here, in Greece, and everywhere that we will find freedom."*

**Late December:** On December 6th, a group of about 15 protesters marched into the Modesto Police station during a public meeting chanting "Cops, Pigs, Murderers!" The group was dressed mostly in black and wore masks bearing the likenesses of two people killed by Modesto Police and Stanislaus County Sheriffs in September of 2010, Francisco Moran and Rita Elias.

The meeting was held to discuss if the Modesto Police Department will again receive accreditation

from C.A.L.E.A. (a national organization founded by cops and for cops), which the department won three years ago. The meeting (which started at 6pm) had a very low attendance, with many of the audience being police both in-and-out of uniform and representatives from other city government departments. Gaining accreditation means that police departments supposedly meet 'standards of excellence' in their cities. The City Modesto spent close to \$30,000 ensuring that the accreditation process would take place.

This is laughable given the recent police murders, and that the Department is currently being investigated for corruption and brutality. An out-going police sergeant recently sent out an email detailing the department's method of "beat and release," stating that police would beat people only to leave them at the local hospital. A subsequent email was published by some anonymous police officers backing the email, and stating that numerous complaints from within the department itself have protested abuses to the chief and others — all to no avail. It goes on to mention several officers by name for abuse and murder — one of them an officer involved in the shooting of Francisco Moran, who was armed only with a spatula when he was killed.

Holding banners reading "Fire to the Prisons! Revolt on the Inside, Revolt on the Outside!," "From LA to Oakland to Modesto, Resist Police Terror, 209 Rise Up!," and "RIP Francisco Moran, RIP Rita Elias," the protesters first rallied outside, then marched into the police department to disrupt the meeting. They heckled and shouted down the first couple of speakers, including head Sheriff, the hated Adam Christianson. At one point, Chief Mike Harden got up in front of the accreditation meeting and declared that he would have anyone shouting "arrested."

Several people got up and addressed the crowd from the group, stating the idiocy of even considering issuing accreditation to the Modesto Police while they are being investigated for corruption and brutality. The meeting was



**Nazi graffiti is common along Scenic Drive in Modesto.**



**A banner over CA-99 in solidarity with victims of police violence. 06 December, 2010.**

over after about an hour, and the group then marched out.

The comments coming from the head of the NAACP were equally pathetic. He claimed that the problem with the police was one of 'bad apples,' and that the NAACP would continue to support MPD as long as it continued to dialog with them. Clearly, the NAACP needs the police just as much as the police need them. Both groups work with each other, in order to appear that one is hard on the other - while neither group has any interest in real change. The NAACP continues to offer false opposition and criticism that gets us nowhere.

Protesters gathered at the accreditation meeting not because they believed that the committee would "bring justice," or "hold the police accountable," but because they wanted to disrupt the meeting and expose it as the farce that it was.

**Mid-December:** Various individuals took it upon themselves to destroy some of the Nazi graffiti left on Scenic Drive (more info in the repression section). Much of the tags and swastikas were altered and crossed out.

**Late December:** According to a post on indybay.org, someone(s) claimed responsibility for busting out the windows of the Fresno Police Union building. The communique stated:

*Ho! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas! Jacky Parks and the FPOA have been very naughty this year. By greedily taking over half of the city budget they are responsible for lost jobs and cut services. I went to fill his stocking with coal but couldn't find the chimney so the coal was delivered through several of the buildings windows. Merry Christmas Fresno!*

**Mid-January:** According to indybay.org: "Marshall Hodgkins, a lawyer with a history of getting dirty cops



**Children removed hate-filled graffiti from Scenic Drive on MLK day, 2011.**

*off the hook, had a brick thrown through his office window with a note attached which read "DIRTY COPS DESERVE THE DEATH PENALTY."*

*Recently Hodgkins has been representing Sgt. Manfredi and also officer Plymale regarding an excessive force case from 2006. The case is currently being looked at by State lawyers who are attempting to force Plymale to testify against Manfredi. Hodgkins is fighting this very hard and has boasted that he is an "obstacle" in this case. The Resistance sees him as an obstacle to justice, and as they say in the streets, NO JUSTICE! NO PEACE!*

*The whole damn system is broken and lawyers like Hodgkins make it so that cops know that they can harass, brutalize, and murder at will because they will get away with it with the help of savvy lawyers. It is time for the people to rise up and say ENOUGH! Let's clean out the pig sty and all the vermin which aid these dirty cops. 2011 must be a year of action as we take our communities back from these occupying forces."*

**Mid-January:** On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, two young Modesto boys, aged 9 and 15, with the help of their mom, took it upon themselves to clean up the latest stretch of Nazi graffiti on Scenic Drive. In past months, the north side of the street has been awash in Neo-Nazi swastikas and slogans. Recently, in blue paint the Nazis painted a swastika symbol, in addition to the phrases "Fuckwhatyousay," and "White Power."

After learning that the city would take a while in cleaning up the mess, the trio got to work on covering up the fascist slogans themselves. Many swastika images and racist graffiti remain on Scenic, as well we assume, those that are putting them there in the first place. So if you see something there - cross that crap out!

**Early February:** A 28 year-old Sonora man, An-

drew Clemo was arrested on misdemeanor vandalism charges and a probation violation. Andrew was caught after he entered a store where he had bought a can of red spray paint and asked to exchange it for a new can because it had "exploded." After the store exchanged the can of paint, clerks followed Clemo and called the police when he began spray painting in the back of a chain store around 7:10 PM. Police claim that the graffiti included the slogan "No More War," and Clemo could possibly be found responsible for other graffiti recently seen in the area.

Commenting on an article on ModestoAnarcho.org, Clemo had this to say:

*"WOW. Hey its me in the flesh, my friend told me she googled my name and she found this. I can't believe it; Thank you for the support. This is so random. I am glad i found your site. you clearly talk about things that i am concerned about. They let me out until i go back to court on april first — april fools day."*



**The graffiti covered up included swastikas and white supremacist slogans.**



# Drink, Occupy, Takeover

## The Story of Travis Kevie

One story slipped through our fingers last issue and it was so humorous and interesting that we decided to write about it this issue. Last summer, a young 'Rodeo cowboy,' Travis Kevie, opened up a bar in Auburn, CA, that had been previously shut down. Several newspaper articles heralded the opening of the historic watering hole, and customers streamed in. Several days later, the new "owner" of the bar was, behind bars! What happened? He wasn't laid off, and he wasn't foreclosed on. Oh where did our fairytale go?

Turns out, Kevie simply went into the abandoned bar and opened it up. That's right. He broke in, cleaned the place up, and opened up the doors. He was squatting not renting. Although he did no damage to the building, he did revamp the place. Cleaning the neon open sign and even spending a little money for a six-pack of beer, which he then sold and used the money to buy more alcohol; all without a liquor license. Police first became suspicious when Detective Jim Hudson recognized Kevie as a local transient who had come into contact numerous times with the Sheriff's Department.

Soon, Kevie was arrested and thrown in jail, only to be released after two days on misdemeanor charges of selling alcohol without a license - even as some people were calling for his freedom.

As one local resident wrote:

*"Travis Kevie, has given me hope in the future of our younger generation...The Winkle family has long been patrons of the Valencia Club. After the Shanghai closed down, I would venture to say it's been the No. 1 venue in the Auburn area to get our drink on. It's almost impossible for a family of seven to enjoy a full night of libations with the prices these new clubs in Auburn charge. How can anyone be expected to stretch a welfare check that far? Lincoln's*

*been out of work for quite a while, and one of the few things keeping him going was the knowledge he and his family could get together four or five nights a week and develop that bond families are given when closing a bar down.*

*Instead of putting young Travis in the county jail, we should be trying to raise funds to help the young man continue his inspirational calling. All he did was help folks out in tough times, and if he was able to pull himself up a bit while doing it, God bless him. One thing I can guarantee is that if one of the Winkle family is on a jury deciding this youngster's fate, he walks!"*

In the end, Kevie was only sentenced to 15 days in jail, in large part due to the outpouring of support that he received from the surrounding community. That support is what we find interesting. A situation like Kevie's is exciting because not only is it a great story, but also it shows support everyday people can give to those locked up for taking over the property of the rich and powerful.

As the commenter in the local paper pointed out - where can working people with little money go now days? With the increase in development like that proposed by planners in Modesto, where can we go to get a drink with our friends and family that isn't totally over priced and taken over by yuppies? Moreover, it seems that Kevie's bar helped to create a sense of community out of his effort and gave people something to believe in. It's not always that the "little gal or guy" gets fucked over. In doing so, he bypassed the government and property owners who claim that everyday people can't run their own lives and organize their own spaces. It spat in the face of daily life in the Central Valley which is filled with boarded up homes and businesses, and thousands of homeless and evicted families.

**Continued on p. 08...**



# Shooting Fags in a Barrel

## A Queer Response to the Recent Shooting at the Tiki

Early Friday, January 7th, 2011 5 to 10 rounds were fired into the patio of the Tiki Bar on McHenry Avenue, resulting in one man receiving a non-lethal injury after bar staff asked three men to leave who had “created a disturbance” within the establishment. The men were arrested almost immediately and booked by MPD on suspicion of attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon, and conspiracy.

No updates have been made available to the public since this incident occurred over one month ago. MPD and the Modesto Bee both failed to identify the Tiki Bar as a gay bar in their reports leading some in the local queer community to question the motivation behind covering up what could properly be called a hate crime. Eyewitness accounts of the event did vary. Some said the 3 men were just really drunk and really stupid, while another source has said *“the shooters opened fire because they took offense that it was an alternative bar.”* (from centralvalleytv.net Friday, January 7, 2011 @ 02:01 AM)

So what is the difference between a hate crime and just being really stupid? According to the FBI website, “a hate crime is a traditional offense like murder, arson, or vandalism with an added element of bias. For the purposes of collecting statistics, Congress has defined a hate crime as a ‘criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender’s bias against a race, religion, disability, ethnic origin or sexual orientation.’” (from fbi.gov )

This means you can be stupid, drunk, and still guilty of a hate crime. Would the three straight men have shot “randomly” into a patio at a straight bar if they were asked to leave for disturbing patrons? Not likely, since that behavior requires thinking that your victims are less than human which is affirmed time and time again by not only major organized religions, media, and the federal government, but also the local police union which sent out mailers

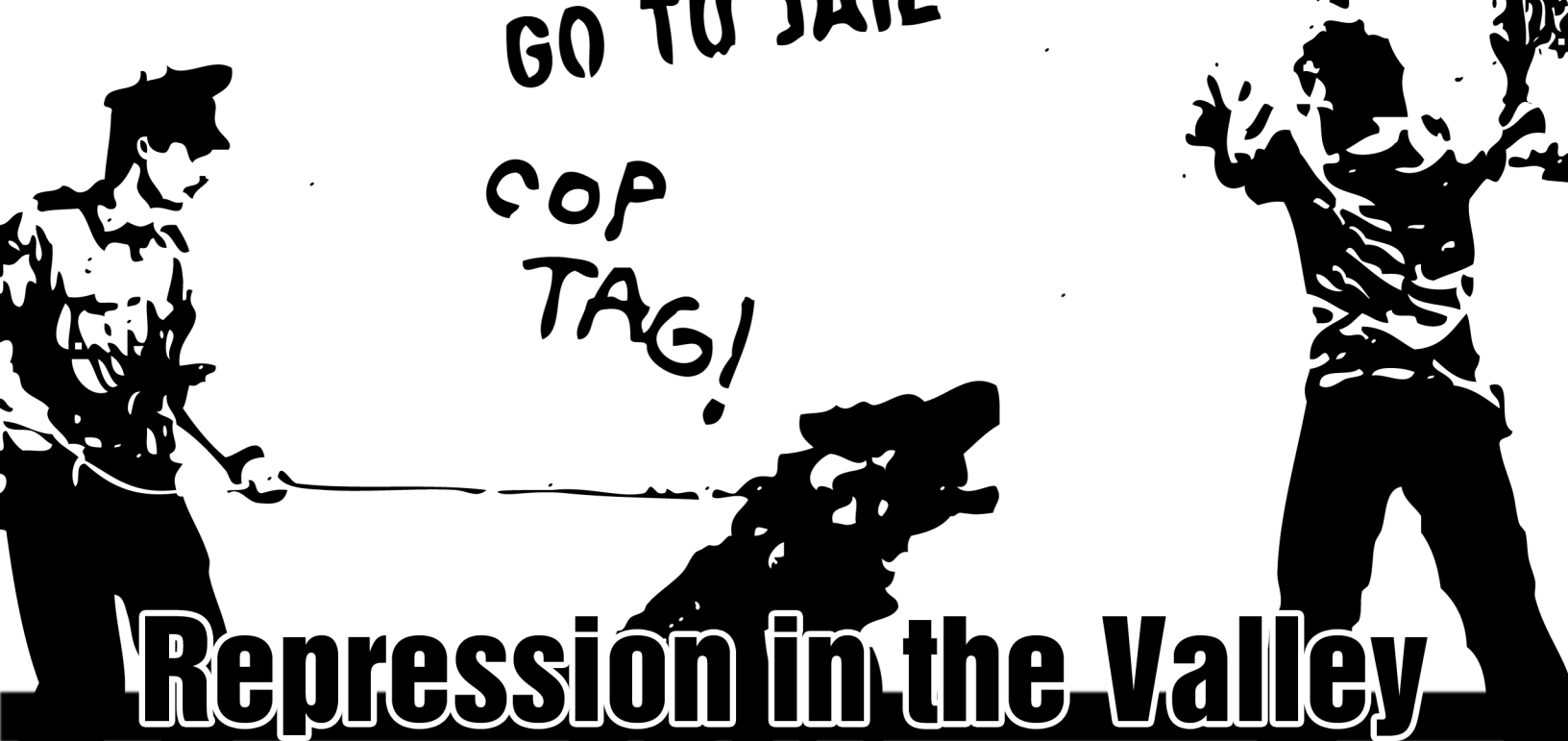
endorsing Prop 8 in 2008 as a way to “protect families”.

Less than a peep has been heard from prominent local, social justice groups such as PFLAG, Stanislaus Pride Center, and the Peace Life Center. As for the actual people of the queer community, the apathy appears to be contagious. We accept whatever comes our way as long as we have a place to buy overpriced drinks and be seen socializing as confirmed by the fact that less than 24 hours after the shooting, the bar was again filled with people getting wasted, apparently without a care in the world. The consensus appears to be that hate crimes against us can be hushed up and tolerated. Even to the extent that the authorities can count on us to act as partial accomplices in the cover up by lying to ourselves about the fact that this shooting could have happened anywhere to anyone, that hate was no part of the motive, and that we are still safe which is probably the biggest joke of all.

### ***Continued from Travis Kevie on p. 7...***

It also gets one thinking about taking back even more space, for our needs, in the here and now. Not waiting for city planners, non-profits, or the police to do it for us. With so much vacant property around — and if threats of jail time from the authorities weren’t stopping us — imagine the types of things that we could be doing. Childcare centers, pool halls, meeting spaces, places to live, and yes...bars! And, with the massive support and interest that’s been thrown Kevie’s way, his jail time was greatly reduced. See what happens when we stand up for each other? Perhaps we need not be so worried, as long as we have each other’s backs. Kevie’s story is a breath of fresh air because we can begin to see that our desire for community, a place to have fun, and a place to come together - is different from that of the police, the property owners, and those in power. And, when we get together and do something about it, a whole new type of being starts to come about.





# Repression in the Valley

**October:** Sacramento police came under fire for the shooting death of a 28-year-old bicyclist. After stopping a man on parole, officers claim that he reached into his waistband for a weapon. They then tasered and shot him three times. After the man died, police discovered that he not in fact armed. According to residents in the area, police brutality is nothing new.

**October:** A series of leaked police emails shone light on continued police brutality in the Modesto area. The first was from a retiring Modesto police sergeant. According to the Modesto Bee:

*Sgt. Craig Plante writes about the “good ol’ days” when veteran police officers taught new recruits the “unwritten rule:” You could beat “anyone who ran from us.” “The bad guys knew it as well as we did,” Plante wrote. “If we chased you, it was coming. . . . You were pummeled, taken to Scenic Hospital, put to the front of the line, patched up and booked.”*

The biggest “B&R event” — when officers would beat and release people — was Modesto’s Graffiti Night festivities, Plante wrote. Police would remove their name tags before doing it, the sergeant said. Plante said he wore another officer’s name tag from 1986 through 1991, the only dates referenced in the e-mail. “You’d start hitting, they’d start running and eventually they’d escape into the crowd,” Plante wrote. “The SWAT (team) had their own ‘Strike Squad.’ . . . They’d pour out and start clubbing people . . . until everyone ran away.”

Modesto Police Chief Mike Harden was quick to dismiss the email, stating that it was ‘probably fake.’ However, soon after Plante’s email was published, another anonymous email came from within the department itself. This latest email, which was signed by several MPD Officers, shows support for Plante’s statements and also states that brutality continues within the MPD. It also states that Chief Harden is well aware of the problems from within the department and does nothing to stop the rampant brutality and corruption. The letter reads:

*“I am a longtime MPD employee and just read the Modesto Bee article regarding Sergeant Plante. Thank you for the courage that you show in defending the right position. The majority of MPD are happy that you disclosed this. Fact is, police brutality is still going on and the solid hardworking police officers have reported this ongoing activity to Captain Balentine and Chief Harden who have done NOTHING about it. These criminal allegations about police brutality on graveyard night shift known as “5B” have gone on for several years. Captain Balentine and Chief Harden have turned their heads the other way.*

*Veteran employees Kelly Rae and Dave Brown, to name only a few, have directly reported police brutality and mistreatment of Modesto Citizens to upper management. These two officers have also confronted Lt. Cloward. Cloward has directed sergeants to leave these guys alone. Lt. Cloward, Captain Balentine and Chief Harden are all K-9 buddies and will protect each other. The*

***“We’re living in some of the worst times and the elites are busy having a cocktail party. It’s time to stop voting, stop believing the politicians and union leaders will bring us change and start to build power in our work places and neighborhoods.”***

*officers committing these acts are James Murphy, Orrin Nelson, Florencio Costales, and Joe Lamantia. All work together and pick on ganger types and helpless citizens. Lamantia just killed a man armed with a spatula.”*

The man of course is Francisco Moran, who was shot by police in September of 2010 (see Modesto Anarcho #15.) While these letters tell us only what readers of this magazine and many throughout the city already know, there can be no doubt from this point on that Modesto police are out of control and are protected from any sort of reprimand by their bosses.

**November:** The family of Craig Prescott released a video showing guards suffocating him inside his cell. In 2009, Craig Prescott was tasered and shot with pepper balls by guards in the Stanislaus County Jail. Prescott was in fact a former guard of the institution, until he came under investigation after being charged with providing tobacco to an inmate. Later, Prescott had a nervous breakdown and was incarcerated. After two days of being in the jail, Prescott was still in mental distress, and that’s when guards came in and began to taser him. According to guards, Prescott was then moved to another cell where he died of a heart condition. But according to friends and family who use the video as evidence, Prescott died from suffocation by guards, which is supported by an autopsy report. A trial is set to take place in Fresno in 2012.

**December:** Newly-elected governor Jerry Brown’s budget simply continues Arnold Schwarzenegger’s assault on poor and working people. According to the *Daily Californian*, Brown’s proposed cuts simply mean more sweeping austerity measures:

*“His plan includes deep cuts to state welfare programs and a total of \$1 billion in funding reductions to the state’s higher education system. The California State University system - which has also experienced severe cuts in recent years - also will sustain a \$500 million cut through*

*Brown’s plan. The plan also includes \$432.5 million in cuts to the state’s community college system while increasing the price-per-unit from \$26 to \$36. “*

According to Joseph Kishore, these cuts go even deeper than those under Arnold:

*“The cuts include: \$1.5 billion from the state’s welfare program; \$1.7 billion from Medi-Cal (the state Medicaid health care program for the poor); \$1 billion from the state university systems; and \$750 million from the Department of Developmental Services, which provides aid to the disabled. Pay for state workers not covered by collective bargaining agreements will be cut by 10 percent, and Brown has made clear that he is targeting the pensions and pay of all state workers. In addition, the governor will seek a referendum vote to keep in place a series of regressive taxes, including sales taxes and a vehicle license fee. Brown’s reference to sacrifices from “every sector of the state” is a fraud, as it is only the poor and working class that will be forced to pay.”*

We’re living in some of the worst times and the elites are busy having a cocktail party. It’s time to stop voting, stop believing that the politicians and union leaders will bring us change, and start to build power in our work places and neighborhoods.

**December:** In mid-December, Modesto police



**Craig Plante released an email detailing MPD’s B&R method of crowd control.**

## Austerity Measures Hit Modesto Junior College

**In February of 2011 word started spreading that MJC was about to become victim of the worst budget cuts in years. While this story is still unfolding, one flier circulating read:**

*MJC will likely take an \$8 Million budget cut this year. President Gaither Loewenstein and his V.P. of Instruction Karen Walters-Dunlap have started implementing austerity measures. These include laying off some of our best faculty members, such as James Todd in the Anthropology department. We are expecting 10-20 faculty to receive pink slips by March 15th. In addition, many of our favorite classes are being cut, and the only departments which seem to be doing ok are English and Math. Finally, tuition will be raised, and may reach as high as \$66 per unit, making an average class cost \$198. Meanwhile, interim Chancellor Joan Smith, was just made permanent and will likely receive a raise of close to \$100,000 dollars in June.*

*Symbolic acts of protest or 'taking the fight to Sacramento' in order to secure more money are pointless. The interests of the administration and the interests shared by faculty and students, are opposed. We must force them to give, or at least, give back, what we want. We must move into actual resistance which imposes our organized power as a material force. This is the only way to gain concessions and to also collectively resist capitalist society. Be aware that some of those that claim to 'be on our side' will shout down the organizing of students and faculty outside of the established channels, such as circulating petitions and holding signs. But it is these established channels that have failed us. This includes the student politicians on campus and the faculty union, which have done nothing to get us out of this situation. Another BBQ or bus ride to Sacramento won't change this reality.*

*We must occupy the college, disrupting the ability of the administration to operate. Students and faculty must strike together, blocking the flow of human labor that keeps the school afloat. Solidarity is our strongest weapon, one that we must direct at our enemies.*

### **Another flier read, in part:**

*Don't think for a second, students, that you are not workers. We work our jobs and then on our school work. We go to college to become workers with careers. Being that we are workers, it is our concern to recognize the fundamental contradiction in capitalism, and this is that capitalism absolutely requires workers to perpetuate and continue the production of capitalism, while at the same time it needs to destroy the workers as individuals and grind us down to mere doers that perform certain tasks in the hopes of a wage.*

**We are watching the situation closely, so be sure to check out the next issue of Modesto Anarcho for a comprehensive analysis.**

shot and killed Jesse Watson of San Jose and critically injured his girlfriend who was a passenger in his car. Watson fled from Modesto's downtown after cops attempted to pull him over because they believed his car "fit the description of a vehicle involved in a suspected break-in at Burnside Body Shop on North Franklin Street." Burnside Body Shop is owned by a member of the City Council. Police then chased Watson for seven miles, after which Watson crashed after being hit by a police car from behind, and then according to police, he backed up toward them. 'Fearing for their lives,' the police opened fire. In doing so, the police not only killed Watson, but also pumped his girlfriend with lead four times, injuring her critically. According to a police insider, "Blue Baton," (who posts on various blogs), police also managed to hit with gun fire a parked police car, as well as a vehicle containing a woman and her young daughter, although they were luckily unharmed. According to the Modesto Bee, Watson's mother "has hired an attorney and plans to file a wrongful death lawsuit." Watson's family describes him as a nice man who simply did "not want to go back to jail."

**December:** In late December, police responding to a house call of a dispute between a couple, ended up leaving a 41 year-old man in critical condition. Brian Reed, a truck driver, was distraught over finances and threatened to kill himself with a small knife. His girlfriend fearing for his safety, called the police. Police then entered the home and told Reed to "Drop the fucking knife!" several times, while Reed kept the knife aimed at his chest. Police then shot Reed several times and he was then placed in critical condition. Reed's girlfriend claims that he never posed a threat to police and kept the knife aimed at his chest the entire time. In the coming months and years, how many more people are going to be distraught just like Reed was over finances? How many of us are on the edge, just hanging on as we deal with bills, being laid off, tickets, court, jail time, fee increases, budget cuts, finding a new job, police shootings, and foreclosure? All this stress and pain is brought on by our position within this system of capitalism. The police aren't there to see us out of it — they're there to make sure we stay in it.

This is why we need to create ways of coming together to attack the crisis brought on by capitalism, of which police violence is only a symptom. We need to start forming groups to organize from at school and at the workplace, and especially in our neighborhoods. Here we can talk, act, and support each other, and hopefully rely on one another more so than we ever could a cop.



# The New Fascism

Commenting on how the German working class movement could have stopped his debased regime from gaining power, Hitler once exclaimed, "Only one thing could have stopped our movement - if our adversaries had understood its principle and from the first day smashed with the utmost brutality the nucleus of our new movement." Today, as capitalism breaks apart, the working class is left with the historical task of organizing itself as a force. Not only against capitalism, but against a radical right-wing that will also attempt to constitute itself as an alternative to the current state of affairs.

Today a new movement in the U.S., commonly known as the "Tea Party," is finding its place in the back rooms of community centers, in the pews during Sunday church service, and the offices of corporate elites and business owners. And, it is time for its adversaries to respond in kind. Fascist movements, however skewed and modernized, are alive and well in present times. It is foolhardy not to take note of their mobilizing, however juvenile it may look to people aware of the issues. The Tea Party Movement is a neo-fascist movement.

The Tea Party movement has metamorphosed into more than an anti-stimulus campaign; it's more than a couple of protests demanding no taxes. It is taking over through culture and technology and it won't be stopped until all the

gains made by the working class have been beaten back into the dustbin of history.

There are several qualities which constitute a fascist movement. They include:

- Fear, a xenophobic hatred of "the other," and/or foreigners
- Hatred of multiculturalism
- Base of support from the middle class, yet also taking from the disillusioned working class
- Adoption of populism
- Use of left-wing slogans and rhetoric for hard-right policies
- Belief that both free-market capitalism and socialism are bad
- Belief in a supreme leader whose word is truth
- Mythology of "better times," and how the present time should emulate the righteous past
- Merging of state and corporate power
- Extreme patriotism and nationalism

Past fascist regimes, as well as current parties throughout Europe have varied traditions and histories, but for the most part, prevailed due to a certain set of persistent conditions including: industrially-advanced economies hard hit by the recession, a discredited Left alternative, dissatis-

faction with an inefficient or corrupt parliamentary system, an end of consensus politics, racism provoked by “job stealing” immigrants, a respectable Right, and nostalgia for a strong state. (Source: Fascism by Stuart Hood)

What has set the Tea Party apart from just your average run-of-the-mill patriarchal, right-wing, racist political party made up of mostly bourgeois exploiters, is that the Tea Party is transformable. It includes an infinite turn-style of participants, where groups are created, formed, and then disbanded within a few months, only to crop up in the next town over whenever a scratch against undocumented workers, social programs, or gay marriage needs to be itched.

However, many people involved in the Tea Party are blatant megalomaniacs, unapologetic for their extremist views. For example: Tom Tancredo, an anti-immigration former representative and speaker at the Tea Party National Convention talking about the “cult of multiculturalism,” and how Obama is a socialist. While equating the current president with socialism has become common place, Tancredo has become one of the most outspoken critics of the administration, stating Obama was elected by “people who could not even spell the word ‘vote’ or say it in English” and that Obama is “...the greatest threat to the United States today, the greatest threat to our liberty, the greatest threat to the Constitution of the United States, the greatest threat to our way of life; everything we believe in. The greatest threat to the country that our founding fathers put together is the man that’s sitting in the White House today.” He has publicly called for impeachment charges against Obama in an editorial for The Washington Times. He is the honorary chairman of the Youth for Western Civilization, a nonprofit far-Right group against multiculturalism that has ties to white supremacist organizations.



But beyond keeping ill company, Tea Partiers are some of the biggest liars and corporate whores around. While claiming to be grassroots, in fact the movement is heavily funded by Koch Industries, one of the world’s biggest energy corporations. This multi-billion dollar company has been working with Republican politicians and far-right activists for the last half century. It is a never-ending supply of corporate-money to throw into the machine of democratic government. Once candidates backed by Koch are in power there will be military, weapons, technology, and manufacturing contracts for the corporation’s loyalty. Its credentials and those of its founders and many of its well-known followers are widely documented by the AFL-CIO in the *New York Times*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and other publications.

Yet most of its “regular folk” followers turn a blind eye to the fuel that created the fire, because acknowledging Koch Industries and other corporations’ cooperation would discredit its stance as being born out of a grassroots anger for the current state of American politics. No one wants to side with corporations, and most Tea Party followers like any wily bitch, will bite the hand that feeds them.



The Tea Party also twists its own projected image of the working class to bolster its stance as an “everyman’s party.” It places “the worker” as an idealized, independent, courageous individual with an explorer’s mentality and family values at its core. It makes the lowly, God-fearing farmer, circa 1785 with his shotgun, wife and seven children its hero. The Tea Party movement encourages stratification between the “hard working, countryside” population, and the “decadent, urban” population, believing the latter will eventually kill itself through its deviant lifestyle.



The Tea Party gathers most of its support from middle America and rural areas, where supporters see the movement as representing “real America,” and those who do not believe are not patriotic or in line with the causes of “freedom,” and “justice.” The movement reaches out to a specific group of people, mostly lower-middle-class working folks who feel disenfranchised, but excludes workers such as undocumented laborers, intellectuals, and anyone who belongs to a minority category not in line with Tea Party values.

The Tea Party is a collection of groups whose membership is made up of anywhere from a few people to a thousand. What keeps these groups weak is that the connections that exist between them are often vague and disorganized. The biggest of these remain at the top, out of focus, funneling money no doubt, but without a direct battle plan.

Extremists such as Tea Partier Rand Paul (R-Ky.) oppose abortion even in cases of incest and rape. It’s going to be an uphill battle to include birth control as preventive care that should be covered under the new health-care bill. And it doesn’t end within the government’s arbitrary borders. According to Jodi Jacobsen, Editor-in-Chief of the Reproductive Health Reality Check website, “We will see almost immediately a range of efforts to focus on restricting reproductive and sexual health and rights. They will try to pass a law codifying a global gag rule, try to reinforce and strengthen abstinence-only until marriage funding in U.S. global AIDS funding.”

A cornerstone of a fascist regime is herding women into traditional roles, as wife and mother, rearing large families and being homemakers, with no voice for family planning and no chance for sexual freedom. After the election The Tea Party movement has been put on the back burner in most traditional media outlets, but it’s still there, slowly simmering, much like its European counterparts, gathering its base of supporters, fine-tuning its dogma, and waiting.

In April of last year, Noam Chomsky was giving a speech on both major U.S. political parties kneeling to the demands of corporations, but digressed to make a fearful prediction about the Tea Party movement. He stated, “I’m just old enough to have heard a number of Hitler’s speeches on the radio, and I have a memory of the texture and the tone of the cheering mobs, and I have the dread sense of the dark clouds of fascism gathering.”

## What to do about Tea baggers in your community:

Tea baggers love to set up shop at community and traditionally “patriotic” events such as regional and county fairs, parades, and local farmers markets. Shut them down, counter-demonstrate, and do not allow them to operate in public.

Many tea baggers make a point of writing daily to their local newspaper just to spew their misguided views on society, many of which get published in the opinion pages; most go unanswered. But go one step further: Create your own media to combat what the tea baggers are saying in your community. Put posters, stickers, and signage in high traffic areas.

Act in solidarity when tea baggers attack the homeless, undocumented workers, or women’s services and abortion clinics. Cross the barriers placed upon the various sections of the exploited by capitalism and build counter-power.

# Fight The Tea Party!



# Broke Rage

*"I am Governor Jerry Brown. My aura smiles and never frowns. Soon I will be president..." - Dead Kennedys*

You can feel it in your chest. It's that anxiety that stays with you from the moment that you wake up and go to work to when you finally pass out and start the day again. It's walking all the way to the library to work on your resume, only to get to the doors and read the sign that says, **"Closed Due to Furloughs."** It's wondering where the children on the street have gone and then remembering that most of the houses on your street are boarded up. Their signs declare: **"Bank Owned."** It's reading in the newspaper that the day care program your daughter goes to is being shut down, seeing the guards at the unemployment office, and the fear you feel when you slip that can of beans into your bag and hope that this time you won't get caught. It's getting your paycheck at work and staring in sadness at the pitiful amount. It's the taste of the tap water that you feel bad about even giving to your dog. It's standing in line at Revenue Recovery on 10th and J Street, as the woman next to you screams at the clerk behind the window, "I lived in that house my entire life! You motherfuckers!"

It's the feeling deep in your stomach, the taste of bile in the back of your throat, and the burning rage that runs down from your face to your balled up fists when you see them, hear them, brush past them at that new, expensive Raley's you run into during your lunch hour to use the bathroom. The politicians, the developers, the businessmen, the upper class; talking through their crooked teeth, in their silken clothes, in all their decadence and superiority

that only a Harvard degree, rich parents, and a job ordering other people around brings. Another law is passed, another park closed, more services cut, and those smug bastards slink back to their mansions in La Loma to prepare for their next campaign race. But these upper middle class managers are only the pencil pushers for those that really control this world. Those that own and control wealth, who rake in massive profits from our labors in the Central Valley, who direct and control politics and its police; although they seem so far away in Sacramento and Washington. Yet, we still feel the violence and poverty of their politics directed against us day in and day out. At night, the sirens wail and your heart pounds; there's got to be more to life than this...

Across the Central Valley, the United States, and across the world - things are getting worse for most people. In the Central Valley, unemployment continues to climb, foreclosures continue unabated, cuts to basic social services raise co-pays, shut down day care centers and clinics, and close library doors. Schools are shut down forever as classrooms grow larger, and in higher education, fees and tuition increases leave many students locked out of universities. Factories are closed, production is outsourced, and many businesses undergo massive layoffs. Police beat and kill without remorse, protected by a blue code of silence and a supportive city government, as the prison population swells. In the jails, prisoners are killed in droves by guards at the losing end of batons and tasers, while on the streets people whisper how the Sheriff's are running the drug trade inside. Immigrants, already facing an onslaught of low wages, pesticides, and poor living conditions, face an ongo-

ing attack from I.C.E., as state governments attempt to pass racist laws and divide the working class. Those in control of the city of Modesto: a collection of business leaders, ex-police, and career politicians, form an upper class that secures and fights for its own interests as they close parks and raise fees at community centers, pass more repressive laws, and protect business interests.

Meanwhile, many turn to drugs to help cope, as our streets are flooded with crime and neighbors become wary of each other. Many do not venture out after dark, as car thefts increase, certain areas become drug dens, and vacant properties become trap houses. At a time when we need to be coming together more than ever, we often couldn't be farther apart. As unemployment rises, the drug economy grows, and gangs and cartels become stronger and fight for control over the drug trade and more territory. For many poor and working class youth, the gangs represent the only viable job option - even as they point only towards open prison gates, death, and the continuous destruction of working class communities and people. Here, it seems only prisons and meth are the growth industries. Everywhere, people are impacted. Everyone is taking a hit. We all know it - but what can we do about it?

## **The Crisis**

The current economic crisis was caused when the speculative housing bubble burst several years ago, sending the economy into a tailspin. As many people began to default on their sub-prime loans (made popular by predatory loan sharks), the house of cards of speculative spending began to crumble. This downturn in the housing market soon began to affect other sectors, as industries related to housing, such as construction, began to be hit as well. Soon, across the board, various industries were laying people off, plants such as Hershey's and NUMMI were shut down, and workers faced cuts to their hours and pay.

Public sector workers such as teachers and government employees faced lay-offs and job cuts, as city and state governments received less tax revenue. Construction workers had fewer things to build as fewer houses were needed and companies were unable to take out loans for development projects. Manufacturing workers faced plant closures and massive layoffs, as companies had less money coming in and sought labor markets where they could pay workers less. Service industry employees faced cuts to hours and scaled back wages, as consumers tightened their belts and spent less. Meanwhile, unions (where they



exist) responded with negotiating the degree in which the capitalists attacked us. Avoiding struggle and confrontation, the unions operated as corporations unto themselves, and mitigated with the bosses which days would be furloughed, how many workers would be laid off, and how much workers pay would be reduced.

Across the board, we watched as we worked harder and were paid less. The price of gas and food rose, and services which were once free, were shut down or grew more expensive. It was workers however, who took the hit in the crisis - as corporations celebrated record profits and CEOs gave themselves record bonuses. One thing became clear: we are paying for this crisis, not them. As the New York Times wrote, "Corporate profits are lighting up boardrooms; it is one of the best years for earnings in a decade. Billions of profits, windfalls in the stock market, a stable banking system [thanks to bailouts from Bush and Obama] — but no jobs."

## **Two Parties, One Attack on Working People**

In the meantime, workers became much more likely to lose their homes due to foreclosure, as many people affected by the fallout of the crash found it harder to make their mortgage payments, even if they had not taken out sub-prime loans. A raising of college tuition by 32% in 2009 (which came after multiple years of similar fee increases) at C.S.U.s and U.C., (which were followed by more increases in 2010), and smaller increases at JCs, locked many working students out of higher education, or pushed others only further into debt. These increases, coupled with cuts to classes, kept many from being able to advance into higher paying jobs or at the least, complete their degrees. Furthermore, cuts to basic social services such as health and child care, left many working people with increased expenses, again, forcing many out of their homes through foreclosure, or at the very least, taking on 2nd and 3rd jobs.



When it came time to vote for Governor, most people in Modesto, and Californians in general, weren't doing something - voting.

Maybe that's because they realized that both parties represent the same thing, the upper class and the interests of business. But, even as the head bureaucrats of unions, upper middle class Leftist organizations, celebrities, and academics begged us to go to the polls and support the Democrats, many simply did not heed the call.

Brown, who won the election, got only about 4 million votes, while Whitman, an ex-C.E.O. who spent millions of her own money, got only 3.1 million. This is out of a station population of 37 million with about 22 million eligible to vote, meaning that only a mere third of the state's voting population pulled a lever for either of the candidates. Youth voter turnout was extremely low, with only about 1 in ten voters hitting the polls on Tuesday being under 30.

As things get worse, Democrats and Republicans are coming into lock step more and more, taking aim at poor and working people with renewed agency. As Tom Carter wrote on the race between Brown and Whitman, the campaign featured *"fierce...competing to [see who could] establish themselves as the best qualified to impose further harsh austerity measures, including mass layoffs and cuts to education, health care, and pensions and other critical social programs."* As Patrick Martin wrote, Republicans and Democrats nationally agree that the workers should pay for the crisis, and not the rich:

*"The calls for spending restraint and "smaller" government apply only to the programs that provide assistance to working people, the sick and the elderly. No Republican congressional leader favors cuts in spending on the military or the gargantuan tax subsidies to Wall Street..."*

The media creates a myth that the "voters," (who apparently in the millions would in fact rather not vote) have become angry at Obama's "socialism," a la big government and big spending. However, most people, especially those who turned out in droves for Obama's election several years ago, were hoping to produce tangible results and an

end to the Bush dynasty; bringing about drastic changes to the American system. These changes many hoped would include universal health care, an end to middle eastern wars, an end to foreclosures, money for jobs, housing, and education, and an end to government surveillance, spying, and attacks on civil liberties. Of course, no major changes occurred.

This is because far from rolling back the changes made by the Bush Administration, the Obama regime has simply continued them. As Carter wrote, *"Workers and young people in California and across the US turned out in record numbers to vote for Obama and the Democratic Party in 2008, hoping for a reversal of the policies of the Bush administration. Instead, these policies were only further entrenched under Obama and the Democrats. The result was mass disaffection."*



People did not swing to the right - they simply woke up to the fact that the Democrats and Republicans do not exist to "fight" for our interests. Millions of people did not vote on November 2nd because they knew that it was pointless to do so. Neither candidate would make the changes needed to help poor and working people, since both candidates have an anti-working class platform.

In an interesting twist, Brown's biggest backers are the unions of workers that he plans to attack, including the large SEIU, (Service Employees International Union). As Kevin Kearney wrote:

*"On pensions, he said he would "raise ages, raise contributions" like Whitman and negotiate with public employee unions to make more desired cuts. Brown has boasted, "When it comes to unions: I'm the only governor who ever vetoed the pay raises for all public employees. I did it once, I did it twice, and I'll do it again." He asserted, "No one is tougher with a buck than I am." Brown's campaign has the backing of most of the major unions, and his strategy is to work with them in imposing cuts. The latest austerity budget negotiated by current governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Democratic Party-controlled legislature includes a pledge of significant cuts in public employee benefits agreed to by [SEIU]."*

*Brown, in contrast [to Whitman], has described his method for imposing austerity as “empowering local governments,” by which he means unloading decision-making on education, health care and welfare spending to cash-strapped local governments, which would relieve the state government of direct accountability. In this sense, he’s made much of his connections with politicians and union bureaucrats as proof he’s best qualified to impose the brutal cuts demanded by the financial elite.”*

And while the union bosses of SEIU are more interested in staying in control of their business (managing the workers in their unions by selling them out to filth like Brown), Brown also states his opposition to public education:

*“When asked if he would roll back the fees for university students that have made the cost of education “astronomical” he said “no.” When asked if he would promise to freeze fees where they are, he gave the same response.”*

While Whitman was known for her support of racist, anti-immigrant legislation like SB-1070 from Arizona, Brown is no friend to the immigrant worker either:

*“On the issue of immigration, Brown boasted of initiating the invasive “Secure Communities” program, which attempts to collect identifying information (fingerprints) for all immigrants in the country and compile it in a database. He said, “If they are found to be here illegally, they get deported.” He also mentioned that, “Workplace inspections are part of the solution.”*

Brown, Obama, and the Democrats offer working people nothing. They offer not a different version of attack on working people that the Republicans propose, but simply a different managed one - one that is in fact more sinister, because it is backed by the major organizations of the Left: the unions and the non-profits which claim to ‘fight for us.’ Thus, we have been left with a choice of the bureaucratic capitalism of Brown on one hand, and the fascist capitalism of Whitman on the other hand. We must take up the banner of class war; of revolutionary action, if we are to better ourselves. It is now time for every workplace to go

on strike. Every school, hospital, unemployment, and food stamps office to be occupied. It is time for every field to be taken over by those that toil under it. It is time to burn the ballot, and leave behind the nightmare that following these leaders has gotten us.

**“Oh, we a gettin’ boss...”**

In partnership with the ongoing cuts, as well as those proposed by Governor Brown, unions are ensuring that these attacks will go into effect and workers will accept them. Chief among these unions is the SEIU, which ‘represents’ many of the workers that will be hurt by such cuts. Mirroring the wedding of political bureaucrats with union bureaucrats in the SEIU, is the leadership of other major unions for teachers, professors, as well as unions in manufacturing. The unions have neither the desire nor ability to launch counter attacks on the ruling class - this is something that can only come from ourselves; self-organized

from bellow. Free from unions. Free from the elections. We can now start to ask ourselves - *what can we do to actually take this monster on?*

### **Towards a Fresh Attack on the Ruling Class**

With the election of Jerry Brown, who came into power masquerading as a ‘friend of the workers,’ or at least, ‘not

Whitman,’ we can see (along with the horror that Obama has brought) the dead end of electoralism. Electoralism is the idea that we can better our lot through elections, and that we can progress towards a better society by electing ‘good’ people to run the government. However, the state exists to keep the economy intact, and to keep the various forces opposed to each other in society; the haves and have nots, from destroying this class divided system. Therefore, electoralism is always a dead end, and only fools us into thinking that we can better our conditions by supporting a new set of leaders from the upper class.

Leaving the dead end of the ballot behind, we can begin to look to where we can attack capitalism. As we look back at the last two years of struggle, the working class in the United States has taken a lot of shit, but we’ve also dished out our share of it as well. Let us learn and take stock of the strikes, riots, and occupations of the past years, and

***The unions have neither the desire nor ability to launch counter attacks on the ruling class - this is something that can only come from ourselves; self-organized from bellow. Free from unions. Free from the elections. We can now start to ask ourselves - what can we do to actually take this monster on?***



see where we can come together, against our enemies, and towards a new future.

### Strike!

Many workers are not interested in taking orders or waiting around for union bosses to tell them when to fight. While in recent months we have seen a growth in strike activity in the US, the most inspiring strike action in the past year has come from the Longshoremen workers in Camdem NJ and Philly. There workers, according to Internationalism:

*“Engaged in an unofficial two-day strike against Del Monte who had moved 200 jobs to a non-union port in Gloucester, NJ which was joined by dockworkers all the way up New Jersey into Brooklyn refusing to cross the informal picket line. Right at the start of the strike, the New York Shipping Association got an injunction from a federal judge in Newark declaring the strike illegal and on the second day of the action, the International Longshoreman’s Association disavowed any association with the strikers, calling on union stewards to send the pickets back to work, and promising that they had convinced shipping associations and industry heads to meet with them a week later to “discuss” the eliminated positions.”*

What makes this action important is that workers decided to go on strike out of solidarity with others workers being cut, and because they saw that the same thing could happen to them. They did not wait for the union to take action for them, and as we saw, the union came down quickly against them, declaring their action as “illegal.” The power of these workers to shut down an economy that threatens us all is clear, as one of them stated, *“We ain’t gonna eat,”* [the worker] said, conceding that he and his brethren stood to lose pay. *“But you ain’t gonna eat either. K-Mart, Wal-Mart, Sears. You name it, it comes through us.”*

While the workers went back to work after several weeks, and union officials are now meeting with industry leaders in regards to hiring back workers who have lost their jobs, we can only hope that these sorts of actions grow larger and spread. This strike helps show a way forward; as workers organize themselves and take power into their own hands, deciding how, when, and where to fight - not taking orders from anyone but themselves, and showing solidarity with others.

**Occupy!** *“Chicago’s a working class town! We’re going to stand together until we win this battle!”*

Another action that began without being called by the union directly, was the occupation of Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago in late 2008. Workers began the occupation, which lasted a total of six days, when they found out that they would be laid off, right before the holiday season. Instead of retreating into the cold and snowy gloom of the city, over 200 workers decided to occupy their factory until Bank of America, the bank in control of the businesses funds, paid them in wages, severance pay, and health coverage. The bank claimed it wouldn’t pay, even though Bank of America - Republic’s main creditor - was in line to receive \$25 billion in taxpayer money, through the recent bailouts. The action became a rallying cry for working class resistance to the recession. The Republic Workers, after six days, won their demands and got their money back - while inspiring a whole new generation of working class militants to take action. The working class of Chicago and around the country also sent messages of solidarity, food, and much need funds to the workers - generating massive support for the occupation.

In September of 2009, less than a year after the occupation of Republic, students and staff at UC Santa Cruz launched another occupation that would take the world by



surprise. Students at the school took control over the graduate commons building, holding it for close to a week. In a statement released, the students declared:

*We must face the fact that the time for pointless negotiations is over. Appeals to the UC administration and Sacramento are futile; instead, we appeal to each other, to the people with whom we are struggling, and not to those whom we struggle against. A single day of action at the university is not enough because we cannot afford to return to business as usual. We seek to form a unified movement with the people of California. Time and again, factional demands are turned against us by our leaders and used to divide social workers against teachers, nurses against students, librarians against park rangers, in a competition for resources they tell us are increasingly scarce. This crisis is general, and the revolt must be generalized. Escalation is absolutely necessary. We have no other option.*

*Occupation is a tactic for escalating struggles, a tactic recently used at the Chicago Windows and Doors factory and at the New School in New York City. It can happen throughout California too. As undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and staff, we call on everyone at the UC to support this occupation by continuing the walkouts and strikes into tomorrow, the next day, and for the indefinite future. We call on the people of California to occupy and escalate.*

In the months that followed, schools across California erupted against the budget cuts and fee hikes. As student fees climbed 32% at both the UC's and CSU's, students walked out, occupied buildings, and fought with police on the barricades. Students fought not only against cut classes and higher fees, but also against cuts to staff hours and lay offs. More than anything, the occupations radicalized many young people, as it woke them up not only to the realities

***“In short, create not an ‘alternative’ that can easily make its fit within the existent, but rather a commune in which power is built to destroy capitalist society. When faced with a university building, the choices are limited; either convert it to ashes or begin the immediate materialization of the international soviet.”***



of modern capitalism, but also to the liberatory nature of resistance to it. Many non-students entered the movement, stating that the occupation of the universities could become a staging ground where the working class could build counter power and attack capitalism.

As one essay read: *“Renew the strikes and extend their reach. Occupy the student stores and loot them. Sell off the computers in the lab to raise funds. Set up social spaces for students and non-students alike to come in and use freely. Appropriate the copy machines and make news of the revolt. Takeover the cafeterias and bars and begin preparing the communal feast. Burn the debt records and the construction plans. Chisel away the statues and vandalize the pictures of the old order. In short, create not an ‘alternative’ that can easily make its fit within the existent, but rather a commune in which power is built to destroy capitalist society. When faced with a university building, the choices are limited; either convert it to ashes or begin the immediate materialization of the international soviet.”*

Another occupation that showed the strength of collective action, was the occupation of the foreclosed office/home of the Central Valley Miwok Tribe in Stockton California. Stockton, like Modesto, is a city that is in the center of the foreclosure housing crisis. When the tribe was denied monies owed to them by the state through Indian gambling and their home was foreclosed, tribal members decide to occupy their residence in order to force the bank to call off the eviction. While the tribe was able to hold off the eviction for several months, the bank again decided to proceed with the eviction in early 2010. The tribe issued a call for support and close to 40 people helped to occupy the building. The gates in front of the home were welded shut and people got ready for anything. Within a day, the bank had called off the eviction. Groups such as Take Back the Land and Homes

Not Jails have also used occupations of land and housing to house the homeless, resist foreclosure, and take over unused space owned by the government.

While it may seem that occupations at work, at schools, and of foreclosed homes are isolated and separate from each other, they are all done to combat the attack of the capitalist class against the working class. These occupations were important, because they help people to gain confidence and win victories, and also show people that success can come to those that were willing to get organized and stand in solidarity with each other. Furthermore, occupations provide spaces where people in various areas can see what creative and combative resistance against capitalism, can, and does, look like.

### Takeover!

In the past two years, class struggle has not been limited just to strikes on the job, or occupations of homes, workplaces, and schools. There have also been inspiring struggles taking place in our communities as well. The three that we would like to focus on here however, are the working class self-defense organizations that have developed out of the efforts of the Seattle Solidarity Network, the movement that has grown in and around the rebellions against the police murder of Oscar Grant in Oakland, California in 2009, and also the struggle against racist anti-immigrant legislation in Arizona.

The Seattle Solidarity Network (SeaSol), is based on basic principles of working class solidarity. The idea is, when someone is swindled out of money at work, when their landlord refuses repairs or takes their deposit, or when someone is fired unjustly, SeaSol goes into action. The action happens when a large group of people comes together and pickets, demonstrates, and raises hell at bosses and landlords workplaces, property, or their homes. As more and more people come into the group and are involved in victories and struggles, they also become part of the group, showing solidarity with other working people when they are attacked. The group then grows bigger, and the network more powerful. Such groups are taking off across the West

Coast, and in Santa Cruz, the recently formed Santa Cruz Solidarity Network recently won it's first battle! These kinds of networks are inspiring, because they show the power that an organized and united working class can have in any city, when we start to direct our rage against the bosses and the rich.

The riots and rebellions by the Oakland (and wider bay area) working class also show the strength of a combative people, unwilling to sit by while the police continue to slaughter us in the streets. When Oscar Grant, a young father and union grocery store worker was shot at Fruitvale Bart on New Years Day in 2009, his murder kicked off a movement against police brutality that caused the first major uprising in the Obama era. In July of 2010, after Grant's killer was found guilty only of involuntary manslaughter, people rampaged through downtown Oakland. Rioters of all colors fought with police, looted stores, and destroyed the property of banks and other large corporations.



**Money returned from a landlord after a Santa Cruz Solidarity action.**

The intensity of the riots flew in the face of ongoing calls by the Left for “non-violence” that placed blame on “white anarchists” for the rage, even though the crowd featured white, black, yellow, and brown youth all coming together to fight the police and loot the property of the rich. Beyond rioting, the uprisings also created forums and new organizations for people to

come together to tackle police brutality in new and better organized ways. People across the globe and the country were inspired to get organized and fight the police due to the Grant case; further radicalizing a new generation of working class militants.

Lastly, in Phoenix, the working class there was attacked by a set of laws called SB 1070, which would give police the ability to stop people and demand that they provide proof that they are American citizens. This law in effect would give the police extreme powers in racially profiling people and would mean the deportation and incarceration of millions. According to a recent study, up to 100,000 Latino people have already left Arizona, in fear of the passing of SB 1070. The bill itself is driven in part by white supremacist politics and prison industrialists that stand to make millions off of the incarceration of millions of migrants — locked

up, and soon to be deported. The law eventually had much of the legislation taken out of it, in part due to disruptive protests, lockdowns, street blockades, student walkouts, and massive marches. The movement against attacks on immigrants and the entire working class in Arizona is ongoing - but is important because it represents a struggle against the racialization of capitalist oppression within the working class. Recently in Arizona, anarchists, youths, and pro-immigrant forces rioted for over an hour against police and Neo-Nazis, who were attempting to hold a rally in support of SB-1070 in Phoenix. The intensity of the street fighting shows an escalation of tactics within the proletariat in Arizona, and shows how people within the struggles there are coming together, gaining confidence, and getting stronger.

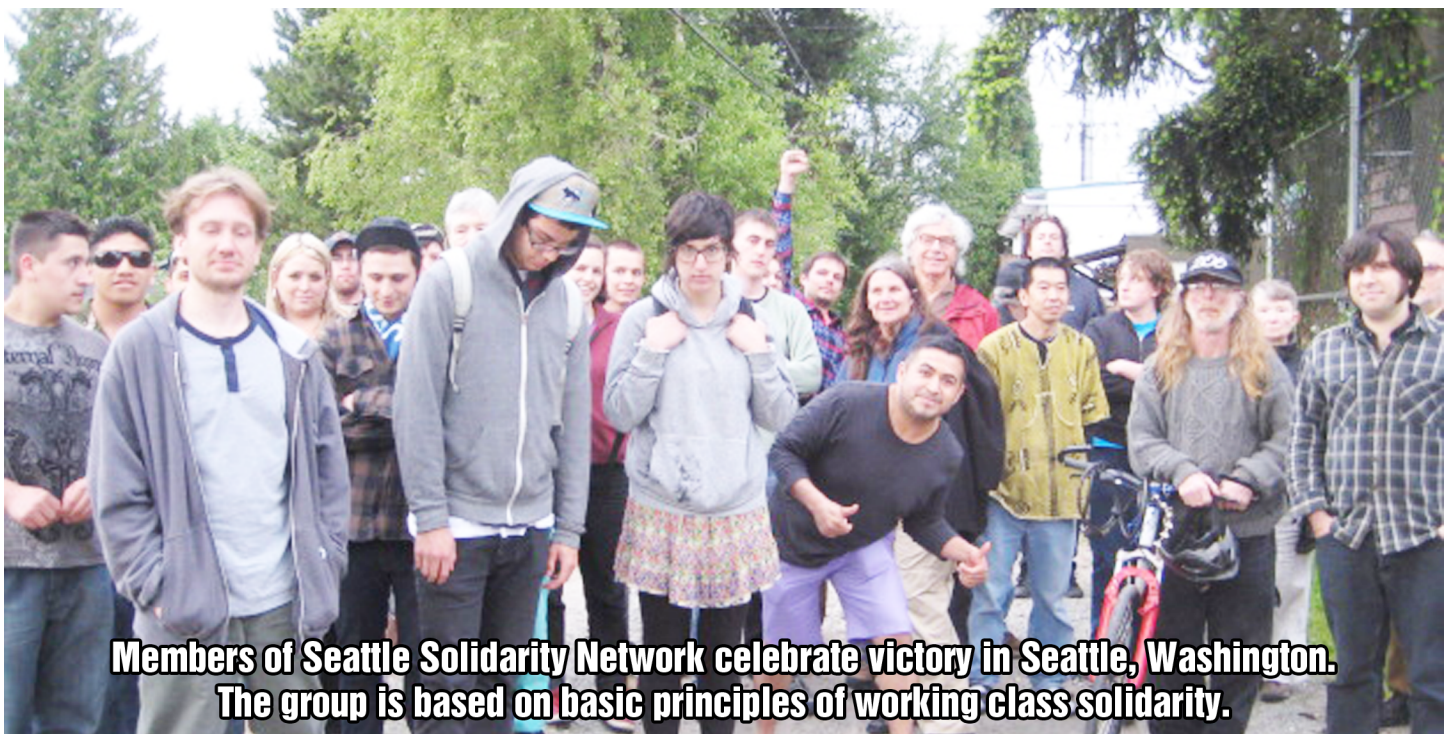
### **We're All In this Together**

These actions should just be the start. What if more workers facing layoffs occupied their buildings? What if high school kids threatened with school closures and bigger classroom sizes occupied their schools along with the college kids? What if unemployed workers started organizing mass lootings of Wal-Marts and Save-Marts when the checks stopped coming? What if field workers occupied their fields and declared them free communes? What if doctors and nurses occupied the hospitals and declared free health care for all? What if workers saw through the empty rhetoric of all the unions and launched general strikes across all industries? What if every neighborhood refused to let the police evict anyone and simply stopped paying rent?

What if everyone fed up with the police simply drove them out and dealt with problems themselves?

We aren't in this alone. There are millions of working people across the world already involved in the fight. Students in the UK call to us from the tops of smashed up police cars. Campesinos in Chiapas cry out to us with guns in hand. Immigrants in Greece salute us while throwing molotovs during running battles with the police. Factory workers in South Korea give us raised-fist salutes while in the middle of an occupation. It is time for us to create the world that fits our needs and desires - and not continue one second further one that exploits and makes us miserable. We are the crisis now, for we are the ones that can destroy capitalism once and for all. Let the world know...

**THE PROLETARIAT IS SOMETHING THAT THE RICH CAN ONLY KNOW THROUGH FEAR; THAT THE MIDDLE CLASS CAN ONLY SEEK TO MANAGE; THAT THE WORKING CLASS CAN ONLY BECOME THROUGH LOVE AND REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE.**



**Members of Seattle Solidarity Network celebrate victory in Seattle, Washington. The group is based on basic principles of working class solidarity.**



# Looking Towards Wisconsin

## An interview with a participant from Milwaukee

*What follows is an interview with a comrade from Milwaukee, Wisconsin on the recent events in the state's Capitol, Madison, only a few hours away. For more information on what is happening in Wisconsin, check out their blog at [burntbookmobile.wordpress.com](http://burntbookmobile.wordpress.com). Class war, don't cha know? Let's get to it.*

### **MA: What is the situation in Madison right now?**

I've only been in Madison during one of the days since the occupation and demonstrations started. I've known people who have spent many days there, who have slept in the Capitol building, and who have been going back and forth between Milwaukee and Madison regularly. People are constantly talking about the situation, so I have an idea that is generally up to date, but there is often a bit of a delay. At other times I'm hearing about things as they happen through friends, because word travels much faster than the reporting often does.

I can describe what my experience was there briefly on that day. I went on the first Saturday, the day when the Tea Party of Wisconsin had also called for protests to counter the occupation and protests taking place. About a couple thousand Tea Party protesters showed up, but they were dwarfed and drowned out by the fifty to one hundred thousand people who wandered through the streets, marched, inadvertently blocking traffic and rerouting it across the city, and took up most of the floor space inside the Capitol building. They were mostly ignored and made irrelevant,

huddled into a corner of the back steps and yard on one side of the Capitol. I had expected the presence of the Tea Party to provoke and heighten tensions between the two sides, but not much happened in response.

Inside the Capitol building people had been hanging posters and signs on everything. As would be expected, there were chants and crowds of people banging on things. When hearing "This is what democracy looks like" chanted I'm usually horribly ashamed to be present, driven almost to the point of nausea, but this atmosphere sent a shiver down my spine. Despite the form of expression this took, I had the feeling that its real content was hidden, but still exposed through the collective force of the activity of these people. It expressed a feeling of being together as thousands of people who couldn't be fucked with, even if the parameters to express this were and are mostly pathetic at this point. It demonstrated that it is our activity that defines us. Otherwise, the contradiction of a movement that is both for and against democracy cannot be explained, as it physically prevents the democratic process. Democracy mitigates and disguises force relations by reducing them to a process and mere matters of opinion. It is the neutralization of force and thus of the conflict that is necessary for the elaboration of a politics, for one to take sides and act. We don't care what as much what people chant, but as long as they increasingly define their position they will increasingly come into an internal contradiction with democratic logic.

What was going on in these spaces had been going on for days and had therefore assumed a kind of routine



or culture. So after witnessing it there wasn't much to do except to wander, meet and talk, eat food, hang out and occupy the space of the city along with the other thousands of people there.

As for what is going on currently in Madison, I've heard that Saturday the 26th has been one of the largest days of the demonstrations in terms of numbers. Though I haven't heard much about the situation on that specific day. There have been rumors and talk of eviction since this all happened, but the police Chief of Madison made an official statement that probably came as an order to be distributed from the Governor, declaring that the Capitol building was to be "cleared" for cleaning, which meant forcefully evicted if need be. A day after this announcement the police union made a statement to the media and gathered crowds saying that they stand with those occupying the Capitol and protesters, not with Scott Walker or his proposed legislation, that they would not be part of any eviction of these people, and that they would in fact be joining them in sleeping on the floors of the Capitol. This is all very weird. It no doubt allows certain illusions to persist, but it won't last long. It had seemed like the moment when lines would be more clearly drawn was fast approaching, making clear connections between this particular event, the inherent play of forces necessary to maintain everyday life and the function of the police, as a force of dispossession. We will not be surprised when the police are forced to act in order to attempt to maintain their role as the ones who make the threats.

On Saturday, word spread in various ways that the Capitol was going to be closed Sunday by 4pm and that everyone was going to have to leave. A couple hundred decided to leave to avoid risking arrest, but many hundreds more gathered and were determined to hold the space with the possibility of being arrested. Against the prospect of having to arrest hundreds of people in the Capitol, which

would have been a bad move in the eyes of many thousands who had come to the Capitol in the preceding days, the police decided that they weren't going to arrest anyone. They encouraged people to leave voluntarily and that they would assess the situation "day by day." This all meant that as long as people stayed that the occupation would continue. It's still continuing now.

***MA: Can you talk about what were some of the first events to happen? The sick outs for instance?***

I first heard about the events in Madison sitting in a computer lab, when none of this seemed like it would last more than a day and it lacked a real quality for many people here. Earlier in the day there had been a relatively minor protest organized by teachers assistants, teachers and others. Nothing was surprising or out of the ordinary. Not until later in the week, when a walk out was called and three thousand people responded, did the unreality of the situation start to appear as if it wasn't going to so easily fade back to normal. After this there was always talk and rumors circulating. There was a giddiness that was held in common by people never expected to share anything. People, who before were just members of the crowd passing between work, class and their homes, suddenly had a vibrancy to them. Invisible dots that connected us became more visible.

I know a few who are teachers for MPS (Milwaukee Public Schools) and a number of graduate students who are TAs at the UW-Milwaukee campus. I don't have a very exact knowledge of all of the districts and specific schools that were shut down by the sick outs. All Madison public schools were shut down for at least four days. Then followed Racine, Milwaukee and a number of others I'm not as familiar with. Thousands have participated in the sick outs. Some of TAs and teachers have not shown up to a single class since the sick out started to teach, despite threats from





the administration. Many of the public school teachers have gone back to work, feeling some obligation to their students and because it seemed that there was less purpose in sustaining the sick outs. It appears as very likely that they will be employed strategically, correlative to certain days: like a general strike, the day when the contracts for many public employee unions expire, or other possible events.

**MA: What is the extent of the student walk outs? The occupations?**

Accompanying the sick outs there have also been widespread and random walkouts, by high school students. They have been incredibly self-directed. We've heard about them taking place anywhere from any of the rural Wisconsin towns, Schools surrounding Madison, and a number of urban Milwaukee schools. The numbers and magnitude of this activity was severely under-reported and communicated, so we have a hard time knowing what exactly went on. We had randomly crossed paths with one group of about two hundred to three hundred kids who had walked out of a school called Rufus King, who just happened to be meandering through the UW-Milwaukee campus during the walkout which was happening there. They joined the occupation of Bolton Hall on campus to show support temporarily, but seemed less interested in assemblies or discussion. They wanted to be angry and how they expressed this was to walk for miles around the city, chanting, yelling and being unruly. No activity we have seen thus far has contained as much energy as these kids.

The occupations outside of the Capitol have been so far pretty minor. Though many students have been a consistent presence in Madison and many have been staying overnight, sleeping on the floor of the Capitol building, and taking part in meetings and discussions happening there. There was the GOP office in Madison which was occupied by members of a disability rights group called ADAPT, who it was rumored to have been joined at least temporarily by steel workers. There is a lot of talk about occupation, and much is expected to coincide or respond to the release of the new budget that happens on the 1st of March, this upcoming student day of action on the 2nd of March, and when the bill passes.

**MA: If a general strike does break out, what do you think will happen?**

A lot of people barely know what a general strike means in the US. We don't know what it means for an entire city to be shut down outside of a snow storm in Wisconsin. Perhaps there will be a snow storm and city workers will refuse to plow it. Most likely not. Union officials are quoted to have said in their endorsement of the general strike that emergency services would not be effected. Everything else run by public and potentially private industries as well will halt. One would assume that there would be marches and many people in the streets, with workplaces suddenly emptied of all their bodies, but it's unclear what exactly these bodies will do suddenly freed and functioning less properly. With the strike being contingent upon when the bill passes and the bill passing being indefinitely delayed, it's hard to tell or foresee an increase or lack of momentum that would change the effect of the strike.



Many people in general are planning. They don't want to sit and wait for the bill to pass to determine their activity. Meanwhile the rank and file of unions are being educated as to the what and how of a general strike. It's hard to fathom what this will look like without being heavily based on the image of how it has happened in the past. In this

case, the past is innovative in responding to the nothing we're so familiar with, but this only goes so far. The situation must be open to more creative and critical approaches in order to respond to the specific modes of production and reproduction of capitalism in Wisconsin currently, so as to fulfill the general strikes threat of a force that refuses to function, making everything stop. I don't expect creative or critical approaches to this, but I have been surprised many times already in the past number of weeks.

**MA: To what extent has the spirit of the Egyptian uprising been an impact on the demonstrators?**

To the degree that some of the people involved have paid some attention to the events in Egypt and found them inspiring, this has contributed some amount of a feeling of a greater possibility here. It is doubtful that it a very large

influence. There are many people who identify within leftist and radical discourses, who would have followed what was and is going on in Egypt, but the majority are normal ass people from Wisconsin who most likely learn about events from standard television news and other “mainstream” media. As someone who doesn’t pay much attention to either I may be wrong.

***MA: What are some of the limits of what is happening in Wisconsin? To what degree are the unions and the Democrats in control of the situation?***

The situation is permeated with limits. It would seem that any potential rupture or large scale manifestation of people reacting to crisis, and thereby being the crisis, will manifest likely at first as a movement for the return to normal. It will be trapped mostly within the apparatuses and discourses which contain them, but also necessarily exceeding them through activity. There are obvious identifiable limits. There are the unions themselves, which in their structure play a role in preventing and containing the self-directed activity of those who work. There are dominant discourses for what constitutes politics or contestation, which prevent and contain how resisting or being in conflict can be thought and acted out. There is the whole of our present conditions which employ and condition the worker that must be struggled against. It is vague but true to say that the alienated being, the kind that exists as a person living in Wisconsin, must fight everything. But this does not mean that there is no specificity to the struggle here. At this point of just barely being started, the struggle is though mostly unacknowledged, in reality against everything that maintains the normal progressive development of Capital. The anti-austerity struggle here must determine barriers by conflicting with its conditions - by creating a language, culture and practice of a shared struggle.

It appears as quite clear that the unions and Democrats are acting as a response to a popular rage and collective force that necessitates they act in a way which maintains degrees of legitimacy. That these mere representations and structures lack the potency which corresponds to the actual abnormal activity of people here is not to say that they have no influence over the situation. They channel this rage into established politics, organization, identity, discourses which all inherently impotently respond to the situation specifically because they are and produce the dead end which we inhabit, this ever increasing lack of control over our lives.

***MA: Have you heard or come across many people who are getting annoyed at the control the Left is placing on the events?***

I’m surrounded by those who are always more than annoyed by the Left. I have not been in close proximity to the organization of the occupation in the Capitol, how marches are organized, etc. The presence of the Left is something that one is always alienated from. There is this feeling of being a member of mass to produce an image of power for ends other than yourself or your interests. There is a constant setting of the stage, the defining of what are acceptable terms, modes of conduct, the aestheticization of the event is often influenced most easily by those who can supply everyone with the same sign, with the same t-shirt, who take and make the image have a role of defining the event. But outside of this there is much self-directed and creative activity that contradicts these tendencies, and which will eventually come ever further into conflict with them.

We understand that activity itself has the ability to dissolve some of these subjective barriers and allows for people to be more than a member of a certain union for that certain union, a worker for work, a man for men, a student for school, etc. We can hope that this event to whatever degree creates a further crisis of subjectivity - that glimpses the abolishment of even more than the class, but the entire conditions and conditioning of the worker.

***MA: Have revolutionaries been able to intervene or expand the revolt in any way?***

It’s at too much of an early and experimental stage to assess the effectiveness of our activity. People with much wider aims and intentions are participating in these events and they’ve been thrown into a fever pace in order to catch up, but it is perhaps not the best idea to go into much detail about specifics. Posters are made and widely distributed. Texts are written that analyze the situation, attempting to clear away as many inhibitions as possible with critique. But most of all, in these moments it is not words but actions which have and which will change everything, and which corresponds to a way of being in the world that we could call communism or anarchy.

***MA: Any last thoughts?***

Look to Wisconsin and see yourselves. Make it spread. Prepare for and create crisis.



# Why is Downtown Dead?

## Homeless, Development, and Resistance

In the early 2000's, the place for young people to be was one place: Downtown Modesto. The closed off street of 10th and J was not only a home for City Hall, but also the movie theater, upscale restaurants, coffee shops, and fast food places. For many of the pre and post-high school age kids that gathered in the area however, the reason to be downtown was not to buy anything. They came downtown to hang out, meet new people, and be with friends. While many saw this as a chance to be around other youth, the downtown also was a well lit, relatively safe place that was also used by a fair amount of adults. It was a regular sight to see parents dropping kids off in mini-vans, knowing that they might be safer there than at a house party. The kids could have been home in front of television, doing drugs and drinking, but instead they were in an open area filled with hundreds of different youth from different neighborhoods, races, and towns. In only a matter of years, this would all be gone.

Go into the Downtown now, and you'll find a very different scene. Instead of young kids, you instead encounter largely young adults, mostly going to clubs and bars. Police have a much larger presence in the area than they did years before; they have a substation, surveillance cameras are everywhere, and police also block off and barricade the streets around 10th and J Street, stopping traffic. But if you aren't interested or because of your age can't go to a club or a bar, there's really nothing for you to do on a Friday or Saturday night. There are hardly any people other than the ones walking to a club or bar. There are certainly not very many young people, especially high school age, left in the downtown. How did an area of the city that was used by large amounts of young people become so dead? Where once public space served as a place for people to gather, laugh, and talk is now completely devoid of any public life.

### Not Just a Mob, But a Mob That Doesn't Pay

10th and J Street was a developers dream. It featured a mix of government, retail, shopping, and restaurant property. City workers on their lunch breaks could buy burritos and get a coffee at Starbucks. Those looking for fine dining could check out the Gallo owned Gallo's restaurant, Dews, wine bars, and a host of other upscale eateries. One could take in a film at either the State or Brendan. The nearby Double Tree Hotel also kept the area awash in groups of convention goers, prom attendees, and a host of other possible customers.

There was just one problem. The open area of the downtown itself and its central location also created a convergence point for much of the city's youth. Once kids learned that they could come downtown, meet other young people, smooze with potential dates, and learn about after-hours parties, 10th and J Street became the place to go on the weekends. Soon, upper middle class restaurant goers were having to rub elbows with grubby punk rockers, hip hop kids in tall tees, and metal heads playing yet another version of 'Enter Sandman' on acoustic guitar. What's worse is that the majority of these kids didn't pay for anything! They weren't there to buy, they were there to hang out, and in doing so used the bathrooms of most of the businesses, put up stickers and graffiti in the area, and provided a nuisance to the 'business community.'

But who would act as a force of protection from the rabble for the business owners in the downtown? Who else, but the police? Soon, by the mid-2000's, police were doing sweeps of the downtown, ticketing young kids for smoking and 'loitering,' and when they could, 'enforcing' curfew laws. This was an attempt by the City Government to

respond and cater to the interests of the business owners in the downtown, and also the associations of developers and business interests that were situated inside local government. For them, the community and atmosphere of fun that had been created around the downtown scene was problematic: these kids were taking up space downtown and simply not buying anything. The police, forever at the beckon call of the city and government interests, were quick to use a slew of "quality of life" measures to try and drive the kids out of the area. They could cite them for being out past hours or simply for loitering. With this harassment, they could push back against the kids. The developers dream came with a price; its desire to bring people out to shop had also brought them out to simply hang out. And while the rich used the police against the youth, the kids still had some cards to play.

### **If the Kids, Are United...**

Kids in the downtown faced a serious challenge. The place that they all used to come together and hang out was being threatened from police harassment. Some young people responded at the time by organizing a Copwatch group, which monitored the police and video taped them during interactions with people in the downtown. In this way, kids tried to create a buffer zone between themselves and the police. It also gave them another tool against harassment. While this caused the police to back off sometimes, in other situations, police issued tickets and turned on the Copwatchers, trying to drive them out of the area. Other times, police simply attempted to interfere with their recording, stepping in front of cameras.

In one instance, a police officer told a young Copwatcher that, "If they weren't there to buy, they had to leave." The mission of the police and their relationship to the youth downtown was very clear: they were there to make things safe for capital and not people.

Anarchists in the downtown also worked within this tension against the police and helped organize weekend "Anarchist Cafes." These cafes featured live music, free food, free literature, films/movies, and in general tried to create a fun and open environment for young people. The cafes were often harassed by the police, who attempted to get the young people to pack up their stuff and leave the area. They also attempted to get store owners who the youth were out in front of to complain so they could be kicked out of the downtown. Sadly for the police, this didn't work, and the cafe' space stayed, adding to the push against police

evicting and harassing the youth.

### **The Downtown Explodes**

But while the crowds of downtown youth presented a problem to the business interests in the area and thus drew the wrath of the police - the bringing together of so many people in the area also represented a possible point where people could explode into larger rebellion. In 2006, police attacked young people coming out of DJ event for high school age students in the downtown as they were looking for a robbery suspect. Police arrested, beat, and tasered several young people, who according to the police, fought back. Video of the event was recorded, but never released to the public. All charges against those arrested were later dropped, and the police did back flips trying to blame the brutality on the fact that the event was a 'hyphy' music concert. Hyphy, they argued, was a form of black music from Oakland, which involved outrageous dancing and car side-shows which often ended in fights against the police. Thus, their attack was warranted because of the threat the genre played to the good citizens of Modesto. Of course, this is all laughable, and was just the police's attempt to use racism to justify their attack. However, with the 'Hyphy Riot,' the point had been made: people could fight back against the police in the downtown.

In 2008, people coming out of bars on St. Patrick's Day fought back against the police trying to move them out of the area. Over a 1,500 people fought the police, threw bottles, and chanted "Fuck the Police!" More than 100 police from various agencies had to be called out to the area to quell the riot. Political demonstrations also were a continuing headache for police in the downtown. For instance, in 2005, over 100 protesters against Bush marched when he went into office for a 2nd term, taking the street and shutting down traffic. Police attempted to arrest several marchers and drove the people out of the streets. The amount of people simply in the streets during the weekend made the act of harassing various people problematic for the cops. Whenever they attempted to arrest, harass, or move along a group of people, they feared a possible riot.

### **The Rich Respond**

The combination of a bunch of youths in the downtown who were more interested in hanging out than buying things and the periodic eruptions of people taking to the streets and fighting the police drove many of the elites in City Government to come up with solutions to the

problem. Those within the City's Citizens Redevelopment Advisory Commission and Board of Zoning Adjustment in their five year plan of Re-Developing the downtown pointed out several measures that have helped to end many of the problems that the police and elites ran into in the early and mid 2000's. First, a police sub-station was placed in the downtown area, which helped in driving away kids from the downtown. Police were even quoted in the Modesto Bee as stating that the goal of the sub-station was to drive many of the youth away from the downtown. And, for now it seems to have worked. Furthermore, the groups representing developers have helped to put in a system of real time surveillance cameras. These cameras help give the police greater control over downtown and also make it harder for groups of people to amass without the police knowing about it. Lastly, the police have developed a system of blocking cars around 10th and J Street which gives them greater control over traffic in the area and the movement of crowds. Again these are all measures laid out in the downtown re-development plan, which you can read on our blog at: [www.modestonanarcho.org](http://www.modestonanarcho.org).

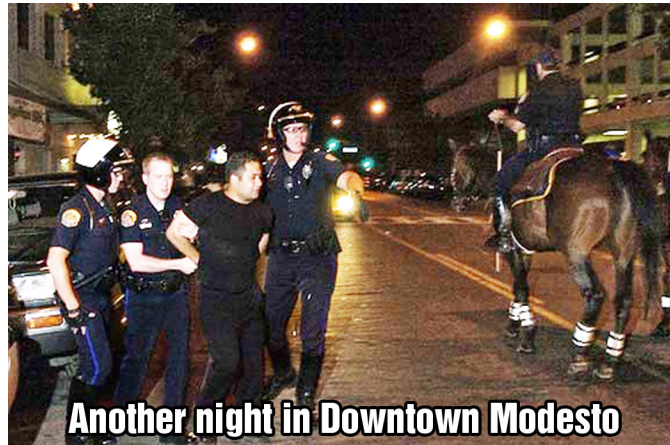
All of these efforts have resulted in youth leaving the downtown in droves while the area has become more of a hangout for those going to bars and clubs on the weekend. But in doing so, those that direct and control the police forces which are responsible for killing the downtown youth scene have also made the area once again more comfortable for businesses. Also, the ability of large crowds to gather in the downtown, (outside of large events such as X-Fest which are highly policed), and then rioting or holding a rawkus demonstration - is nil. In July of 2009, when a fight broke out at the Downtown Fat Cat night club, we can see all of these parts of the puzzle coming together, as police responded to the fight which had spilled into the street in full riot gear, pushing and roughing up many within the crowd. Here the police were quick to show the extent to which they would respond to any small disruption of social order.

### **Clearing Out the Homeless**

Those that have drafted plans to remove the downtown of youth also have similar plans for homeless throughout the downtown. For instance, Vice Mayor Brad Hawn

who helped write the 5-year downtown development plan is also a part of the Safety and Communities Committee, which helped push for the closing down of Paperboy Park. The Committee also includes Joe Muratore, the City Council rep for District 4, who also was is involved in the La Loma Association, an anti-homeless homeowners association that has pushed various anti-homeless initiatives in the city. The La Loma Association called for harsher criminalization of the homeless, surveillance cameras in public parks, the criminalization of dumpster diving, and many other measures aimed at street people. Muratore, a Harvard grad, is also a businessman with developer ties and many connections in Real Estate. As we wrote in Modesto Anarcho #15, those from within the Committee spear-headed a push to close the park after business owners complained that homeless people were using the park to much (IE, sleeping in it and resting there). The City then responded by shutting down the park, only allowing the public access to it from 11am - 1pm, or if a person paid a fee. This is Modesto,

where business interests direct government and the rest of us pay the price.



Now, Muratore is starting up a "Blue Ribbon Homeless Commission" in order to 'tackle' the problem of homelessness. The committee, according to the Modesto Bee, will be made up of a "seven-member commission... of representatives from service, business and neighborhood or-

ganizations." These of course, are the same people Muratore is already apart of or is a member to! Neighborhood organizations such as the La Loma Association want the homeless gone because they threaten property values and scare upper middle class members of their organization. Business organizations want them gone because the homeless scare away investor capital to the area. 'Service' organizations such as the Gospel Mission or various churches are more interested in 'saving the souls' of homeless than they are of stopping people being on the street. Nor are the churches going to kick up much of a fuss when people start to attack them. And of course, none of these people on the committee will be homeless themselves, nor will any of them have any desire to tackle the problems that cause homelessness in the Central Valley: poverty, foreclosure, unemployment, drug addiction, etc. They will however, have an interest in removing homeless people from the Downtown and continuing to make things safe for business.

Muratore has stated numerous times that his goal is to 'consolidate' homeless services and get them out of public parks, i.e. out of the downtown. To many people this will seem reasonable. The problem is that Muratore's drive to do so is not caused by a love for the homeless - it's part of a push to develop and gentrify the downtown and remove undesirable elements from it. Such actions will also do nothing to end homelessness, which in the current crisis is only going to be on the rise, and instead simply remove the 'problem' from the area via harassment and force. For instance, senior citizen residents living in the high rise near five points have already been complaining about the homeless that hang out in the park outside of their apartments. When did these people arrive on their doorsteps? Around the same time that Paperboy Park was shut down. Muratore doesn't want to help anyone but those within government and the business community. And, in a time when so many of us are literally one pay check or one eviction notice away from homelessness, are we really going to let rich big-wings like Muratore practice 'business as usual?'

In the end, the 'bourgeoisification' of the downtown ultimately means not only gentrification, but - boredom. It means not having people to talk to other than over something that you paid for, watching a film where you are silent, at a city council meeting where people speak to you or for you, or to another worker who is on the clock. It does not mean meeting people randomly in the street, hearing music being played for the hell of it, picking up underground literature like Modesto Anarcho and meeting the people behind it, or simply kicking back with your friends outside without paying a goddamn dime.

The reason for all of this; the police, the redevelopment plans, pushing people out of parks...of course is simply to make money. By 'cleaning' the downtown of the elements such as youth, the homeless, etc, neighborhood associations like La Loma can stay prestigious and attract new renters and keep their old ones. Businesses in the downtown will not feel threatened and capital looking to invest will not be scared away. City Governments looking to make money off of property and sales tax can be assured that their coffers will be filled. Police also, looking to 'keep the peace' by keeping the rabble off the grass also can find job security as repression becomes a boom industry.

The people that lose at first are those that are the targets of repression. The youth kicked out of a place to hang out. Homeless people moved out of park. But moreo-

ver, those that lose out are all those who are denied access to the places where we can come together and talk, hang out, and organize from.

There are several things to take away from the last decade of life in the downtown. The first is that the police are not neutral. They serve and work for the business and political interests that run this city. Remember the police officer that said, "If you're not here to shop, you have to leave!"? The police know full well who they work for. Second, we can see that the push to attack the homeless, push out youth, and develop and gentrify downtown are not problems of bad policy or 'mean' politicians. They are instead actions of an upper class that seeks our removal so they can make money. Lastly, we can also see that the drive by the ruling forces to stop people from coming together without buying things is not just an economic decision, but also a political one as well. The forces that want us gone because we don't buy things also don't want us coming together in the middle of town, talking, organizing, and resisting together.

Downtown Modesto, 2011. Parks are shut down. Places where people used to come-together weekly now are guarded by police substations, road blocks, and surveillance cameras. This isn't just happening in Modesto. In Arcata, the square that once was filled with travelers and music is now almost silent, as police have cracked down on basic code infractions. In Santa Cruz, it's a crime to smoke on Pacific Ave. To many people these actions by the state are seen as simply poor policy, which is why it's important to understand that these laws are the first wave of an effort in developing and gentrifying an area. They don't care about people smoking! They want a reason to harass people and move them along. They want a reason to get in there and clean up the area for their own purposes. For the past 10 years, the rich have waged on ongoing battle against the poor and working people of Modesto in order to make sure that they get their money and we stay in line. Sadly for us, it appears that many of us aren't in the plans for the future other than as workers, consumers, or people that "used to live here."

Will the places where we live be open and full of life? Will we have public space that is open to all, where music, food, and passion flow freely and we meet new faces, lovers, and friends? Or, are we going to allow our streets and public spaces where we gather to become simply boring, expensive, and heavily policed? The choice is ours.

# The New Lynching:

## We Want Bread, and their Blood Too.

Maria Isabel Vasquez Jimenez was only 17 when she fainted into her fiancée's arms, slipping from this world and taking not only herself, but the life of the unborn child inside her. She collapsed, outside of Stockton, and then later died due to heat stroke, the result of working over 9 hours in the hot sun picking grapes. When she arrived at the hospital, she had a core body temperature of 108 degrees. Maria's death sparked controversy; however, sadly, she was only one of many who perished in the fields of California while working. According to Dan Bacher on [www.indybay.org](http://www.indybay.org):

*Maria was one of six immigrant workers who died from heat exposure in the agricultural fields of California last summer [of 2009]. The deaths all have a tragic character, but what ties them together is that in every case the sub-contracting agencies, who are responsible for hiring most farmworkers, failed to implement basic health and safety standards.*

*In 2005, 12 farmworkers died from heat-related illnesses. In 2006, the number of reported deaths was 8. The death toll has continued to rise during Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's administration.*

According to the Autonomie Project:

*Perhaps one of the most surprising numbers is the staggering fact that out of roughly 35,000 farms in California, only 750 inspections were conducted by Cal/OSHA in a year, as of two summers ago. The workers in question provide 90 percent of the labor in California's multi-billion-*

*dollar agricultural industry, and are routinely deprived of water, shade and rest, having to work outdoors in temperatures that commonly top 100 degrees F!*

As the budget crisis wore on, oversight government agencies like OSHA had less and less funds to investigate the literally thousands of farms in California that were hiring cheap, and largely immigrant labor. There were simply too many employers, and too many employees for the government to watch and make sure that the bosses were playing by the rules. Even if bosses were brought up on charges or fines, a repeatedly biased appeals board also was in place to keep things on the side of those with the money. And, while high profile cases such as the death of Mrs. Jimenez brought some media attention to the struggle of farm workers, in the halls of government, the politicians were only happy to back the bosses' attacks on workers. In July of 2010, right in the middle of one of the hottest summers on record, then Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed a bill that would give farm workers overtime after working 8 hours a day. Farm workers often perform their back-breaking work as "piece workers," (people who are paid by how much they put out, and not by the hour), thus often having to work 10-12 hour days in order to make enough money. The decision by the government to deny them over time pay only helped solidify their position as second-class citizens and ensured that the massive amounts of profits that are generated by paying them so little are kept rolling in.

In January of 2011, two company officials involved in the death of Mrs. Jimenez received a deal of a \$1,000 fine

and several years' probation, skipping out on an involuntary manslaughter charge. Imagine, if only for a second, that the roles would have been reversed. What if Marisa Jimenez would have killed her boss and her unborn child and not the other way around? Do you think that she would have gotten away with only a \$1,000 fine and probation? Of course not. Just as the police receive light sentences when they kill us, but we are sent to death when we kill them, there are laws for bosses and there are laws for the rest of us.

Both the ruling regarding Maria's death and the vetoing of the overtime bill shows one thing to be clear: the government and the bosses do not care about the health and safety of farm-workers; the literally thousands of workers slaving in California's fields for next to nothing while the agricultural companies rake in the profits. Secondly, the government protection agencies in place to provide oversight are not capable nor willing to safeguard farmworkers and stop the wide scale murder of workers at the hands of those that own and operate farms. And, when we add up all those that are dying every year in California's fields with those that die on the US/Mexico border; some killed by border patrol guards, some killed by vigilantes, and many dying in the desert, we begin to realize that we are talking about the deaths of literally thousands of people.

Many liberals and Leftists will tell us that these deaths are the cause of poor government policy. That with more oversight and better leaders, these abuses could be stopped. However, as we have seen, when bosses are "held accountable" within the system, the law always rushes to back them. While they may get slight fines and weak sentences, these are nothing even compared to what most working class people receive for having a small amount of marijuana. And, when legislation is pushed forward that would help farm workers and migrants begin to crawl out of their lower economic status, it is quickly defeated in an attempt to back the interests of rich business owners.

The problem is a government that exists to protect an economy that destroys and kills us for the sake of profit. The problem is capitalism, not finding the best way to manage it. Thus, the attacks on farm workers in the

form of ICE raids, attacks on workplace organizing, and preservation at any costs of poor working conditions, are not the result of poor or bad government, but instead political decisions made in order to preserve class divisions in society that impoverish some and make others rich. It is this constant fear of deportation or violence from the state, as it is completely designed to do, which keeps a large population of farm workers in fear of fighting back and from organizing to better their conditions.

To some, this may seem like slavery. But, in many ways, wage slavery is in fact much more desirable for the capitalists than chattel slavery itself. Instead of having to house and feed workers, and provide them with healthcare, bosses simply have to pay workers minimal wages. In many cases, farm workers have to pay bosses just to sleep in poor housing units the bosses own. And, if they complain or attempt to organize they can simply be fired or deported. Government officials are few and far between, and even if a boss is reported, they can simply appeal a decision and get off quickly. Constant fear of the threat of deportation is enough to scare many workers into keeping quiet and from striking. Furthermore, the racial divisions in place between immigrant workers and non-immigrant workers is also so strong that any real solidarity that might exist between them is often broken apart due to racism or a false sense of nationalism

promoted by the rich and powerful. All of this combines to create a perfect business environment for capitalists in the fields. They have a government that looks the other way and refuses to back worker interests. They have in their pocket a police force and ICE (la migra) who they can call in anytime they need to scare the workers with deportation. And, if they do face legal trouble, they can count on the courts to exonerate them. They have an easy way to make billions of dollars off the backs of working class people living in dire poverty and disgusting conditions.

During and after slavery, the state and often sadly, the white population used violence, murder, and terrorism in order to force blacks into accepting their second class status. Within capitalism, they benefited from having blacks work for free as slaves, and after the abolition of slavery, as a lower class of workers. Often, white workers were





given special privileges from the state to ensure that blacks stayed in this position. Thus, throughout history we see a disgusting recurrence of white working class people acting not in their class interests with other workers, but instead along racial lines, against other workers they have been led to see as 'below them.' And, white working people often justify this violence against other workers of different races as an attempt to defend their higher social standing within capitalism. In his book, *The Long Road to Delano*, Sam Kushner discusses this in regards to the Central Valley:

*Even as the nation in the post-Civil War era was beginning to evaluate the high cost of racism as reflected in the system of slavery of persons of black skin, the growers were embarking on their own "Southern strategy." This included full use of persons of color as workers in the fields but it did not require that the employers of such labor feed and house these workers while they were not employed in the fields. In this respect the California growers went their southern slaveholder cousins one better. The racism in the fields was in numerous instances reflected in the actions of white workers, also oppressed by the capitalist system, who were temporarily turned against workers of different skin color. This prejudice was intensified by the desperate competition for jobs, especially during periods of economic stress, and was supported by reactionary union officials, many of whom had been mere echoes for the employers...*

These latest deaths in the fields caused by the brutality of the bosses, at the hands of border guards, and in the actions of ICE police are the new lynchings. This is mass racialized violence sanctioned and organized by the state for the sake of ensuring that the migrant population will stay subordinate, and above all, keep working. Keep picking fruits, vegetables, and all sorts of produce for cheap. All of this, in order to keep generating mass profits for those that own and control these industries.

Non-migrant workers. White workers. Are you going to back the bosses? When you hear of another death in the fields or on the border or at the hands of guards or ICE - will you turn the other way? Will you say nothing when people blame the problems of this country on immigrants? When they say they are "stealing" "our" jobs, will you agree or will you know bullshit when you smell it? Will you start to see other poor and working people in struggle as part of the human community which can destroy capitalism? Not that long ago in the Central Valley, workers in the fields: brown, white, black, and yellow - organized together to fight the bosses. Sometimes they did it in organizations like the

anti-capitalist Industrial Workers of the World, only to be the targets of the police and the government:

*In the 1910's, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) organized and led strikes in California among workers of all nationalities. The IWW believed in letting growers' crops rot until they paid a living wage. They pioneered direct action tactics, like chasing scabs out of the fields. By 1917 the IWW had over 10,000 migrant field worker members, but the growers and government teamed up in the following years to jail their leaders and shut down their union halls in Fresno, Bakersfield, San Diego and elsewhere.*

It is exactly this multi-racial organizing in the Central Valley that not only brought on massive government harassment of revolutionary organizations like the IWW, but also pushed the government to promote the Bracero Program, which brought in migrant labor from Mexico, although making sure to keep the workers in a second class position. In the current age, we can still build a united, militant and fighting working class movement, for all workers... or, we can fight each other over the scraps that the capitalists throw at us. But the crumbs are coming less and less.

So just who is your enemy? The boss? Or another worker? It's not a hard decision and it's time we let the upper class everywhere understand the meaning of that answer. In the fields. In the factories. In the schools. Everywhere. Half a world away, in Egypt they chant: "Tell the police, tell the army, we cannot find a loaf of bread," and "Revolution, revolution, like a volcano!" How much longer will we stay hungry? How much longer until we blow?



# Solidarity with Georgia Prisoners



## Prisons are the new plantations

# The Georgia Prison Strike

During the week of December 12th 2010, inmates in at least 7 Georgia prisons engaged in the longest prison strike in U.S. history. Organized mostly using contraband cell phones, prisoners refused to work, go out to the yard, line up for roll call, attend meals, or otherwise leave their cells. The strike was in protest of forced labor including working in the kitchen and janitorial work which was extended to other government buildings. Inmates, their families, and human rights advocates alike have called this slavery. Other reasons given were that the prison enforces a monopoly on money transfers from their families to them, held by the private company J-Pay, which takes a 10 per cent commission. Global Tel-Link, another private company, charges \$55 a month for once-weekly 15-minute phone conversations between prisoners and families.

Inmates came together across boundaries of religion, skin color, and gang affiliation to fight for their shared interests. In an interview with the Irish Times, former Black Panther Elaine Brown, whose 27-year-old son is in Macon State Prison, was quoted as saying: *"They have set aside their differences... You have blacks, Mexicans, whites, Muslims, Christians, Rastafarians, you name it. They are all united and they are conscious that they are united around their common interests."* Further, the strike seemed to be unanimous. In the same interview, Brown said: *"If you're at Macon or Smith or Hayes, you're participating in the strike. It's not five people. This isn't rabble-rousing. It's a universal,*

*unified effort on the part of men who have been treated like slaves, whether they are black, white or Latino."*

For six days, prisoners endured near-lethal beatings from not only prison guards but SWAT teams which were brought in to crush the strike, destruction of their property, starvation and other conditions of lockdown. Demands included: a living wage for work, educational opportunities beyond the GED, decent health care, an end to cruel and unusual punishments, decent living conditions, nutritious meals which include fruits and vegetables, job opportunities, access to their families, and fair parole decisions.

Eventually, the strike was called off, although prisoners and their supporters stress that the strike made a huge impact on their negotiations, and that they were not afraid to take further militant action should their demands go unaddressed. Since then, prisoners who participated in the strike have been constantly harassed by guards and prison officials, including being isolated in lockdown. Further, as of this writing, thirty-seven prisoners who were identified by authorities as "leaders" of the strike are still missing.

For many of us, these conditions sound all too familiar. From our shit minimum-wage jobs, to not being able to afford college, to facing repression at the hands of...

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# Letter from a Prisoner

Greetings to you and the rest of the Modesto Anarcho. I didn't think I'd hear back from you. I got the packet you send to me. Hell yeah! I won't pretend to know shit about your (our) movement, but if it is the things I read about then I'm all about it!!!

In-n-out for many years, I was involved in the National Socialist [Neo-Nazi, editor] bullshit - I spent years of my life in places like Pelican Bay S.H.U. [Special Housing Unit, essentially a 'prison within a prison,' editor], Corcoran S.H.U. and others, proving to a bunch of dumb fucks that I was "down for my race." Fortunately I woke up and got my head together and walked away. I didn't get kicked out - I walked out with my head up! I may be a lot of things, and I have done some really crazy shit, but I ain't a punk and I refuse to live a lie!!

Everybody I had in my life - except for my family - was involved with the prison bullshit and when I manned up and walked away - they left me hanging and I'm glad about it, because I needed to refocus my life and I wouldn't have been able to do it with them hanging around - you know what I mean? After years of being in the hole - I am now out in general population again and I have had time to figure out a couple of things.

#1.) I am 150% committed to a new direction in my life - I feel pretty stupid for buying into that racial superiority crap for as long as I did, and I feel bad about some of the shit I did on behalf of the misguided beliefs, but I cannot change that, though I can take the things I learned from that experience and put them to good use. I earned a PhD in disruptive behavior!

#2.) I learned that there is nothing more powerful than a person who is committed to a cause. You wouldn't believe the things that have gotten accomplished in here, and they got done, because dudes were serious about what they were doing.

#3.) My biggest problem has always been the

fuckin' system. The soundtrack to my life the been: "Fuck you I won't do what you tell me!!!" Grrrrr! These people irritate me more than mere words can articulate!! I By spending even one day more than I have to in here is feeding the beast that helped create me and I'll be damned!!

I would love to hear more about what you guys are about - I saw that you posted a couple of look ups for dudes who are being held captive and I would like to ask if you could do the same for me? I just want to hang out and kick it! I would appreciate anything you can do for me, thank you!

I'm reading "A People's History of the United States," and it has got me fuckin pissed!! These lying ass motherfuckers "forgot" to mention a lot of this information in our school's history books. Right now I'm loving that dude, in Florida, who ran up on that School Board meeting with a gun! Word to your moma bitches! [Clay Duke was an ex-Con who in 2010 shot up a school board meeting after his wife, an English teacher, was fired. Before firing on the board, (and killing no-one), Duke spray painted a circled V, a reference to the anarchist character in V for Vendetta. Duke was then shot by security and then took his own life, editor's note.]

Hey man, thank you again for the reading material. Do you have a mailing list I can get put on, or something? Keep up the fight brother, because people are hearing you and want to join war!!

Modesto Love,  
Mike

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## ***Continued from p. 34...***

...the police, we all desire a better life and a better world. Likewise, we find strength and inspiration in the actions of our comrades behind bars. When prisoners put their lives and their bodies on the line to resist the conditions imposed upon them by the state, it is the least we can do to express our solidarity and find ways in which to support them; perhaps the best is to consider how we may resist the conditions imposed upon us. As one chant that echoed through the streets of downtown Modesto said several months ago, "Revolt on the Inside, Revolt on the Outside!"

# CALIFORNIA

## WHERE WE RIOT, NOT RALLY



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