SANTA CRUZ IN COLOR



A LOCAL ETHNIC STUDIES ARCHIVE



VOL. 1/ 2025

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Our role as publisher is not to define a single point of view, but to support the many voices that make up our community. Sometimes that means encountering ideas we embrace, and sometimes ones we question—but always with the intention of challenging a perspective.

At Vibes, our podcasts, print magazine, digital platforms, and SCVM TV network, provide spaces where dialogue can live and grow. If something in Santa Cruz in Color moves you—or challenges you—we welcome you to connect with us and take part in the conversation.

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CONTENTS

04 AN INTRODUCTION
06 SILICON SANTA CRUZ
12 PALESTINE SOLIDARITY IN SANTA CRUZ
17 SANTA CRUZ MUST STAND AGAINST I.C.E.
22 SANTA CRUZ'S MAGA PAST
26 COLA FOR ALL

SANTA CRUZ IN COLOR

A PEOPLE'S ARCHIVE OF LOCAL COMMUNITY MOVEMENTS FOR JUSTICE

by Christine Hong

With an idyllic reputation as a place of towering redwoods, pounding surf, progressive politics, and sustainable farming, Santa Cruz has long exerted a potent hold on the popular imagination. Its mystique, famed natural beauty, and "slow coast" lifestyle beckon to the outside world, luring to its shores well-heeled newcomers willing to pay a happiness tax in order to live and play here. In the late twentieth century, a succession of French theorists, marveling at its irreality, hinted at what lurks below Santa Cruz's surface, describing it as a "strange, padded, wooded, pacified, convivial republic" (Jean Baudrillard) and a postmodern "social and electronic paradise from which all trace of work and exploitation has been effaced" (Pierre Bourdieu).

Yet few outsiders have discerned the deeper truths of this seaside town with its "city on a hill" university as perceptively and insightfully as Haunani-Kay Trask, a Native Hawaiian writer and sovereignty movement leader. Long before the routinization of land acknowledgments, Trask opened a 2004 essay, "The Color of Violence," by foregrounding the colonial erasure of the original stewards of the land on which UC Santa Cruz sits. Piercing the ideological veil that enshrouds Santa Cruz, she called attention to the structural processes of dispossession, subjugation, and stigmatization by which "what is hidden from view" comes to be obscured. Specifically, Trask indicted the racism of "peaceful violence" (Frantz Fanon) that engineers capitalist lifeworlds–and here, she clarified, the "[p]ower over peoples and land and economies. Power to take and consume. Power to define and confine. Power to maintain power."

Reimagining "Santa Cruz" against its ideological whiteness and self-advertised lure as a Central Coast getaway, Santa Cruz in Color is a grassroots movement archive. It holds up a mirror to what "peaceful violence" cloaks in our area: namely, local people's struggles for life possibility, justice, dignity, and liberation from oppressive conditions, both here and around the world. As a living archive grounded in an ethnic studies commitment to praxis–the pairing of knowledge with transformative action–Santa Cruz in Color reaches back into the past and amplifies in the present the struggles of local communities against structural injustice. It casts light on the challenges they faced and continue to face, the tactics of power unleashed against them, and the ways they have sustained their resolve, cared for each other, and reproduced movements for change.

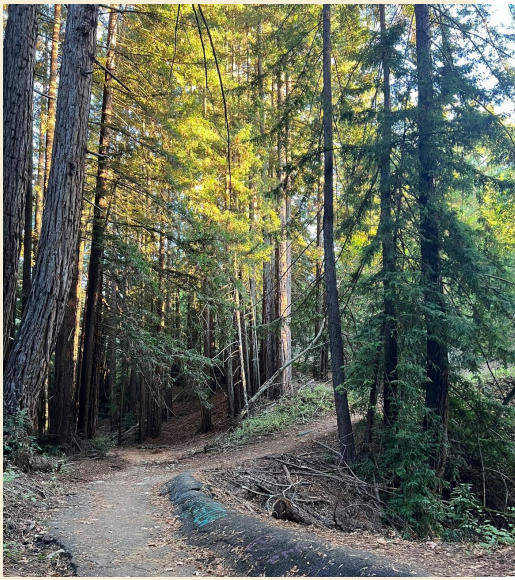
Animated by a commitment to the grassroots power of political education, Santa Cruz in Color reveals how vibrant local movements have shaped and socially transformed the greater Central Coast, yet are seldom materialized in place, building, or street names, much less featured in history books assigned in classrooms throughout our region. As a teachable movement archive and storytelling repository, Santa Cruz in Color remaps our sense of local landscapes by highlighting spaces of collective struggle–trenches,

kitchens, parks, schools, churches, and streets–where people moved and continue to move for change.

Committed to the ongoing work of social transformation, this archive emerges from collaboration with community partners that have fought against mass incarceration and policing, contested the displacement and criminalization of the working poor and the unhoused, defended Watsonville against INS (now ICE) raids, opposed armed U.S. intervention in Southeast Asia, secured sanctuary status for Santa Cruz as the United States was waging dirty wars in Central America, organized against the devastating effects of pesticides on Latino and Indigenous farmworkers, supported Mexicana workers in a historic 18-monthlong strike against labor exploitation in local canneries, moved in solidarity with the Palestinian people's long struggle for freedom, and fought for ethnic studies in our classrooms. These are the ways in which local people, with an eye to fostering just conditions for the greatest possible collective, have challenged institutionalized power relations in our area and beyond and catalyzed structural change through grassroots organizing.

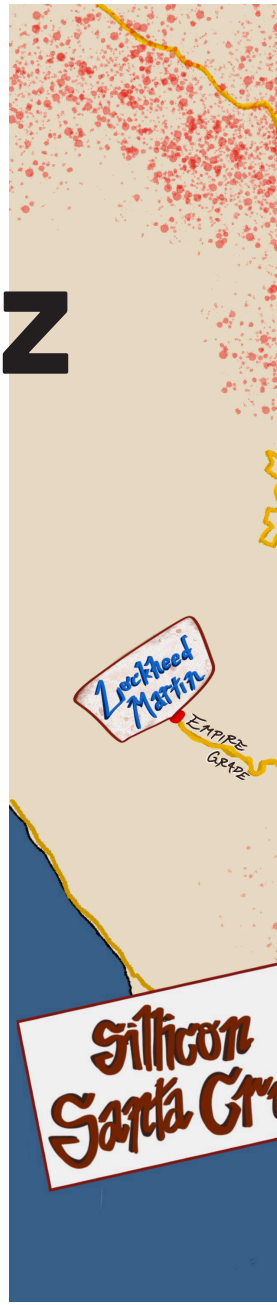
In this inaugural zine, we showcase four collections. The first—and last—essays expose the shadowy margins of Santa Cruz's political economy and the role of the university and local industries in fostering local labor precarity and imperialist violence around the world. Reaching back over half a century, the second delves into the long history of Palestine solidarity in our area, prompting us to grapple with the ways in which Palestine has been and remains a local issue. The third sheds light on the linked sanctuary movement and immigrant rights struggle circa the late Cold War period when Santa Cruz locals organized in the belly of the beast against U.S. wars and genocide in Central America. Against a backdrop of contemporary pitched grassroots battles for ethnic studies in both the state and our local area, the fourth essay extends back to the mid-1990s when Watsonville youth helped to lead the local charge against Proposition 187, a racist anti-immigrant law, and organized in visionary ways for Chicano studies at Aptos High School. You will notice that we have posed discussion questions in each section, and we invite you to engage with those. Some additional questions you might consider as you read through and across the sections: What institutions and interests hold and exercise power "over peoples and land and economies" (Trask) in our region? Which hold the power "to take and consume" and "to define and confine"? How does the dominance of these institutions and interests register on an intimate and everyday scale on people's lives and experiences? How have local communities not only organized to change their conditions but also built the worlds in which they wish to live?

In uplifting past and present grassroots movements for justice in the Central Coast, Santa Cruz in Color highlights the indivisibility of our struggles. It extends the transformative power of ethnic studies beyond the classroom by locating its dynamic practice organically within local community movements. There is much collective work to be done. We are only getting started.



Silicon Santa Cruz

by Keiko Utsumi

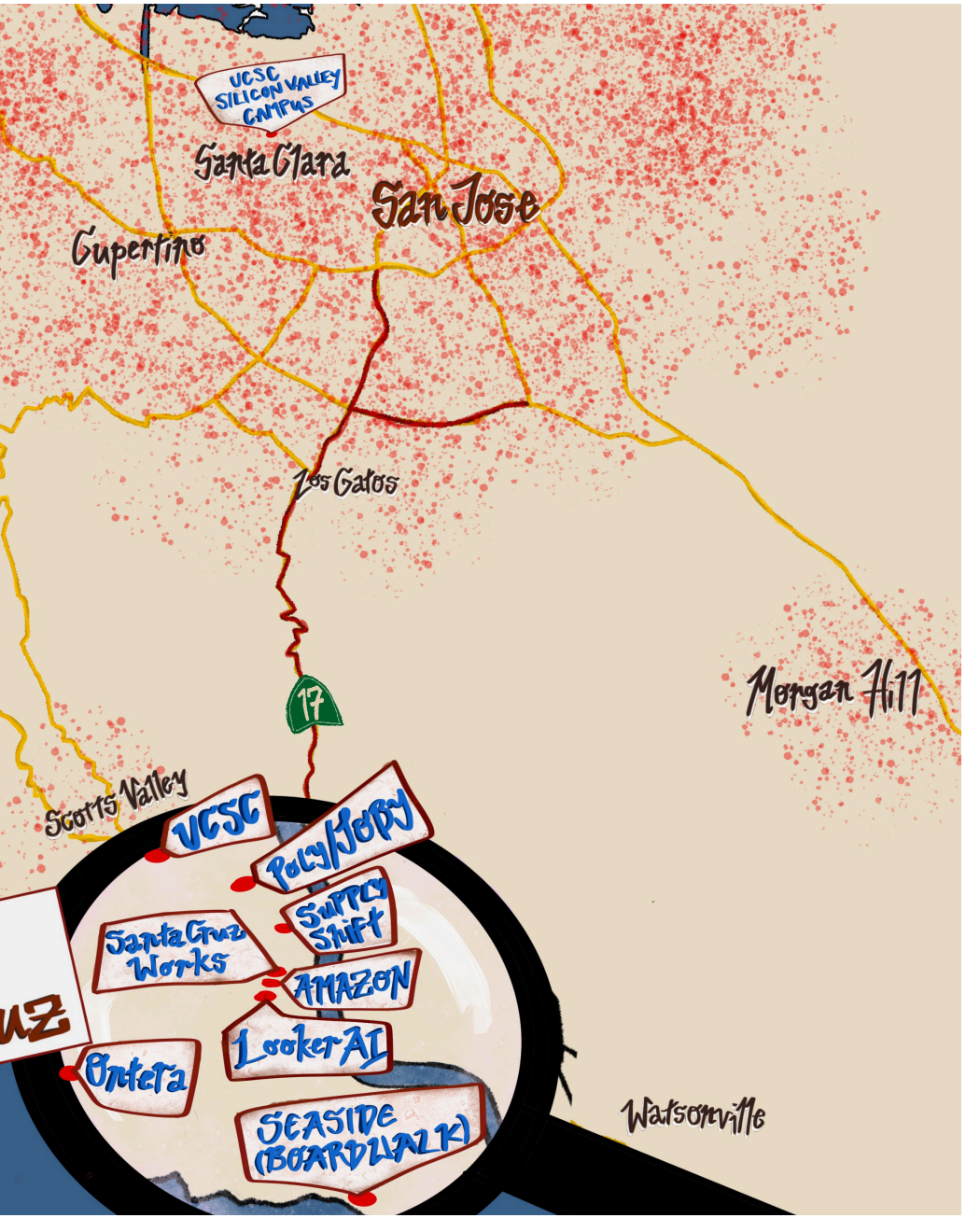


In 2020, at the height of the pandemic, Santa Cruz County launched an ambitious five-year plan to become an "alternative" to Silicon Valley by capitalizing on out-of-county partnerships and collaboration with the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC). These long underway efforts are reinforced in the latest draft for the next 5-year economic strategy, which fails to address, much less challenge, systemic inequity. Through multiple tech booms and the growing creep of Silicon Valley, the county has expanded its aerospace, defense, manufacturing, and tech industries. The development of niche technologies and a STEM-focused professional workforce, however, has come at a cost—skyrocketing rent prices and living struggles for many service and hospitality workers who comprise the majority of the local labor force.

Silicon Valley's "entrepreneurial" character is often romanticized as "innovative" and "clean," but the model itself was founded to aid U.S. military development. Spurred by the work of Stanford University scientists, the establishment of "Silicon Valley" right after World War II boosted California's potential to systemically anchor the development of war technologies. The reliance on military investments for growth modeled the power of the iron triangle—the collaboration of the research university, government contracts, and the war and technology industries—that bolstered the Cold War.

"A STRONG CANDIDATE TO MARKET ITSELF AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SILICON VALLEY."

— Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board, 2020



Silicon Valley's reach spreads to Santa Cruz, CA with long-standing and developing defense, aerospace, data, biotech, and supply companies. Traffic on Highway 17 is increasingly congested as the primary connector between Santa Cruz and the Bay Area. Illustrated map by Keiko Utsumi.

FROM THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY 2020 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

SUPPORT & FOSTER ENTREPRENEURIALISM & SMALL BUSINESSES

OBJECTIVES

- *3A. Support incubators & coworking space*
- *3B. Host innovation competitions*
- *3C. Support developing businesses & workforces*
- *3D. Market Santa Cruz County as an alternative to Silicon Valley*
- *3E. Increase awareness and connectivity to Santa Cruz County's innovation and entrepreneurs*
- *3F. Explore opportunities to fund entrepreneurs and small businesses with local students interested in internships & part-time work*

Some of Silicon Valley's early products included night-vision quadcopters, communication devices and cluster bombs, which have been continuously developed for use in ongoing U.S.-backed wars abroad. *Now Silicon Valley has become a hub for the production of biotechnology, AI, and virtual warfare tools, building the capacity to automate national security.*

Against many stakeholders' dreams, the transition toward a Silicon Valley-ized town isn't sustainable—dirtying the local landscape with war production. Look no farther than the transformation of Santa Clara to understand the local impacts of Silicon Valley's vision of global domination. As corporate real estate bought out more land, building luxury apartments for white-collar intellectuals, small downtown businesses folded, canneries closed, and the agricultural sector shrank. Santa Clara now houses over 150 global elite tech companies. A Silicon Valley pattern was built, utilizing university STEM programs and recruitment to establish tech hubs around the world that have radically changed the housing market, urbanized towns, exported manual industries to regions of cheaper labor, and heightened living disparities between the working class and elite.

Locally, the expansion of Silicon Valley to Santa Cruz has meant a prioritization of "first-tier" (highest-paying) jobs, which increased the most out of all job tiers from 2014 to 2019. UCSC has developed biotech and engineering programs with specialized majors tailored to industrial needs and opened its Santa Clara Silicon Valley campus extension in 2016 to train professionals specifically to enter the tech market. Through research initiatives, talent recruitment and development, and industry investor partnerships, UCSC plays a key role in realizing Santa Cruz's Silicon Valley dreams. University-affiliated workers and students don't just bring purchasing power to the local economy, but help to extend the reach of Silicon Valley.

What does this mean for living conditions throughout the county?

Embracing Silicon Valley, Santa Cruz County has earned the corporate status as a bedroom community for professionals to live and commute over the hill for high-paying tech jobs. What about the lives of many residents who do the daily lower-paid work? How does

the prioritization of the highest-paid local industry, "defense, aerospace, and transportation manufacturing," which the county views as its major driver of growth, correspond to unaffordability, worker and resident instability, and an unequal distribution of resources and benefit?

Historically, tourism and hospitality have been main streams of county revenue and comprise the majority of jobs in the county. But viewed as the "lowest-skilled," these areas are the lowest-earning employment sector, therefore its workers are deprioritized. This deprioritization heightens county-wide disparities that manifest in resource underinvestment, industrial character, socioeconomic segregation, and environmental racism throughout various parts of the county. Rather than building opportunities equitably, the benefits of an improved Santa Cruz will be reserved for the small portion of the population who can afford them, while the city will continue looking to residents of regions like Watsonville to staff service, tourism, and hospitality positions catering to students, high-salaried professionals, retirees, and visitors.

Santa Cruz's shift toward Silicon Valley impacts every local industry, from agriculture, construction, and tourism, to the arts and education. From the university, many students, faculty, and workers also cannot find housing, commute from faraway places, and live paycheck to paycheck. The county cannot continue to disguise decades of racial and class segregation and preserve

Joby Aviation's electrical vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft in motion over Santa Cruz mountains, with active prototypes deployed to Edwards and Macdill Air Force Bases as part of a $131M contract with the Department of Defense.

Photo by Santa Cruz Works.



"More insidious plans lie hidden in the mountains, fields, and behind closed doors."

its facade of liberal progressivism and natural beauty whilst making itself unlivable to the workers who make it all possible.

While tourists come year-round to patronize Santa Cruz's beaches, boardwalk, and restaurants, more insidious plans lie hidden in the mountains, fields, and behind closed doors. As more unaffordable high-

As more unaffordable high-rises pop up, the turnover of downtown businesses increases.



Opened in July 2024, the Anton Apartments on Pacific Avenue host 207 units ranging from studios for $3,000/mo to 2-bedrooms upwards of $5,900. Part of the city's Downtown Plan, this project was developed by LHH Partners led by Owen Lawlor of SCFS Ventures, and Devcon Construction, the largest Silicon Valley general contractor. Illustrated by Keiko Utsumi.

rises pop up, the turnover of downtown businesses increases, the housing supply shortens, the cost of living increases, and in-county income, educational, and resource inequities remain unaddressed. In its latest five-year development plan, the county identifies "increasing linkages between Santa Cruz County and Silicon Valley" as a top priority. The defense, aerospace, transportation, and biotechnology industries account for only 2.4 percent of the jobs in the county yet they are the highest paid. Meanwhile local unemployment is higher than the national average and job quality of most industries doesn't satisfy the rising needs of the working class.

Amidst increasing displacement and unaffordability catering to the top 2.4%, what lies ahead for the workers and communities whose invaluable contributions make Santa Cruz so lovable? Against gentrification backed by local-to-global institutions and venture capitalism, it's time that the local government be held accountable to the true needs of the people.

SURF CITY

ABOUT SANTA CRUZ

Don't want to make the commute to the Silicon Valley over Highway 17? Join our Santa Cruz, California office, and enjoy the beauty of a beachside town. Our office is located in the heart of Downtown Santa Cruz, above the O'Neill store.

The Santa Cruz office holds members of the Alexa team — the brains behind the groundbreaking Amazon Echo — as well as Seller services.

Spend your weekends cruising the famous Santa Cruz Boardwalk, getting lost hiking in the forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains, and enjoying fresh local produce at the Cabrillo College Farmer's Market. Kids will love a steam engine-powered ride at Roaring Camp Railroads or a visit to the Seymour Center aquarium. The University of California, Santa Cruz contributes to a college town feel. Santa Cruz is perfectly positioned to experience the best of Northern California, with Silicon Valley 30 minutes to the north and a host of small towns nearby to explore, like Capitola and Aptos.

Search for jobs in Santa Cruz, CA



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

In Amazon's ad, what are the key aspects of Santa Cruz's allure? Who is Santa Cruz being marketed to? How does the growth of Silicon Valley businesses and workers impact local housing, culture, and demographics?

The above text is pasted from the Santa Cruz job listings page on the Amazon website.

THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF PALESTINE SOLIDARITY IN SANTA CRUZ

by Lucy Liu

On June 9, the Gaza freedom flotilla Madleen made headlines when it was intercepted by Israeli soldiers who detained and deported the 12 activists on the ship, despite the fact that it was in international waters. The Madleen followed in the wake of the Conscience flotilla, which several weeks prior was struck by Israeli drones en route to Gaza, forcing activists to evacuate after public pleas for their international protection and slow, inadequate communications with Maltese authorities. The Madleen and Conscience come from a long line of ships carrying activists attempting to break the siege on Gaza and deliver humanitarian aid, primarily arranged by the Freedom Flotilla Coalition.

The formation of the Freedom Flotilla Coalition points to the long history of Israel's imposed blockade on the Gaza Strip, transforming the population-dense area into "an open-air prison," controlled by air, land, and sea. In 2008, the Free Gaza Movement launched the first of many flotillas, consisting of two ships carrying 46 activists who successfully delivered 200 hearing aids to Gaza, even as the vessels were forced to turn back immediately after unloading their cargo. Santa Cruz residents were aboard the 2011 and 2018 ships and took part in political education around and fundraising for the flotilla's humanitarian delivery of aid.

In fact, the Freedom Flotilla Coalition and other organized international actions for Palestine have local roots in Santa Cruz, specifically an untold, almost half-century history of Palestine solidarity in the area. Founded in 1976 by a group of predominantly white university graduates in their 20s, the Resource Center for Nonviolence (RCNV) has long served as a local hub for catalyzing organizing for justice on the global stage, often by revealing U.S. involvement and complicity in the suffering of people around the globe. The RCNV's founders understood that lasting social and political change needed an organized, central base and community support. A commitment to international solidarity and nonviolence has defined the RCNV's mission, with its staff connecting to activists from the War Resisters League, Movement for a New Society, Plowshares, Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the United Farm Workers, and mobilizing around

the civil rights movement, interfaith sanctuary work, anti-nuclear organizing in Europe, and human rights defense in Palestine, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Mexico. Palestine solidarity organizing has always been an RCNV focal point. Peter Klotz-Chamberlin, board member and co-founder of the RCNV, states: "I was told this in Nicaragua, I was told this in Palestine: 'Go back home and organize.' So that's the tragedy and the responsibility that we live with."

Indelibly associated with Scott Kennedy, an RCNV founder, the history of local organizing for Palestinian human rights dates back to the late 70s, when the RCNV emerged as a Central Coast anchor for progressive causes, hosting rallies, film screenings, speakers, action training, and a community space for peace, justice, and non-violence. Kennedy served as RCNV's Middle East Program Coordinator until his death in 2011. Kennedy was also the mayor of Santa Cruz in 1994 and 2004 and an elected member of the Santa Cruz City Council for three terms. Along with his deep involvement with local county and state politics, Kennedy chaired the board of directors of Interfaith Peacebuilders (IFPB), which was established in 2001. IFPB consolidated international delegations as a form of Palestine solidarity organizing. Within his lifetime, Kennedy led dozens of delegations to Palestine through IFPB and used RCNV's platform to provide report backs and share lessons with a local audience.

The delegations Kennedy organized were oriented towards "emphasizing the grassroots voices of Israelis and Palestinians immersed in the reality of the conflict." By witnessing the everyday violence of war and occupation and by learning from those committed to nonviolent struggle, human rights, and peace, delegation members would be able to relay the horrors and instability of life under Israeli occupation to Americans. Delegation members testified to the injustices they witnessed such as regular



The Audacity of Hope ship displaying a banner with the message "To Gaza with Love" near Athens. Photo by Darko Bandic.



Activists onboard the Audacity of Hope in 2011. Photo by Marko Djurica.

Israeli state-sponsored home demolitions, poverty, starvation, and arrests. Daily violence endured by Palestinians was used as a point of education and advocacy, shedding light on how the violence in the region is connected to U.S. foreign policy. The model, however, was limited. It turned on an interfaith framework of reconciliation between two opposing sides, a model that obscures the systemic nature of Israel's settler colonial erasure of Palestinian sovereignty, its ongoing occupation of Palestinian lands, and its apartheid regime.

Yet through these visits, local Santa Cruz residents, who undertook activist training, sought to help foster avenues of Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation and engage in a broader Palestine solidarity movement by challenging U.S. policy in the region. Complicating "a missionary relationship to Palestine" is what Jennifer Kelly, author of Invited to Witness: Solidarity Tourism Across Occupied Palestine and UC Santa Cruz faculty, has called the imperative to "go home" and effect transformation within communities complicit in the Israeli occupation through tax dollars. IFPB has since evolved into "Eyewitness Palestine," moving away from the reconciliation framework, rejecting normalization in all its forms, and focused on immersion with the goal of learning directly from Palestinian human rights defenders, community organizers, and activists committed to peace, signaling a larger shift in the understanding of Palestinian agency, justice, and freedom within the Palestine solidarity movement. "Keenly aware of the voyeuristic violence tourism can enact in the context of occupation, Palestinian tour guides—since the first intifada—teach tourists about Palestine and teach them how to be tourists in Palestine: to learn, listen, and do their work at home. And central to that work is believing Palestinians when they speak," Kelly explains.

International delegations offered a vital window into occupied Palestine during a time when media that could expose Israel's crimes was less advanced and accessible to people. Today, during a time when world-shattering

violence and mass death are live-streamed on our phones, revealing the horror happening during our everyday lives, what responsibility do we have to advocate and act for change on a local level for Palestine? What does it mean to bring Palestine home, and what lessons might we draw from the internationalism of decades of past Palestine solidarity organizing in Santa Cruz?

Since the beginning of the genocide, community support for Palestine has erupted throughout Santa Cruz, evident in mass rallies, boycotts, and frequent fundraisers for Palestinian families in Gaza. Yet this growing consensus against Israel's mass slaughter of the Palestinian people has been met with repression. In January 2024, nearly a thousand locals waited from 3 P.M. until 3 A.M. to deliver public comments overwhelmingly in favor of a ceasefire resolution at the Santa Cruz City Council meeting, only to be blocked by Mayor Fred Keeley and council members. UC Santa Cruz administrators also deployed militarized police to raid a student encampment, and they continue to persecute student activists. The United States, and specifically California, have a history of exchanging tactics and training with Israel. American police are trained by the IDF to facilitate police violence, suppression of dissent, and racial profiling– unjustly deploying these tactics against Americans during the Black Lives Matter protests.

What does it mean to bring Palestine home?

We are not passive observers in this struggle.

Locals have rallied around Rolla Alaydi, a local Palestinian community member, who has struggled for nearly two years to get Congressman Jimmy Panetta to support the humanitarian evacuation of her family from Gaza. Silvia Morales, the current RCNV director, states: "The documented atrocities in Gaza, including the mass displacement and starvation of a civilian population– reveal the failures of international law and the need to work together to build a future where global solidarity, justice, and humanity prevail."

Through our tax dollars, our government and state institutions directly maintain the ongoing genocide. We are not passive observers in this struggle. We have a responsibility to stand against the most brutal atrocity of the twenty-first century. Now more than ever, we have to understand that the struggle for Palestinian freedom stretches back many decades into the past, both in Palestine and in Santa Cruz. We must draw wisdom and strength from that history and continue our active engagement, participation, and support for Palestinian liberation.

SANTA CRUZ IN COLOR

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From an interview with

PETER KLOTZ CHAMBERLIN

Founding member of the Resource Center for Nonviolence

"A core tenet of non-violence is how am I related, where am I positioned? You know—what hopefully can I influence and how I am complicit in [actions] by members of Congress, our taxes, and our investments, in addition to our own institutions that we're part of?"

From an interview with

SILVIA MORALES

Executive director of the Resource Center for Nonviolence

"To speak of nonviolence while ignoring the oppression of people around the world—including the Palestinian people—is to speak in a vacuum. We must see the clear lines that connect their reality to our own, and recognize that our liberation here in the United States is bound together with theirs."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

How is Palestine a local issue? What does it mean for justice to be indivisible across borders and struggles?

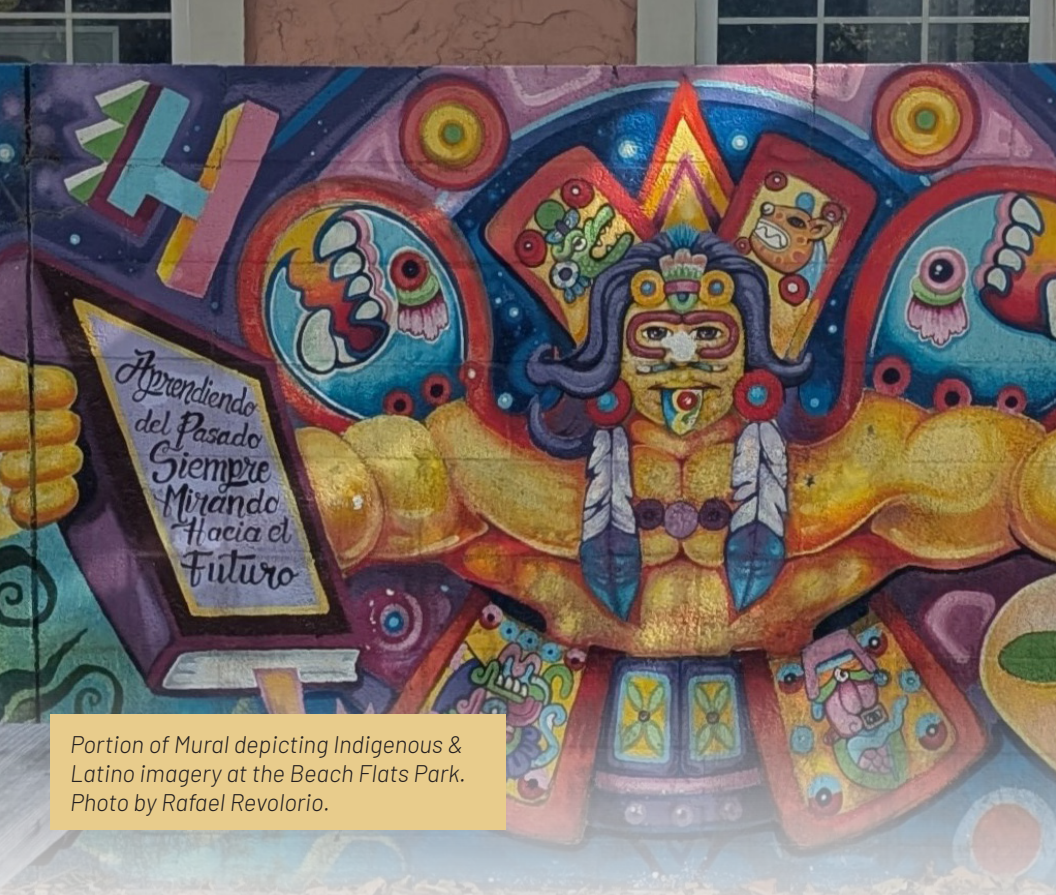
Drawing on Its Past, Santa Cruz Must Stand Firmly Against ICE

by Rafael Revolorio

Visa cancellations, ICE raids, indefinite detention, and quota-based deportations have marked the beginning of Trump's second term. Under orders from the president and reflecting the Trump administration's collaboration with repressive foreign governments and disregard for due process, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has targeted and attacked migrant families. Trump has authorized the deportation of people to the Terrorism Confinement Center in El Salvador (Centro de Confinamiento del Terrorismo, CECOT), deployed the National Guard and Marines to Los Angeles, and denied suspected undocumented immigrants due process, setting a dangerous precedent for people living in this country. The intended message is clear: immigrants are unsafe in the United States, and anyone who resists these policies are deemed enemies of the state.

State terror has also reached into Santa Cruz County, with ICE targeting long-time Santa Cruz resident Adolfo Gonzalez for deportation. Yet we might be reminded by the message on a mural in the Beach Flats neighborhood of Santa Cruz, which reads, "Aprendiendo del pasado, siempre mirando hacia el futuro," which translates to "Learning from the past, always looking toward the future." What might we learn from Santa Cruz's sanctuary past? How did Santa Cruz residents not just demand, but also, enact basic human dignity for targeted communities against racist dehumanization and criminalization? How did Santa Cruz residents participate in creating sanctuary conditions and practices during a time when the United States had destabilized Central America and was conducting immigration raids domestically?

One person we can learn from is Dorothy Granada, a credentialed nurse who lived in Santa Cruz in the early 1980s. As a committed organizer, Granada worked with the Resource Center for Nonviolence (RCNV) to educate locals about the root causes of Central American migration to the United States–namely, U.S.-orchestrated imperialist wars and genocide during that late Cold War period. Dorothy connected the dots between Nicaraguans seeking asylum and the seizure of their homeland by violent U.S.-backed Contra paramilitaries, as reported by the Los Angeles Times in 1985. For Dorothy, knowledge about what the United States was doing in Central America translated into an obligation to act. Notably, she served as an accompanier in Guatemala and Nicaragua,



Portion of Mural depicting Indigenous & Latino imagery at the Beach Flats Park. Photo by Rafael Revolorio.

eventually moving to Mulukuku Nicaragua, to provide health services for women at a community clinic.

An "accompanier," as defined by the Guatemala Solidarity Network, is a designated person who uses their own body to safeguard targeted communities and human rights defenders from attacks and other forms of repression by U.S.-backed dictators and their lackeys. Inextricable from the practice of sanctuary, accompaniers placed themselves at risk in order to protect Central Americans; offer moral support to communities, organizations, and individuals; and to raise awareness of human rights abuses. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, during the Cold War, the United States systematically denied asylum status to Central Americans fleeing political persecution, while supporting brutal anti-communist regimes that labeled everyday citizens and refugees as communists to justify the use of violent force, a practice that in some ways continues today. Jose Artiga from the SHARE Foundation, a Salvadoran solidarity organization, elaborated on the power of accompaniment to change public understanding of the material conditions prompting Central Americans to seek refuge in the United States. He explained, "The U.S. [states that] these are communists, these are bad people. And then if you have citizens going and getting to know the young people, the women, the children of those communities, they will come back [with a very] different view of what's [happening]." In this respect, accompaniers returned to local areas, like Santa Cruz, in the role of educators able to teach their own communities about what they witnessed as a result of U.S. foreign policy.

Dorothy has for decades dedicated her services as a nurse for the community in Mulukuku. Her current work in Nicaragua



is intimately connected with the feminist health care services she provided in Santa Cruz. In an online reflection, Dorothy wrote, "I spent [time] at the Santa Cruz Women's Health Center… to learn about contraception and how to diagnose and treat the most common gynecological ailments. [I recalled] my unspoken promise to the campesinas to provide a health service for as many women as I could." Both here and in Nicaragua, Dorothy's work illustrates the power of community-based care for refugees and immigrants alike, when the state can't or won't provide them with support.

In 1986, Santa Cruz passed a county-wide sanctuary ordinance as a result of fierce organizing in the community. Then-councilwoman Jane Weed pointed out a continuous truth: "What's tragic is that it is our government's policy that is creating the reasons why people have to flee." As a hub for programming about people's struggles against U.S. imperialism, the RCNV was one organization, among many, that played an important role in tying local and international organizing around migrant justice. The center hosted a plethora of political educational events about the U.S.-backed wars in Central America. Through their resources and connections they fostered solidarity by bringing speakers—including labor leaders, human rights defenders, and organizers like Amilcar Mendez, Rodolfo Robles, and Maria Toj Medrano—to uplift their struggles and connect their realities of exploitation to labor and migrant justice organizing in Watsonville, providing an invaluable site for local political education. This tactic is still used by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), which organized a speaking tour about the conditions of Honduras following the end of the well documented U.S.-supported dictatorship of Juan Orlando Hernandez, with speaker Victor Hugo Tejada, one stop of which was hosted in Santa Cruz in April of 2023.

Beyond city or county designations, the



Santa Cruz declared a sanctuary

3-26-86

By JOAN RAYMOND
Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — Following the lead of cities like Los Angeles, Berkeley, San Francisco and Seattle, City Council members here voted 5-2 Tuesday to declare Santa Cruz a sanctuary for Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees.

Although sanctuary supporters had pushed for a unanimous vote as a symbolic gesture towards refugee support, council members Katy Sears-Williams and Joe Ghio cast dissenting votes.

Council members passed a resolution declaring Santa Cruz a sanctuary for the refugees until they "can safely return to their homelands" or until they are granted federally recognized residency status.

The resolution also requests Congress to establish a policy granting "extended voluntary departure" status to refugess who have escaped persecution in their native countries.

The sanctuary proposal was endorsed by several churches and by 1,500 residents who had signed petitions.

At a public hearing, sanctuary advocate William Crane said an estimated 200-250 of the refugees are living in the Santa Cruz area.

Sanctuary supporters said the Guatemalans and Salvadorans are being persecuted in the same way the Jews were persecuted during the Holocaust.

The friends and families of the refugees have been the target of death squads in their counties, said the church and humanitarian leaders of the sanctuary movement.

"Do not stand idly by. Don't oppress the stranger in our midst," Rabbi Richard Litvak told council members.

But Ghio and Sears-Williams said they had reservations about passing a declaration that they said had more to do with politics than humanitarianism.

Mayor Michael Rotkin responded that there comes a time when politics cannot be seperated from humanitarianism.

Councilwoman Jane Weed commented, "What's tragic is that it is our government's policy (in Latin America) that is creating the reasons why people have to flee."

Councilman Arnold Levine broke from his usual political tradition of staying out of foreign-policy issues and voted with the majority in support of the declaration.

Levine did offer an amendment to delete sections calling for what he called "civil disobedience," but the amendment failed on a 3-4 vote, with Sears-Williams and Ghio voting with Levine.

Those sections state the city police will not relay information to the Immigration and Naturalization service about the detention of Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees.

But the statement is largely symbolic, since Santa Cruz police have no jurisdiction over immigration or other federal matters.

The declaration acknowledges that the United Nations High Commission on Refugees recognizes "the fact that persons fleeing El Salvador and Guatemala are bona fide political refugees, yet fewer than 2 percent of those applications whose cases have been considered have been granted political asylum" by the U.S. Immigration service over the past three years.

"Santa Cruz Declared Sanctuary." Article by Joan Raymond for The Santa Cruz Sentinel. March 26, 1986.

term "sanctuary" represents a practice of mutual aid and community safety in hostile settings. It requires leveraging one's relative power to ensure the protection of human dignity, through policy changes and direct tangible aid. In a moment when Trump uses demonizing rhetoric to racially scapegoat immigrants to advance his fascist political agenda, few people contextualize his anti-immigrant federal policies against the long history of U.S.-backed destabilizations in Latin America. Yet Santa Cruz's sanctuary past demonstrates how local residents drew the lines of connection between migrant vulnerability and the destabilizing effects of violent U.S. foreign policy, making clear the connections between local, national, and international injustices. Today this includes standing firmly against ICE and all policies that fuel immigration through local support networks and organizing for immigrant rights and dignity.

Key immigrant justice organizations in Santa Cruz today that provide tangible community support include Barrios Unidos, Campesina Womb Justice, Your Allied Rapid Response, and CISPES. These organizations all uphold Santa Cruz's historical legacy through education about the root causes of migration, political advocacy, and maintaining resource networks for immigrants. We must continue to unite and build political pressure against militarized U.S. foreign policies that destabilize communities around the world, a major cause for migration. Ultimately we must fight for all humanity and stand firmly against militarization, human rights abuses, historical revisionism, and political scapegoating, remembering that political change is always made through the power of the people.

"What's tragic is that it is our government's policy (in Latin America) that is creating the reasons why people have to flee."

Santa Cruz Councilwoman Jane Weed

From an interview with

AMY ARGENAL

Community Studies and Sociology professor, UC Santa Cruz

"At the core, [sanctuary] has to be anti-imperial. It has to be anti-imperial because at the[...] very core, sanctuary also has to include the right to remain. Or as a colleague of mine will say, the right to thrive in place."

"It was us, you know, [the United States] that literally created the situation that has forced them to migrate. And I don't think that we will ever get people to see the idea of open borders, until [U.S. citizens] can truly understand their own role in what causes our migration context to begin with."

DISCUSSION QUESTION:

Santa Cruz's 1986 sanctuary resolution included "calls for civil disobedience." Consider what forms this civil disobedience might have taken. Consider how the state might have responded. How have prior practices of sanctuary been revived today?

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Decades of Student Struggle for Ethnic Studies Reveal Santa Cruz's MAGA Past

by Riley Alinsug

In a nation overtaken by Trump's fascistic agenda, California may appear to be a liberal holdout. Yet in the mid-1990s, California paved the way for Make America Great Again (MAGA) politics when conservative state officials incited racial panic in order to seize political power, and some Santa Cruz locals fanned the flames. Describing undocumented immigrants as criminals who had invaded the state in order to steal its resources, Governor Pete Wilson stated in a 1994 TV re-election ad: "They keep coming, two million illegal immigrants in California. The federal government won't



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FILED
In the office of the Secretary of State
of the State of California
NOV 0 9 1994

EXECUTIVE ORDER W-113-94

WHEREAS, the people of California have passed the Save Our State Initiative, d in so doing, have sent a clear message that it is wrong to reward those who eak our immigration laws; and

Left: 'Students march from Aptos High School near Freedom Boulevard and White Road toward Watsonville,' photo by Mike McCollum for the Register-Pajaronian, November 2, 1994. Above: Photo scan of California Executive Order W-113-94.

stop them at the border, yet requires us to pay billions to take care of them."

Urging people to vote for Proposition 187, a ballot initiative denying undocumented immigrants in the state of California the right to access public services, including healthcare and education, Wilson pitted California against the federal government. In the decade prior to California becoming a majority-minority state in 2000, Proposition 187 criminalized Latino communities, sanctioning state violence against them. Throughout the state, including in Santa Cruz, people organized rallies and walk-outs in protest.

Policymakers dubbed Proposition 187 the "Save Our State" referendum, implying that California was under threat of immigrant invasion, a fear fortified by the racist depictions circulated by the Wilson campaign of actors posing as "illegal aliens" running from the Mexican border into California. The framing of Proposition 187 anticipated the anti-immigrant rhetoric of President Donald Trump's January 20, 2025 Executive Order 14159 titled "Protecting the American People Against Invasion." The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), which fought against Proposition 187, describes it as "the granddaddy of anti-immigration measures."

Locally, Proposition 187's passage intensified existing race and class tensions between wealthy Aptos parents and Latino students from Watsonville in the midst of a desegregation effort led by the Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD). By 1994, as a result of Watsonville youth being bussed into Aptos High School, the once predominantly white student body had become 45% Latino. Locally, news media referred to Watsonville as "Gangland," and its youth were framed, in nativist language, as invading criminals who were usurping school resources. Some Aptos parents proposed "seceding" from Pajaro Valley Unified School District to form a separate (80% white) district, finding support in Doug Kaplan, a school board trustee and Aptos resident.

These key factors led to the formation of Aptos High School's chapter of Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA), sparking a local movement for Chicano studies.

At Aptos High School, at the height of anti-

immigrant hysteria, MEChA ran a slate of candidates whose commitment to immigrant rights informed their advocacy for Chicano studies. At the movement's forefront was Omar Dieguez, a student leader chosen by his MEChA peers to campaign to become the first Latino president of Aptos High School. To this day he can still recall the treatment that he and his Latino peers faced on a daily basis. "Just from the moment we got there, being bussed from Watsonville High School to Aptos, the parents oppos[ed] us being there, asking for their own school district, trying to segregate us, saying that we're lowering the community, the quality of education, saying that we're bringing gang members to their schools," Dieguez stated.

What began as organized youth resistance to racist state law and local school segregation efforts transformed into a powerful movement for an inclusive education—an ethnic studies education. Students understood that ethnic studies, by focusing on the struggles of racialized communities for life, equality, and justice, was vital to dispelling xenophobic, anti-immigrant propaganda.


Feb. 27

Just be American

Latino students at Aptos High School want to know more about their history and culture. All well and good. But is it the responsibility of our public schools system to provide them with special "cultural activities" and "Chicano Studies?"

In letters to Register-Pajaronian, local parents argued that student calls for Chicano studies were driven by entitlement, forcing the mid-county school to cater to a special few, even as Latino students made up nearly half the student population. In a February 27, 1995 letter, a Capitola resident chastised Latino students to "Just be American." As letters like this demonstrate, the geographic divide between Aptos and Watsonville was treated as though it were the U.S.-Mexico border. "It was almost like they were trying to 'deport' us back to Watsonville," recalled Dieguez.

When Latino students from Watsonville walked out for Chicano studies, organized rallies, and spoke out at school board meetings, they were described as aggressive, a racialized character trait associated with gang stereotypes circulated in local media about Watsonville youth. Much as MAGA politicians claim that critical race theory teaches students to be ashamed of our country and imbues white children with guilt, Aptos parents criticized student advocacy for Chicano studies through a lens of white grievance: "Why do we allow them [Latino students] to intimidate us?" Rarely did these letter writers view themselves as part of a local social establishment and educational system that discriminated against working-class students of color. Instead, they cast Latino students as a threat to white safety. In a climate conditioned by racist fear, students who organized in a hostile school setting for an empowering education were criminalized, collapsed with racist caricatures circulated in local newspaper coverage and broadcast on TV in Governor Wilson's campaign.

> They want to live in America. So why can't they just be American. Like the rest of us.

History is not linear, Dieguez observes. "Those struggles we've been fighting have been fought by our ancestors and people before us," he stated. Three decades after he and other Latino youth fought against Proposition 187 and for ethnic studies, Watsonville students have again rallied for an ethnic studies curriculum and against ICE's



Watsonville High School students stage a protest Thursday along East Beach Street against the Trump administration's immigrant deportation policies" from "Students Sound Off Against Deportations." Article by Tarmo Hannula for *The Pajaronian*. February 20, 2025.

attacks on immigrant communities. Their organizing serves as a testament to the spirit of resistance against state and federal violence passed down from past generations to the youth and students of the present day.

During a time of brutal federal assault on immigrants throughout the country, we might ask: What can we learn from the struggles of Watsonville and Aptos youth who organized against their state's anti-immigrant policy and for ethnic studies over thirty years ago?

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) of the past has become the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) of the present. Wilson's reactionary politics paved the way for Trump's MAGA politics today. Right now brown youth and their communities have been stripped of the protection of due process, with recent Supreme Court rulings marking skin, language, and laboring status as reasons for suspicion. Then as now, a racist politics of fear serves a select few while disenfranchising the many. It thrives on immigrant dehumanization, persecution, and exclusion. We can no longer deny students their agency and ability to critique the racism embedded in policies which target them for surveillance, detention, and deportation. The study and analysis of power at the heart of ethnic studies is more vital than ever.

DISCUSSION QUESTION:

Consider the local attacks against Chicano studies in the 1990s. What interests opposed Chicano studies? What interests oppose ethnic studies today?



COLA For All

County and statewide investments must stop neglecting frontline workers!

by Keiko Utsumi

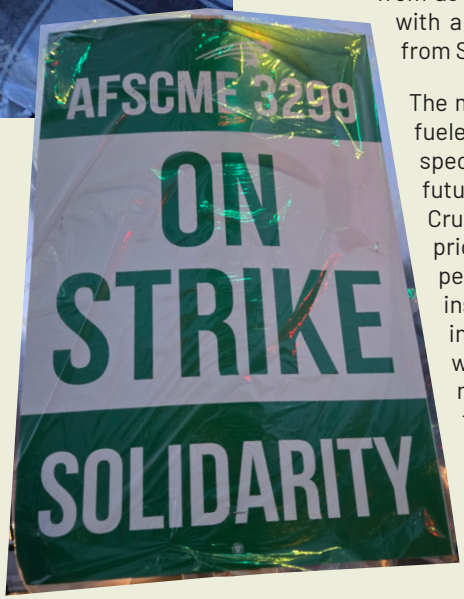
The largest employer in the greater Santa Cruz area, the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), touts its reputation as a "clean" research institution. However, even as it furnishes over 15,000 jobs countywide, UCSC reinforces racialized class divisions and inequity. Deriving significant funding from the Department of War (DoW) (previously called Department of Defense), the UC has poured resources into developing STEM fields and producing new generations of obedient engineers for biotech, computer engineering, and aerospace corporations. As budget cuts rain down across fields, many DoD contracts in STEM face cancellations, coercing academics to cater toward the desires of big funders. While the integrity of the university comes into question, budget precarity disproportionately impacts service and technical workers, who face high commute times and inadequate pay to do the hidden reproductive



May 15, 2025— UC workers and students wear symbols of Palestinian liberation in solidarity against the ongoing Israeli genocide in Gaza, while protesting at the Regents meeting at UC San Francisco against an insulting final contract offer including permanent wage cuts, higher healthcare costs, and greater staff vacancies despite increased revenues over the last decade.

labor necessary to run the university and the town.

Throughout the past year, university labor unions have picketed with a recurring slogan: "Pay us enough to live here." This includes AFSCME 3299 representing the campus' lowest paid service, technical, and skilled workers, University Professional and Technical Employees (UPTE-CWA 9119) representing faculty, laboratory, and medical workers, and the UAW 4811 representing graduate student workers. However, in recent years UC administration has bolstered unfair labor practices to repress demands for dignified working conditions, such as implementing "Time, Place, Manner" (TPM) policies restricting rights to protest, picket, and flyer on campus, retaliating and arresting union organizers. As the UC refuses to meet contract demands for fair wages and security for all of its workers, these strikes continue years-long campaigns for adequate cost of living adjustments in Santa Cruz, the most expensive county for renters according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Many workers, students, and faculty commute from as far as Oakland, Hollister, and Monterey, with a significant number of workers coming from Salinas and Watsonville.



The mid-twentieth century founding of UCSC fueled a lucrative market for real estate speculation with the prospect of renting to future students, forever altering the Santa Cruz property landscape. Over time, rental prices have increased exponentially, with periodic waves of heightened housing insecurity and displacement. In a 2024 interview, UCSC senior food service worker, Julissa Flores, shared, "[Each month] I pay $5,000 for rent, [and] I pay for bills, lights, water, food." Living in midtown and having worked at UCSC for over 20 years, Flores stated, "At this time, everything is very, very expensive and the university doesn't care if we do not have enough to eat, to pay the rent,

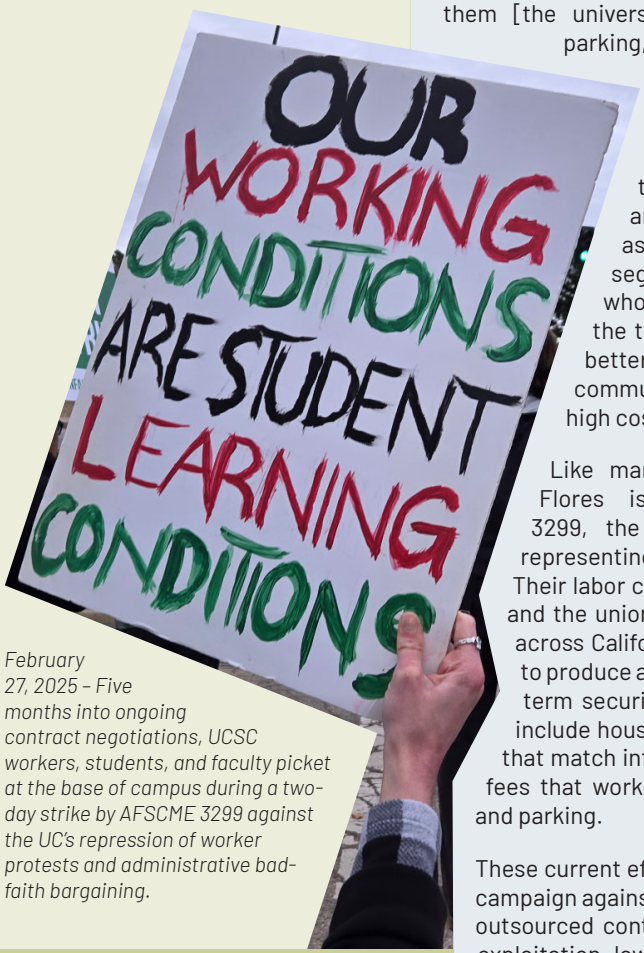
April 1, 2025 — Picketing at the High St. intersection, AFSCME workers joined UPTE-CWA 9119 in their strike against UC's unfair labor practices, illegal bad-faith bargaining, and unlivable wages.

bills, or for our kids' studies."

With economic recession and rising inflation, the hidden costs of working add up fast. The prices of commute and campus-related fees pile on top of other living expenses. Flores, who uses the university bus pass costing $16/mo. or $192/yr. to travel to UCSC, says that these programs that are supposed to support workers aren't as helpful as they're advertised to be. She pointed out, "The wage isn't very good if at the end of the day we are paying them [the university] back through insurance, parking, the bus pass—even the [dining hall] food isn't covered." Rather than prioritizing livable working conditions, daily necessities such as transportation and housing are exploited by corporations as avenues for profit and labor segregation. For many workers who commute from farther regions, the time lost in transit, which could better be spent taking care of family, community, or responsibilities, is a high cost.

"... the university doesn't care if we do not have enough to eat..."

— Julissa Flores



February 27, 2025 – Five months into ongoing contract negotiations, UCSC workers, students, and faculty picket at the base of campus during a two-day strike by AFSCME 3299 against the UC's repression of worker protests and administrative bad-faith bargaining.

Like many university career workers, Flores is unionized under AFSCME 3299, the largest UC employee union representing over 37,000 skilled workers. Their labor contract ended in October 2024, and the union has been periodically striking across California to protest the UC's refusal to produce a fair contract that ensures long-term security. AFSCME's demands notably include housing assistance, wage increases that match inflation rates, and a reduction of fees that workers have to pay for healthcare and parking.

These current efforts build upon AFSCME's 2019 campaign against the UC's increased reliance on outsourced contract workers, which increased exploitation, lowered wages, and led to greater food and housing insecurity for workers of color. Public service jobs have traditionally been entry points to gain economic mobility into the middle class, but this is no longer true. Many people come to university jobs hoping to contribute positively to social infrastructure and education. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What possibilities for solidarity open up when students who work on campus understand themselves as workers? How does this testimonial by Julissa Flores, a UC Santa Cruz worker, shift your perception of the university?

role of farmworkers, janitors, food service staff, healthcare technicians, and others as the essential workers on the frontlines, keeping social establishments accessible everyday to people's needs, even through crises. However, these most essential workers pay a steep price–layoffs, low pay, and insecurity–for the increasing privatization of the UC and other nominally "public" institutions as they are governed by short-term elite interests. At the top of UC decision-making is the Board of Regents, composed of privately-appointed politicians, tech and defense CEOs, commercial stakeholders, and business financiers, alongside the state governor—all of whom have manufactured UC-related housing shortages and wealth gaps in areas surrounding campuses statewide.

Locally, these conditions continue a pattern of sourcing exploited labor through county-wide long-standing racial and socioeconomic divisions that have never been truly addressed since the UCSC campus was established in 1965. While the UC touts its mission of serving the public as a "non-profit" educational institution, it obscures its own role in driving local economic inequality and global suffering through investments driving technologies of war, militarization, policing, and displacement. Amidst the increasing privatization and degradation of public education across the country, the fight continues against institutionalized inequity—for a Santa Cruz and UC that serves the people by creating sustained, higher job quality and enabling its staff to live in the area where they work.

As the academic year continues, local AFSCME representative Christopher Contreras has reaffirmed that the workers and community will "continue and never give up the fight for a better future." Stay updated on AFSCME's ongoing campaigns and negotiations, get organized, and get ready to strike!

From an interview with

JULISSA FLORES

Senior food service worker,
UC Santa Cruz

"Yo creo que es justo que a nosotros como empleados nos traten lo justo que la universidad nos pague lo justo para que nuestro trabajo de 20 años valga la pena porque hemos dado casi toda nuestra vida ahí."

I believe it's right for us as employees to be treated fairly, and that the university pays us what is worth our 20 years of work because we have given almost all of our life to it.

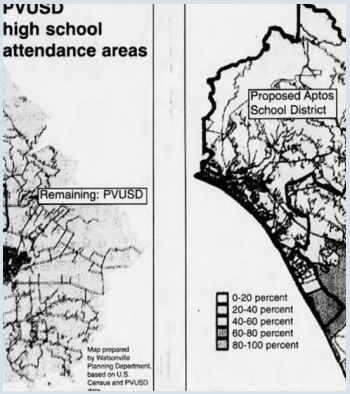
"En realidad no lo que nos pagan no es nada. Lo que nos pagan tan poquito y todo lo que nos están pagando otra vez se lo estamos regresando - con el pago de la aseguranza, con el pago del parqueadero, con prácticamente tenemos [...] Con qué me quedo con nada. Como te digo eso trabajamos nada más para sobrevivir. Eso es una explotación que nos está haciendo la universidad, me entiendes, porqué porque nos está llevando la universidad nos está llevando hasta estresarnos y deprimirnos de saber de pensar que no nos está alcanzando el dinero me entiendes."

In reality what they pay us is nothing. We are paid so little and everything that we receive we have to return again by paying for insurance, parking, with practically everything we have[...] and it leaves me with nothing. We work just to survive. What the university is doing to us is exploitation because it is taking more from us until we're stressed and depressed from knowing we're not making enough money.

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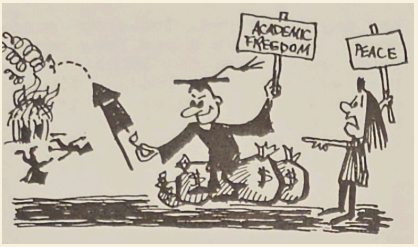
1990s' Chicano Struggle in Aptos



Sanctuary Santa Cruz



(UC)SC Structure of Inequity



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Santa Cruz in Color would not be here today without the support of our community members, whose stories are documented in our growing archive.

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Santa Cruz in Color is a digital people's archive and multimedia community storytelling repository that documents local grassroots social movements for justice throughout the Central Coast, with a focus on the greater Santa Cruz area.





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SANTA CRUZ IN COLOR

A PEOPLE'S ARCHIVE: COMMUNITY STRUGGLES FOR JUSTICE

Thank you for picking up the inaugural printed isssue of our Santa Cruz in Color zine. A digital version of this publication is available on our website.