

Light the Way, Part I:
*The Gaza Solidarity Encampment
at U.C. Berkeley*



LINES IN THE SAND

Writings on the Gaza Solidarity Encampment
& Campus Flood at U.C. Berkeley from
an Anarchist Prisoner of War

with whatever weapons at hand

Casey Goonan

*transcribed, formatted, & edited
with love & rage from
comrades to the end*

cover images:

شهادة الاطفال في زمن الحرب
In Time of War: Children Testify
(Drawings by Palestinian Children)
Beirut: Mawakif / PFLP, 1970

April 17, 2026
Palestinian Prisoners' Day

with whatever weapons at hand
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Writing a letter to a political prisoner or prisoner of war is a concrete way to support those imprisoned for their political struggles. A letter is a simple way to brighten someone's day in prison by creating human interaction and communication—something prisons attempt to destroy. Beyond that, writing keeps prisoners connected to the communities and movements of which they are a part, allowing them to provide insights and stay up to date. Writing to prisoners is not charity, as we on the outside have as much to gain from these relationships as the prisoners. Knowing the importance of letter writing is crucial. Prisons are very lonely, isolating, and disconnected places. Any sort of bridge from the outside world is greatly appreciated. Find out more:

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Editor's Note

The content of this book comprises writings and letters written by Casey during their time at Santa Rita Jail in the year before they were sentenced to federal prison. Some of the ideas and opinions expressed in this text are rooted in a particular moment in time and do not reflect Casey's current views on strategy, approach, and political action. These are not definitive statements and must not be construed as such, especially given that Casey is imprisoned and certain ideas may create undesirable repercussions.

The editors have aimed to be as faithful as possible to Casey's original words in the transcription and editing process, with minor spelling and grammar changes for readability.

Light the Way, Part I:
*The Gaza Solidarity
Encampment at U.C.
Berkeley*

Casey Goonan is a dedicated community educator, writer, distroist, printer, and anarchist/anti-imperialist political prisoner who has committed their life to struggles for liberation. Casey is incarcerated for actions carried out in solidarity with Palestinians facing genocide in Gaza and in response to the repressive actions against the pro-Palestine student encampments in the United States. In January 2025, Casey pleaded guilty to one count of maliciously damaging or destroying property used in or affecting interstate commerce by means of fire or an explosive for the arson attack on a campus police car. As part of a plea agreement, Casey took responsibility for other attacks but pleaded not guilty to the additional charges and was sentenced to 235 months in federal prison. Just as Casey has persistently for years cared for, supported, and struggled alongside incarcerated comrades, we aim to replicate these actions in solidarity with Casey as they continue their struggle from the other side of the wall. A note from Casey in September 2025: “*Thanks to everybody out there who has shown me love and offered support through this time. I wish every prisoner could experience the level of support you all have shown to me. In here, I’ve done my best to show my love to all my fellow prisoners and I remain steadfast to the movement to Palestinian liberation and the movements for decolonization and abolition worldwide.*”
More information:

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On April 17, the Gaza solidarity encampment on Columbia University campus begins. The following day the encampment is raided by police. Over one hundred students are arrested. The encampment quickly rebuilds with the aid of massive community support, mostly from people who are not students nor campus workers. The quickness of efforts to rebuild the encampment is a crucial factor that enhances the capacity of this catalyst-action to boost morale and shift a sense of momentum back momentarily in favor of the Palestine solidarity movement. This act of defiance leads to Gaza solidarity encampments (and plans for encampments) to begin hatching across the country. On April 22, Cal Poly Humboldt students, alumni, and community members escalate this budding proliferation of campus insurgency—dubbed the “student intifada”—with the seizure and “occupation” of Siemens Hall. Approximately 45 people fight the police in a standoff that lasts six hours, forcing the cops to retreat and provoking the reaction of the school administration to lockdown the campus for several days. A video of the successful stand-off and retreat of the police goes viral online, with a clip of someone hitting a cop over the head with an office water jug becoming a signature “meme.” (*Bonk!*)

The very same day that Siemens Hall is taken in Humboldt, a coalition of students and non-student community support establish a Gaza solidarity encampment on the University of California, Berkeley campus. From my vantage point as an

individual, a printer, and member of a few collectives and affinity groups engaged in local projects and peoples' survival programs (as well as an anarchist with over a decade of experience organizing on college campuses), i begin preparing to join in support of the encampment wave the best i knew how. While many comrades begin living and participating in the various local encampments from their inception, a close friend and i spend three days printing and assembling somewhere between two-to-three thousand zines, which, beginning on April 26, are delivered to, circulated among, and/or tabled at every Bay Area campus within the span of a week.¹ I begin tabling nightly at the U.C. Berkeley encampment, then full days in front of the camp by that first weekend. Comrades grab boxes of zines at a time, delivering the materials as far north as Humboldt and as far south as U.C.L.A.

My first day tabling at U.C. Berkeley, an anarchist participating in the encampment stops by the table and briefs me on the dynamics of the camp, its internal processes, and the different conflicts underway. They then proceed to pin up posters with a communique from the Humboldt encampment-occupation, which reads:

1. Out of the quads, into the buildings.

It's clear that in order for this crisis to develop further, student occupations should take buildings wherever possible. The first action of the police was to instruct the occupiers to move to the quad. In saying this, they showed that we can wield the most

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ings organized by sections of the camp where our tents were located.

7. “Bay Area Autonomists Reflections on UCB, SFSU, and USF Camps,” some anarchists (*Indybay*: May 3, 2024), <https://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2024/05/03/18865767.php>.

power by occupying the spaces where classes are held and administrators have offices. In addition, buildings on campus are filled with everything you might need to construct barricades and protect an occupation.

2. If you build it, they will come

It only took a small number of students to occupy Siemens Hall. Don't be afraid to hold your ground. This movement is strong. Seemingly out of nowhere, hundreds if not thousands will come to support you. Importantly, outside crowds were able to impede the police by dividing their attention. The cops found themselves kettled and completely unsure where to turn. Someone set up a barbecue—free hot dogs fueled the crowd.

3. The pro-Palestinian movement must be a movement against the police

At every step, police will not hesitate to brutalize those who call for an end to the genocide in Palestine. In Gaza, Palestinians face the Israeli military; in the United States, we face the police. We must recognize that these forces are one and the same: they are all foot soldiers of empire.

4. Listen! organizer.

We need not wait for the permission of professional

activists to set the terms of struggle. Student occupiers acted decisively to take the buildings without the backing of any established organizers. Collectively, we found we had the skills, experience, and creativity needed to carry out our action. While student organizations often recommend starting with a list of achievable demands and entering into endless negotiations with administrators, our occupation held one demand for six hours: that the police leave campus.

5. Be prepared.

Our town is somewhat sleepy. We underestimated the scale of police repression we would face. Four years after the George Floyd Uprising, we should heed its lessons. It is best to come to all demonstrations with goggles, gas masks, laser pointers, and shields. You never know what a casual sleep over might become.²

The distro table allows me to connect with the encampment at U.C. Berkeley, to feel out the temperature of activity, to greet comrades, friends, and acquaintances in attendance at different times, and to spread revolutionary ideas, which I learn quickly are at once present and absent among the campers, a source of internal contradictions certainly. Among this former set of campers, revolutionary ideas are largely book-learned and not based in much experience of action, while those experienced with action were all quite young, mostly activated into such

mob violence as a crystallization of “the largely explicit and generally understood alignment of the universities at a national level with forces of both formal and informal violence... The petty pogrom tracks recent political developments in the U.S. in which informal actors, with tacit and unsayable authorization from the state...exact often-fatal violence amid anti-state upheavals...with impunity.”

5. “No Peace,” Unity of Fields (2024).

6. Upon entering the camp as a permanent resident-participant, several homies briefed me on the internal struggle unfolding within the camp. My first few days there is a contentious struggle over ideas in so-called general assembly meetings that were held once every evening at the end of the day. These evening meetings were a place where radicals hypothetically should have been able to speak our grievances over the direction and purpose of the encampment’s organization and decision-making structure, as well as challenge the “negotiations”-based mindset of the student organizers. Sadly, the evening meetings became a primary source of exhaustion and stress (possibly even a distraction) for radicals who were frequently shot-down and condescended to by students with less experience but clearly more decision-making power. Members of big-tent “leftist organizations” who saw their role as deferent supporters reinforced the sanctity of student choices. Over time, this power play turned off many of the camp’s radical participants, who increasingly split off to plan other activities. On a whole, radicals gradually spent less time involved in camp activities, events, and aboveground decision-making. This conflict felt unresolvable often, and many non-student radicals abandoned the encampment-making process entirely. The few of us who remained continued to have our ideas rejected, myself included, by camp liberals. Yet we stuck around, deciding to act on our own initiatives without proposing agenda items to the larger assembly. Eventually, the evening GAs stopped and instead broke into smaller meet-

Notes

1. It's difficult to convey the scale of the zine production and distribution, but a ton of labor went into it. We printed continuously, nearly every other day for the span of two weeks. Everything was hand-assembled, folded, and stapled. About half of all zines printed went to the U.C. Berkeley camp, while the remainder was divided up to other campuses. The content of the zines is important to note, as it makes more clear the concrete impact of the distro work. The materials printed include: communiqués, analysis pieces, and critiques of and produced by different campus insurgences including the Columbia and Humboldt camp-occupations. This brought a *sense of continuity* between all other encampments, and a chance to increase *clarity of purpose*. Along with this material was a healthy dose of literature on and published by the Palestinian resistance factions (Hamas, PFLP, Lion's Den, etc.) and some propaganda by the Palestinian anarchist group Fauda. We also printed a substantial amount of instructional "101" literature on tactics, tools, and relevant practical needs, such as "How to build a barricade" and primers on "building occupation" methods.

2. "Lessons on Taking the School: A communiqué from the occupation of Siemens Hall," *Crimethinc* (zine, April 23, 2024), <https://crimethinc.com/2024/04/23/report-from-within-the-cal-poly-humboldt-occupation-the-occupation-of-siemens-hall>.

3. "No Peace," Unity of Fields (blog post, October 28, 2024), archived at the Wayback Machine, <https://web.archive.org/web/20241101163935/http://unityoffields.org/?p=1161>.

4. Research and Destroy, "The Student Intifada," *Verso Books* (blog post, June 21, 2024), <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/news/the-student-intifada>. The research collective writes of the zionist

practice somewhere between 2017 and 2020, a majority of the camps most enthusiastic participants post-2020. For many people involved with the U.C.B. encampment, it seems like this is the boldest protest they have ever taken part in.

On April 29, on the East coast, the Columbia University encampment wakes up to the administration threatening with a probable sweep by the police. A breakaway group of 46 people in the evening invade Hamilton Hall, smashing out the building's surveillance cameras, barricading themselves in, and renaming it "Hind's Hall." Rather than a "spontaneous" and unplanned action, this building takeover is "surgical and planned down to the minute" by a "tightly organized" cadre, as one comrade reports.³ The following night, April 30, police lock down the entire campus, sweeping the Gaza solidarity encampment with mass arrests, and violently raid Hind's Hall. Also occurring this same night, in the same city, is the sweep and mass arrest of an encampment-occupation formed at the City University of New York (C.U.N.Y.) with 28 people catching charges. (As of this writing, 8 people continue to face charges, 6 with felony charges.)

On the West Coast, April 30, two developments also threaten to reverse the momentum of the cycle of escalation and insurgency, back in the direction of settler-empire's counterrevolution. The first is the raid and removal of the Cal Poly Humboldt takeover, which at this point has seized multiple campus buildings, created barricades, internal processes of horizontal decision-making and popular assemblies, and has even moved to build fortified structures to "occupy" high up in

the trees. From my vantage point, the images and reports of these sweeps and raids is alarming, and mark a clear counter-escalation by the white supremacist state and civil society—a counter-escalation that, only days before, used chemical weapons on a group of mostly students and some faculty at Emory in Atlanta.

That same evening, in Southern California at University of California, Los Angeles (U.C.L.A.), a group of approximately one hundred zionists and pro-zionist christo-fascists (including former soldiers of the israeli military) attack the encampment established on campus. The attack lasts several hours. The group of grown men violently lash out at the students, taunting and beating on members of the encampment, while campus police and other local police agencies stand back for over four hours watching as if spectators at a sports game. This “petty pogrom,” as the Research and Destroy collective describes it, is live-streamed in its teeth-grinding entirety, adding a vicarious dimension for many of us paying close attention to the rapid changes underway in the terrain of this turbulent unfolding struggle.⁴ Sadly, yet understandably, for some this night would mark “the end of the spring of the Student Intifada.”⁵

From my vantage point, bearing witness to all of this sequence of repression signals the urgent need to move beyond the table and enter holistically into the day-to-day life, social reproduction, and defense of the camp i had grown so fond of.

living in tents and makeshift structures. By May 7, U.S. police have arrested more than 2,400 students and non-student protesters at more than 50 college and university campuses across 25 states since the first encampment began at Columbia. And convergences on university campuses in protest of the Israeli offensive and for divestment have been reported in Australia, Canada, Egypt, France, India, Mexico, the Netherlands, Ireland, and the U.K.

of this critical moment in time yet again, we hope to impart this critical context on the readers. the united snakes has pushed the non-profit system, its affiliated counterinsurgent dogs, and the associated colonial tech “gold rush” into the bay area as a way of preemptively stamping out the specters of rebellion which haunt them. to the state agents reading this, both paid and unpaid, we have one word for you: boo!

we urge students, youth, all our beloved outside agitators to just say no. this movement does not belong to individuals. all moments in time belong not to one but to the numerous and the nameless. now is the time to pour gas on the fire and to push the fuck back...⁷

This statement provides an important (if not decisive) criticism of the very real “power vacuum” that is a concrete feature of and obstacle in the U.C. Berkeley encampment, which is filled opportunistically by big-tent organizations and individuals marshaled by the non-profit industrial complex (NPIC) and professionalized activist Left. It also places collective responsibility in the hands of the Bay Area anarchist milieus for this vacuum to persist as such, by not setting strong enough terms of engagement to which all oppositional blocs must dialectically respond to, as well as the lack of exemplary actions taken to make concrete what those terms may be.

Meanwhile, on May 6, the Israeli zionist entity begins its “Rafah Offensive” in the southernmost part of the Gaza strip, or what was to be the indiscriminate bombardment and terrorizing of unarmed refugees, mostly women and children,

II

On May 1, the morning after the petty pogrom witnessed around the world, i decide to spend all day involving myself in the daily social activities that maintain the encampment spread out across the front lawn of Sproul Hall in the heart of U.C. Berkeley campus. Not fully committed to the idea of living full-time in the camp just yet, i’m in awe of the abundance of food, medical and hygiene supplies, housing offered for participants in the form of available tents, as well as the internal processes that were clearly developed on-the-fly. The food deliveries and constant stream of donations is impressive, and a marker that—despite the shadow of disapproval cast by administrators and zionists—the Gaza solidarity encampment has drawn significant community approval and support (this is a point that i will return to elsewhere). Some of my close comrades and friends at this point—who for over a week have been engaged in a deadlock ideological battle with the self-anointed “leadership” of (neo)liberal student activists, grad students, and partially-committed non-student participants from the Bay Area activist Left—had grown frustrated by this point. Whereas, given the relative novelty of everything, i can’t help but see potential in every relation built that tethered the encampment together. In my mind, there is too much collectivity and resources concentrated in the camp to abandon it, despite the troubling news i keep hearing in conversation with trusted comrades.

Additionally, the ever-present, looming threat of zionist

counter-demonstrators at this point is a force to contend with. The precedent set by the attack on the Gaza solidarity encampment at U.C.L.A. the night before, led me to acquire the opinion that non-student local anarchists should not abandon the space of the camp so quickly. After staying the entire night and a tense midnight standoff with a group of obnoxious zionists walking circles around the encampment, yelling anti-Black and anti-Arab slurs and making bomb threats, i decided that i would stay within the camp indefinitely, funneling my energy into militant community defense, barricade fortification, and political education from within the Refaat “Liberation Library” tent.⁶

My opinion and chosen roles notwithstanding, i agreed with the internal criticism from many comrades and friends: there was a need to communicate these tensions and contradictions quickly, having been largely crowded out of the so-called “general assembly” meetings held once every evening. Apparently, similar frustrations from radicals across the Bay Area campuses led to the circulation of an important position paper, which, of course, much of the student/campus-worker bloc at U.C.B. either ignored, or, if challenged to move differently, seemed to not fully comprehend what the autonomist critique is astutely demystifying. As the May 3 statement, titled “Bay Area Autonomists’ Reflections on U.C.B., S.F.S.U., and U.S.F. Camps” reads:

we are numerous, we have no name, no body, no beginning, and certainly no end. this is a call, a reflection, a promise that

we will find each other. we are the spark to an uncontrollable fire.

in recent weeks, we’ve watched the new bay area (quite different from the one we grew up in) join the student movement to call for an end to the ongoing genocide in gaza. uc berkeley, san francisco state university, and university of san francisco are as of now the three local campuses where student-based encampments have launched...

...there have been numerous attempts for autonomy and escalation for gaza stifled by the university-sanctioned cowards and the alphabet boys. we understand the majority of our fellow students and fellow young people are learning this shit on the fly and taking their first steps toward fighting for liberation. however, we understand there is something of a power vacuum that opens when students look to those with experience. the “organizers” who step in during these moments tend to be paid actors, pouncing to push their liberal compliance on students who then see these teachings as gospel. we see this as a threat with a history, a context, and deeply infected roots.

we are in the bay area, with its own unparalleled history of black radical tradition, a centerpoint for the occupy movement, a bright fire burning from grief for oscar grant. the bay is the hub of countless counterinsurgent agencies—mostly non-profits—many of which began preying on our people in the aftermath of these organic moments in time. the united snakes government fears black rebellion, and all rebellions so inspired and shaped. as we witness the attempted defanging