

University
of California as
Infrastructure of
Empire



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
withwhateverweapons.noblogs.org*



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.

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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:

nycabc.wordpress.com

The University of California (U.C.) remains an infrastructure of central functional importance within the global apparatus of U.S. American-Israeli Zionist coalescence. My use of the term “infrastructure” here is intentional, analytically specific, and provides an important geographic scale for examining the form and content of the Palestine solidarity movement, as well as the concrete social context of the U.C. campus as a site/scene of (potential) revolutionary anti-colonial insurgency and exemplary action. The term “infrastructure,” as defined by Nick Mitchell, refers to “material systems, constructed, often under the auspices of state and capitalist planning and regulation, for the purposes of organizing the movement of people, ideas, and other entities over time and space,” which in turn comprise a “major part of the social machinery of domination and exploitation.”¹

From this notion of infrastructure, the dynamic set of *social* relationships that constitute the University of California system, its specific historical and institutional formations, and its role in the reproduction and maintenance of colonial-capitalism can be more easily mapped out. As Mitchell explains, several contested logics of social organization characterize the U.C. as an infrastructure in this sense, foremost among them being: dispossession, displacement, and accumulation.² Within this schema, the logic of *accumulation* can be identified as a precondition for the U.C.'s public mission of education and research, the concrete basis upon which this “mission” is made possible at scale. The scaling up of education and research is driven by the “convergence and

(re)articulation of different accumulation projects.”³

Accumulation of land, of populations, of capital, of labor, of knowledge are all elemental material interests and objectives that the U.C. as an infrastructural form facilitates. The educational mission of the University of California system establishes an institutional narrative that deflects (if not outright disavows) its imperial nature by “rewriting violence as a project of amelioration and uplift.”⁴ Nowhere is the imperialist-colonial character of the U.C. system more apparent than its status as a research arm for the U.S. Department of Defense and its integration into the Israeli Zionist war machine.

On a quantitative level, the figures are striking. The Associated Press on May 15, 2024 reported that the University of California has approximately \$32 billion invested in weapons manufacturers and related industry, representing about one-fifth of the U.C.’s overall assets. Broken down further, the figures read:

\$3.3 billion in weapons manufacturing

\$12 billion in U.S. treasuries

\$163 million in Black Rock

\$2.1 billion in investments managed by Black Rock

\$6 billion in investment firm Blackstone

\$3.2 billion in other companies with ties to Israeli settler colonialism, including Coca-Cola and Disney⁵

Black Rock is an asset management firm that owns shares of companies linked to and supporting Israel, and Blackstone is a similar investment firm with ties to the Zionist entity.

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:

freecaseynow.noblogs.org



In a September 29, 2024 article published in *Jacobin* magazine, it is found that the University of California received \$333 million of Department of Defense research funding that was distributed among different labs across its campuses. Apparently, eighteen labs held active contracts at the time of the article's publication, and ten other labs recently had their contracts expire. Contracts and investments such as those listed above are straight-forward, concrete targets to organize around and mobilize against within campaigns for divestment. Disclosure remains a necessary objective.

Both the U.S. military's investment in research produced by U.C. scholars and the U.C.'s investment in various aspects of Israeli state formation and social planning represent *quantitative relations* between components of the transnational settler-colonial apparatus that link together the United States of Amerika and the Israeli Zionist entity. These are specific, analytically distinguishable relations that have a traceable history, their changes can be examined over a span of time, and so forth. There are numerous other dimensions of the apparatus of settler empire by which the University of California mediates as an infrastructure.

Borrowing from the terminology used by Fredy Perlman and Roger Gregoire, I would like to further differentiate between these "quantitative" relations between various components of the U.S.-Israel's imperial apparatus and the more fundamental *qualitative relations* that compose "the shell in which the quantitative changes take place."⁷ Distinguishing between the two kinds of relation brings clarity

to our reading practice, offering a conceptual tool of demarcation that will assist collective discussions over strategy and the prioritization of objectives/goals. Sitting with the difference between the “quantitative” and “qualitative” yields a creative tension that will enable us to anticipate concrete obstacles, to pinpoint antagonistic versus non-antagonistic contradictions, and to locate the most effective targets for offensive attack. It is from a recognition and analysis of these two differentiated levels of structural analysis that we can more properly comprehend each U.C. campus in its local specificity and political geography, and also establish a sense of the continuities among each campus as sites of struggle with similar attributes, functions, and technologies of control. What are the possibilities, precedents, and limit-points of the University of California campuses as a field of struggle for anticolonial insurgency and the global Palestine solidarity movement?

As Dylan Rodriguez writes, the University of California campuses are historically significant sites of counterinsurgency,

not only because the U.C. serves as an infrastructure for research and teaching agendas that support (and define) the cultural, juridical, social scientific, and technological formations of modern domestic and global policing/warfare, but also because it actively uses police power on its employees, students, and visitors in its daily operations through electronic and video surveillance, plain-clothes observation of demonstrations and political events, detention and arrest of suspected unauthorized campus visitors, militarized responses to protest mobilizations, and an armed

LINES IN THE SAND

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1. To Speak for Myself
2. Poetry
3. Academicism, within & without the Academy
4. Singular Apparatus, Differentiated Terrains
5. University of California as Infrastructure of Empire
6. Light the Way, Part I: The Gaza Solidarity
Encampment at U.C. Berkeley
7. Site & Scene of the University Campus
8. Forms of Struggle
9. Light the Way, Part II: The Campus Flood
10. Lines in the Sand
11. Federal Task-Force to Combat Anti-[Zionism]
12. A Message to a Prisoner Letter Writing Event
13. Timeline of the Gaza Solidarity Encampment Wave
& Campus Flood at U.C. Berkeley

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

patrolling presence (etc.).⁸

As such, the U.C. campus is not only a producer and industrial conduit of U.S.-Israeli military engagement “somewhere else” but also presents us with a unique zone of asymmetrical combat *in-and-of itself*, with its own particular forms of specialized reaction and counterinsurgency that must be considered in relation to resistance, insurgency, and oppositional movement from local-to-global scales.

The University of California in its contemporary form, following a half-century of neoliberal austerity and financialization, “cannot imagine itself outside or in absence of policing,” writes Rodriguez.⁹ The U.C. campus is therefore itself a unique “counterinsurgent learning-environment” which organizes technologies of policing that allow for “university-sanctioned” forms of student organization *only*, and relentlessly attempts to enforce “disciplinary (criminalizing) parameters around autonomous forms of student community and mobilization, including mass gatherings, mutual aid (housing and food distribution), and off-campus political and cultural activities.”¹⁰ If we understand the U.C. campus as a geography of warfare, then how does our perception and interpretations of the spring 2024 intifada of the college campuses change? What orientation and approach to praxis can (and do) emerge from an explicit comprehension of the warfare condition? What kind of strategy and operations meet the task of sustaining a protracted revolutionary movement on the counterinsurgent campus? If the call is to “flood the gates,” what might we learn from the

operational art of Al-Aqsa Flood, for our own purposes in the campus struggle? Not simply as single action (or even a series of events) but as a *paradigm* for decolonization and abolition praxis?

Notes

1. Abigail Boggs, Nick Mitchell, Eli Meyerhoff, and Zach Schwartz-Weinstein, “Marx, Critique, and Abolition: Higher Education as Infrastructure,” *The Palgrave International Handbook of Marxism and Education*, ed. Richard Hall, Inny Accioly, and Krystian Szadkowski (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 510.

2. Ibid, 519.

3. Ibid, 524.

4. Abigail Boggs, Eli Meyerhoff, Nick Mitchell, and Zach Schwartz-Weinstein, “Abolitionist University Studies: An Invitation,” *Abolitionist University Studies* (2020), <https://abolition.university/invitation/>.

5. Sophie Austin, “University of California official says system has \$32 billion in holdings targeted by protesters” Associated Press (May 15, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/california-regents-university-divestment-israel>. Michael Burke, “UC has \$32 billion in assets targeted by pro-Palestinian protesters, but no plans to divest” *Ed Source* (May 14, 2024), <https://edsource.org/2024/uc-has-32-billion-in-assets-targeted-by-pro-palestinian-protesters-but-no-plans-to-divest/>.

6. Derek Seidman, “Using Research to Uncover Campus Complicity in Genocide,” *Jacobin Magazine* (blog post, September 29, 2024), <https://jacobin.com/2024/09/power-research-universities-palestine-1968>

7. Fredy Perlman and Roger Gregoire, *Worker-Student Action Committees: France, May '68* (Olympia: Detritus Books, 2020 [1969]), 78.

8. Dylan Rodríguez, “Tyranny of the Task Force: Police Abolition and the Counterinsurgent Campus,” *Connecticut Law*