

Forms of Struggle



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*



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

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.

Forms of Struggle

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



The momentary escalations of the Palestinian solidarity movement on U.S. university and college campuses consisted of several different “forms” of struggle. The most prevalent forms were: protest encampments, expropriation, and sabotage.

The encampment model became the most generalized form, proliferating in seemingly memetic fashion across approximately 140 campuses. This is due to several factors, foremost is that it is a minimally combative tactic, with relatively low risk involved. Its popularity spread widely and rapidly. Regardless of its non-combative character, a majority of these camps were subjected to harsh police repression, as well as harassment (and even attacks) by zionists and other reactionaries. There has been a great deal of affirmative and critical analyses published over the past year that reflects on the tactic.¹ As a participant in the Gaza solidarity encampment at U.C. Berkeley and west coast articulations of the spring intifada more generally, my perspective is undoubtedly influenced by such experience. The Revolutionary Intercommunalism Research Group gives us a helpful summary of this dimension of the Gaza solidarity protests on university campuses overall:

The prospect of the Columbia encampment spreading to schools across the country formed the horizon of activity. All debates on tactics took place within this strategic possibility and limit. Campus protests sought to defend the “Liberated Zones” from police and Zionists, while simultaneously turning the camps into centers of mutual aid, group deliberation, political education, and chanting. It is not clear why, since the “negotiations” between student bureaucrats and

university authorities were a gross and demoralizing ruse, but the protestors seemed to believe that establishing encampments would give them leverage against their respective authorities on the question of support for the Israeli war against Gaza. Students and their allies thought that universities form a central pillar of the Israeli war in Palestine, or at least attempted to foment widespread resistance under that premise.

The political meaning of the protests was clarified by the clashes between protestors and police; not only by the slogans, statements, and demands produced by the students. Everywhere that protestors failed to engage in active or passive physical confrontation with the police, we can say nothing really happened, even where protestors had developed coherent and interesting statements and goals. The real question posed by the events focuses us on the role of American civilians in opposing US imperialism in Palestine. What could they do, and what would they risk to do so?

Most encampments were short lived, facing police attacks and violence in an hour or less. This had a serious effect on what protestors could do or imagine, and locked them inside a framework of defense. As squads of helmeted riot police ambushed camps in the early morning hours with clubs and mace, the Gaza Solidarity Encampments defended themselves in almost every way an unarmed movement could. Most camps opted for passive resistance to arrest by linking arms and constructing barricades. Some were more active: they shoved the police, threw objects, or blocked the cruisers taking arrestees to jail.²

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1. To Speak for Myself
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Encampment at U.C. Berkeley
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12. A Message to a Prisoner Letter Writing Event
13. Timeline of the Gaza Solidarity Encampment Wave
& Campus Flood at U.C. Berkeley

Notes

1. Dylan J, Frances Fuku, and N. S. Ríos, “Student Intifada: Reflections from the 2024 Palestine Solidarity Encampment Movement,” *Unity and Struggle* (September 11, 2024), <https://www.unityandstruggle.org/2024/09/student-intifada/>.
2. The Revolutionary Intercommunalism Research Group, “The Student Intifada and the Revolution to Come,” *Radar Journal*, no. 1 (2024), <https://radarjournal.online/pdfs/issue1.pdf>.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Research and Destroy, “The Student Intifada,” *Verso Books* (blog post, June 21, 2024), <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/news/the-student-intifada>.

When encampments took militant community defense more seriously, or what the Research Group above refers to as “active” resistance to the police, they in some instances were able to stay functioning for two or even three weeks. Some were able to regroup after attacks and disbandment by the police. The encampment wave had been based on a paradigm of *strategic defense*. Yet as the Research Group soberly argues: “as long as the police are permitted to retreat,” they will eventually surround and destroy [unarmed] place-based resistance.”³ Here they point out how “static bases of resistance” over the last ten years have always led insurgencies to “surrender the initiative” to the police, who have all the time they need to “plan a counter-attack, to be carried out when it most suits them.”⁴

On a few campuses however the Gaza solidarity encampments served as a launch point for actual escalation, which most often took on some form of *expropriation* action. Most often, this type of initiative consisted of the “occupation” of campus buildings, planned and executed by small breakaway groups. Cal Poly Humboldt and Columbia University are the first sites this tactic was advanced at, followed by takeovers of varying degrees of “success” on only a few more campuses, not many, including City University of New York (C.U.N.Y.) and U.C. Berkeley. Although it is hardly ever mentioned, one of the more inspiring building takeovers was at C.S.U. Los Angeles, where people autonomously converged one night on the campus to occupy, barricade, trash, and loot a major administrative building. After ransacking the building, the large group dispersed instead of attempting to hold down the

expropriated building. This was strategically smart and tactically innovative.

Another principle form of struggle and creative self-activity that was organically expressed in the CSU Los Angeles building takeover is *sabotage*, through deliberate property destruction. Two unique examples of sabotage as a form of struggle in the intifada last spring are at Portland State University and U.C. Berkeley. In Portland, a black bloc march tore through a commercial district near campus, smashing up property of businesses whose interests align with the zionist entity, staying on the move to evade capture. The march ended on campus, where the existing encampment had already seized the library. The library was ransacked. On May Day at Portland State, a black bloc march also smashed out every window of the campus police station.

Far too often, when a new protest “movement moment” arises in the contemporary U.S.-context, there is a viral effect and *mimetic replication* of fetishized tactical forms throughout its course of development: certain tactics that prove successful in one environment are attempted by others in a different location, often without consideration for that tactic’s relation to strategy or mindfulness of geographic and contextual specificity. For example, maybe the encampment model is not the best suited for particular campuses but it is for others? Maybe the “form” of struggle is not what needed to be replicated universally as the spring wave began to rise but only its momentum and spirit of purpose (i.e. the conflictuality, refusal, and militant anti-zionist principles)? If each campus took into

need have no such scruples. Take the buildings, take the campus, then give them away to the broader movement, so that it can organize for work in other areas, such as direct action against defense contractors. Come back after summer and take them again. The fight for the liberation of Palestine will be long.⁷

help push things forward. The connection between this strike, however, and the broader university Gaza solidarity movement, provides the opportunity for such divisions to be transcended, though such efforts will likely need to be coordinated at a distance from union leadership—who might worry that elements not directly under their control will weaken their position at the bargaining table. The “stand-up” strike model is, in this case, no more a structure of escalation than it is a structure for forestalling the same, holding power in reserve... In truth, the university will likely be willing to yield anything of significance only once it’s clear that the strike risks turning into a wider campus conflagration, with lecturers and tenure-track faculty joining the strike and students engaging in autonomous action to liberate campuses. It is then that the university will truly want to avail itself of the union’s disciplinary power.

These problems have complimentary solutions. The encampments, bearers of the initial spirit under the slogan “Escalate for Gaza,” will need to push the union to overspill the constraints of policy and legalism. The strikers must by the same token overcome boundaries imposed by the division of labor at the UC, and particularly the divisions among students, academic workers, faculty, staff, and so-called outside agitators. This can sometimes be difficult given the position in which graduate student workers find themselves with regard to undergraduates, for whom their real concern is the basis of solidarity but no less a route to paternalism. Unionized educators may feel compunctions about violently blockading campus and confronting some of their own students who are not in solidarity, but students themselves

account the specifics of place, local demography, and institutional culture with greater consideration, the generalization of the intifada may have been far more substantial without the pressures of fitting into the mold of a pre-determined form. This of course is only speculation, but here we begin to see the problem of “tacticism”: when a movement or insurgency disproportionately focuses on tactical questions at the expense of all the other necessities that struggles over social power require.

Relatedly, the news cycle of our epoch—both “mainstream” and normative-algorithmic social media—deeply reinforces this compulsory tactical mimeticism between and across different geographies. What begins as an action uniquely intended for its particular local circumstances unexpectedly and rapidly becomes an “object” of the news cycle, celebrated or ridiculed, part of the commodity spectacle no less: its formal components duplicated without critical contemplation of its relation to content or context. Where escalation was able to materialize, the fetishization of form is less prevalent, and seems to correlate with the capacity of specific campus protests to generalize. “[S]truggles spread insofar as they give people a way to channel their frustrations into meaningful collective action, to use the skills and relationships they already have, and to participate in meaningful historic events.”⁵ And central to this process of invitation is ensuring that our strategic thought is based in a concrete analysis of concrete situations. “Tactics cannot be judged in abstraction, because there is no abstract balance power.”⁶ Unfortunately, in most Gaza solidarity

encampments, the greater the escalation on campus the less number of people seem to participate or in some instances even support the escalatory actions taken at great risk. This is not desirable, as those taking on increased militancy become isolated and atomized and thus more easily targeted for repression, as was the case in the Bay Area at U.C. Berkeley.

One form of struggle that we have not discussed yet, but would emerge briefly against the University of California, is the “political strike,” which U.A.W. graduate workers on a few U.C. campuses organized. Unfortunately, the strike was effectively killed by a court order. A helpful perspective on this attempted strike and the broader university Gaza solidarity movement is offered by the Research and Destroy collective:

The strike [as a form of struggle], once and for good reason understood as potentially part of a revolutionary sequence, has largely established itself in the U.S. as a limited means towards a limited ends, specific demands. The return of the political strike to the precincts of the UAW, however, portends something more. As the institutions of empire have had progressively less surplus, less wiggle room, fewer fucks to give and fewer reforms to offer, winning these in any serious way has required ever more intensity. If the path to revolution is no longer to be found via accruing reforms, then the reforms themselves, if that is one’s goal, nevertheless require something like revolutionary intensity. It may not be too long before one must blow up a pipeline just to win socdem policy changes.

This sets in part the measure of the current movement. The coordination of strike and encampment, if it can be developed, would be a significant and heartening development. Alongside the steadfastness of the student protests, the realization of the strike must be attributed, in large part, to the work that comrades have done to deepen and radicalize the UAW at the UC. [The 2022-23] strike may have been beaten by the university....but the graduate students remain mobilized, organized at the department level. At the same time, however, these [2024] strikes present at least two problems.

The first is that they accede to a legalistic terrain, requiring the negotiation of labor law to find basis for a political strike despite a contract with a No Strike proviso... This would be less of an issue had not the strike itself, in the context of demobilized encampments and exhausted academic years nationwide, become the leading orientation for the movement, offering leverage elsewhere absent. Consequently, the fate of campus solidarity with Gaza was handed to the courts—a strange evolution from its origins in defiant illegality, or at least principled indifference to official policies...

The second problem is the extent to which such strikes risk re-institutionalizing the problems of militancy at another level. During the 2022-23 UC strike, the necessary focus of rank-and-file formations on internal cohesion toward pushing past the grade deadline, where their core leverage lay, left other factions on campus (particularly undergraduates) with little sense of how they might involve themselves and