

# A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

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EN ESPAÑOL  
PÁGINAS 20-24

## Israeli Flag Raising in Fresno

BY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STAFF

The raising of the Israeli flag on Oct. 12 at Eaton Plaza in downtown Fresno was met with protestors from Peace Fresno, grassroots community activists and Palestinians holding signs. The Israeli flag was raised in recognition of the 1,400 people who were killed by Hamas in Israel on Oct. 7.

As Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer spoke, he was confronted with chants to "Free Palestine," voices questioning his past transgressions

and inquiries as to what he is doing to stop the attacks against the Palestinian people.

Dyer was not there to talk about the bombing of the Gaza Strip taking place that day but instead focused on attacks against Israel. There was a gathering of supporters from the Jewish community, and there were several shouting matches between the two groups of demonstrators. There was also a large police presence.

Other speakers included Rabbi Rick Wiener and Rabbi Levy Zirkind. This was followed by the raising of the Israeli flag at Eaton Plaza. Protestors asked the City of Fresno to fly the Palestinian flag as well, but that request was quickly dismissed.

The flag raising took place as a state of war between Israel and Palestinians was under way. An invasion of Gaza by Israeli troops seems imminent.

To see a short video of the event, visit [youtu.be/TZB44DO-nAs](https://youtu.be/TZB44DO-nAs).



While Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer was explaining his support for Israel, protestors showed support for Palestine. Photo by Mike Rhodes



A supporter of Palestine was present at the event in which Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer, in the name of the City of Fresno, raised the Israeli flag. Photo by Mike Rhodes

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## Fresno Demonstrates about War

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

Since war broke out on Oct. 7 in Israel and Gaza, there have been several events and demonstrations in Fresno. Some events were in support of Israel, and several were in support of Palestine.

There was a prayer vigil for Israel at the Cornerstone Church on Oct. 10. There was an Israeli flag-raising ceremony at Eaton Plaza on Oct. 12. At the intersection of Blackstone and Nees avenues in Fresno, demonstrations occurred on Oct. 14 in support of Palestinians in Gaza, on Oct. 15 in support of Israel and on Oct. 17 in support of Palestinian civilians under heavy bombardment (which drew 450 people). All these events were peaceful.

At the flag-raising ceremony, members of Peace Fresno, the Palestinian American

community and other Fresno residents came to protest the one-sided action of raising the Israeli flag in support of Israel as innocent civilians of Gaza are getting bombarded and killed.

Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer, objecting to protestors at the event exercising their First Amendment rights peacefully, in a statement that outrageously mischaracterized the protestors, said that "we are not here today to alienate any part of our community. However, if people in this community or anywhere else support the terrorist activity that occurred on Saturday in Israel, then I would question their allegiance to the United States of America."

He went on to repeat unverified claims about atrocities committed by Hamas. He made no mention of Palestinians killed in Gaza by indiscriminate Israeli bombing.

Several hundred people were in support of Palestinians at the Oct. 14 demonstration. Many people held signs calling for a ceasefire and an end to all violence on both sides. Many signs called for ending the occupation, and there were many chants condemning uncritical U.S. support of Israel's bombing campaign against the civilians of Gaza.

Speakers accused Israel of war crimes and of dehumanizing all Palestinians. Several speakers criticized Mayor Dyer for raising

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NOVEMBER 2023

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# Fresno Demonstrates about War

Continued from page 1

the flag of Israel at Eaton Plaza. Several more demonstrations are planned.

Across the United States, many Americans are speaking out and calling for a ceasefire.

Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) made this statement:

"Jewish Voice for Peace mourns deeply for the over 1,200 Israelis killed, the families destroyed, including many of our own, and fears for the lives of Israelis taken hostage. Many are still counting the dead, looking for missing loved ones, devastated by the losses. We wholeheartedly agree with leading Palestinian rights groups: the massacres committed by Hamas against Israeli civilians are horrific war crimes. There is no justification in international law for the indiscriminate killing of civilians or the holding of civilian hostages."

The JVP statement continues, "And now, horrifyingly, the Israeli and American governments are weaponizing these deaths



Adam Yaghmour, the lead organizer of an Oct. 17 protest for Palestinians that drew 450 people at the intersection of Blackstone and Nees avenues in Fresno. Photo by Peter Maiden

to fuel a genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza, pledging to 'open the gates of hell.' This war is a continuation of the Nakba, when in 1948, tens of thousands of Palestinians fleeing violence sought refuge in Gaza. It's a continuation of 75 years of Israeli occupation and apartheid."

The Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) issued this statement:

"The policy of the United States has consistently been to deny the reality of the Palestinian plight, only recognizing the situation as a mere 'conflict' and standing by to further arm and support Israeli

aggression," said MPAC President Salam Al-Marayati.

"Rather than use their influence to end the bloodshed of Palestinians and Israelis alike, the United States focuses its foreign policy on forging deals with other Arab nations in support of Israel. In doing so, they perpetuate the humiliating frustration of the Palestinians and fuel the cycle of violent reaction to occupation.

"As a global leader, as well as a fundamental player in the history and maintenance of the Palestinian Occupation, the United States must take effective steps to address both the current war and the occupation as a whole."

On Oct. 17, an air strike hit a Gaza hospital, killing more than 500 civilians. As of Oct. 17, more than 3,500 people in Gaza had been killed in air strikes—more than 1,000 children and more than 800 women.

Contact your representatives in Washington and demand diplomacy. Only an immediate ceasefire can end the bloodshed on both sides.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bob McCloskey is an activist and resident of Yokuts Valley. Contact him at bobmccloskey06@gmail.com.

# Protecting Indigenous Rights

BY MIKE RHODES

According to Fresno City Council Member Miguel Arias, Fresno is the first city in California to make changes to its Municipal Code that end discrimination against Indigenous people. The amendment also protects against caste discrimination. Fresno is the second city in the country to address anti-caste discrimination. Seattle was the first.

At a press conference held in front of City Hall on Sept. 28, City Council Members Arias, Mike Karbassi and Tyler Maxwell said that the resolution passed unanimously.



Sarait Martinez (at the podium), executive director of Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO). Photo by Mike Rhodes



Naindeep Singh (at the podium), executive director of the Jakara Movement. Photo by Mike Rhodes

Sarait Martinez, executive director of Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO), said, "We know this discrimination is part of the legacy of colonial structures that continues today, and I think this takes a concrete step to start combating it."

"Our indigenous nations have been working for over 500 years to end discrimination and end the violence," she added.

Naindeep Singh, executive director of the Jakara Movement, said that "what is so powerful about today is that, just as Council Member Arias showed, the fight for civil rights, the fight for dignity, the fight for humanity is alive and well and growing and thriving and especially continues to be born right here in the Central Valley and specifically in the city of Fresno."

"Our collective responsibility to our community requires us to stand beside those who have briefly illuminated these pressing concerns, impacting marginalized communities across employment, education and housing," says Arias.

"This ordinance represents our unequivocal acknowledgment of the discrimination that exists and our unwavering commitment to confront it head on."

\*\*\*\*\*

Mike Rhodes is the executive director of the Community Alliance newspaper and author of the book Dispatches from the War Zone, about homelessness in Fresno. Contact him at mikerhodes@comcast.net.

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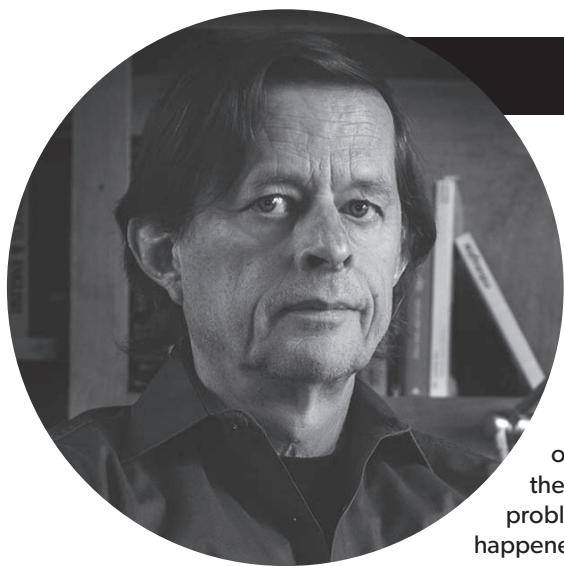
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FROM THE EDITOR

# More Than Ever, Independent Media Makes a Difference



It's no secret that the City and County of Fresno received millions of dollars to manage the homelessness problem. Yet, nothing happened, and the money goes mainly to...developers! And still hundreds of people are on the

streets with nowhere to go.

The *Community Alliance* has been reporting about this and other issues that usually go unreported, or are disguised by city council members and county supervisors to make you think they are doing their job.

We continuously bring you news and analysis about these hot issues affecting our city and county. After all, it's about our tax dollars that our elected officials manage at their will without adequately consulting you (and us).

Corruption is a bipartisan issue.

The more we know, the more we can push to correct the wrongdoing.

That's why we need free, independent media. "Independent" means not attached to any source that could control the content of the news.

The *Community Alliance* has been exposing corruption in our local institutions since 1996. We are the only independent and progressive publication in the San Joaquin Valley.

Because we are not mainstream and not connected to big money, we struggle to survive.

Without your support, we won't be able to publish the stories you won't find anywhere else.

As the cost of producing a printed and online local paper goes up, our monetary resources don't.

More than ever, in this fast-changing world, independent media plays a crucial role.

Help us to continue bringing you fair information and social analysis so that we can better understand our society and make the right decisions. Let's make Fresno and the San Joaquin Valley a better place to live. Let's be sure we have an independent media you can trust.

Join us on Dec. 8 for our fundraiser at the SEIU Local 521 (5228 E. Pine Ave., Fresno). Chat with our writers and long-time supporters. Help us to make our paper the right tool to confront corruption and wrongdoing.

Subscribe, donate, join and enjoy!

Stay tuned for our keynote speaker and special guests.

Check online for ongoing news about the event at [fresnoalliance.com](http://fresnoalliance.com). Till next month.

The *Community Alliance* is an independent voice for workers and progressive groups in the Central San Joaquin Valley. The goal of this monthly newspaper is to build a powerful progressive movement that will support social, environmental and economic justice; immigrant rights; and a living wage for all working people. We seek to expose social and political injustices and to link the diverse network of activists working in our community.

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**Deadline:**  
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Articles 800-1,200 words.  
For more details, contact  
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**Peace and Social Justice Calendar:**

Please submit all activities to  
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by the 15th of the previous month.

**Letters to the Editor:**

E-mail editor@fresnoalliance.com.  
Up to 200 words.

The *Community Alliance* newspaper reserves the right to edit all articles for space and clarity. The *Community Alliance* newspaper is printed on recycled paper. The *Community Alliance* newspaper is a 501(c)(4) entity.

The *Community Alliance* newspaper is published monthly by the San Joaquin Valley Media Alliance, located at 1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno, CA 93728. The *Community Alliance* newspaper is distributed free of charge, or by subscription. Subscriptions are \$40 per year, \$60 per year for a movement builder subscription or \$15 per year for a low-income subscription.

## Letters to the Editor

### Ceres Paper Trump-Focused

The quaint, culturally deficient municipality of Ceres in Stanislaus County is the unfortunate home of what could well be the worst weekly newspaper in America—the *Ceres Courier*—the malodorous stench of which is stunting the city of Ceres' intellectual and emotional growth, if not its population growth.

What a pathetic pile of Trumptarded trash trying to pass as a newspaper. The craptastic *Ceres Courier*, laughably ludicrous in almost every respect, shows a complete lack of respect for the people of the city of Ceres and Stanislaus County by continuing to employ a full-blown fascist, racist homophobe named Jeff Benziger as its incompetent idiot of an editor whose personal pet peeve is Mexican taco trucks.

Bigoted Benziger is a real piece of White supremacist work, to say the least, and the *Ceres Courier* is his work. So sad! Benziger has been whining, crying, yelling and screaming in print ever since career criminal conservative cult leader Donald "The Traitor" Trump got his 215-pound Putin's puppet backside tossed out of office by the majority of America's voters in a landslide in both the popular vote and Electoral College back in November 2020. Get over it, snowflake!

It's almost three years later, and neither *Ceres Courier* Editor Benziger nor his prison-bound Dear Leader Donald Trump are emotionally capable of accepting reality. Joe Biden is President, and Vladimir Putin's bought-and-paid-for puppet Trump is not. Get over it already, you hateful hillbillies—You lost! And deranged Donald Trump is guilty as hell! Trump is 100% guilty!

Trump will be a convicted felon before the next election, and President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris will be reelected easily in 2024, especially if Trump runs again (whether from a prison cell or house arrest at Mar-a-Lago). You can take that to the bank. Biden-Harris will win again. Donald Trump is done, son. God bless America!

Jake Pickering  
Ceres

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# Climate Change, Water Scarcity and Consequences

BY DEBAY TADESSE

Fear of the damaging repercussions of climate change has increased worries that environmental deterioration and population pressures could force millions of people to leave their homes and cause severe social unrest.

According to most experts researching the potential effects of climate change, many countries throughout the world are projected to face greater temperatures, rising sea levels, shifting rainfall patterns and increased climate unpredictability, more severe storms, increased drought and threats to wildlife, all of which could impact a significant portion of the planet's people.

Predictions of the next world war involving water instead of oil, land or other natural resources are increasingly common. Water can be figuratively viewed as the blood of the organic whole that makes up the world, according to Malin Falkenmark, a Swedish hydrologist. Water availability and use for domestic, industrial, agricultural and hydropower generation should be considered when governments formulate development strategy or policy.

Humanity's demand for water is growing. Pressure on water resources is increasing due to overuse, pollution and climate change. The UN 2023 Water Conference, the most critical event on water in a generation, seeks to raise awareness of the global water crisis, exchange game-changing ideas and spur global action toward achieving the internationally agreed water-related goals and targets.

The UN General Assembly, which has 193 member countries, is the United Nations' main decision-making body. It offers a special platform for bilateral discussion on every aspect of international affairs covered by the UN Charter.

Only 3% of the earth's surface is covered by freshwater; the other 97% is saltwater. Barely 0.3% of the fresh water's 3% total is found in rivers and lakes; the remainder is frozen in glaciers and ice caps. Fresh water is limited, but its uneven distribution is more so than its abundance on the earth's surface. There would have been sufficient water if it had been distributed evenly for all imaginable human requirements.

According to Terje Tvedt, a Norwegian academic, "There is plenty of water in the world; the problem is that it is frequently either in the wrong place or available at the wrong time."

Water shortage is currently a problem in several U.S. states due to poor management of water resources and a lack of cooperation between cities and states. This could result in decreased agricultural productivity, which would either cause a food shortage or an increase in food prices.

## Water and Food Security

Water shortage is one of the most critical environmental problems of the 21st century and has caught the attention of both the United States and the rest of the world. World Water Day is marked annually on March 22 to encourage sustainable management of freshwater resources and to increase public awareness of the importance of clean water.

Speakers at the water conference concluded that there will be severe water shortages for two-thirds of the world's population over the next 25 years because freshwater demand is 17% more than supply. In addition, the World Resources Institute in Washington, D.C., has warned that freshwater systems worldwide are in danger. By 2025, it is estimated that a billion people of the world's population will experience water scarcity.

Water demand to meet basic human needs, food security, energy and economic development while maintaining the integrity of aquatic ecosystems cannot be based strictly on efficiency criteria to reconcile private and societal interests. Furthermore, individuals, special interest groups, nonprofits, the private sector and government agencies respond differently to water-use imperatives. These stakeholders will increasingly influence choices between competing objectives.

The present state of affairs will eventually result in fierce conflicts. The status quo, which doesn't guarantee equitable water distribution or make significant expenditures in water conservation measures, is primarily to blame for the absence of regional cooperation. This leads to an undeniable escalation of the worrying rate of environmental destruction.

The environment could eventually entirely disintegrate if prompt action is not taken to reverse the trend, severely affecting the quantity and quality of water sources in the United States.

Missouri is located in the center of the nation. In addition to the eight states that border it, Missouri shares water with 26 additional states and two Canadian provinces. Interstate streams include the Mississippi, Missouri and White rivers and their basins.

Each year, groundwater (underground water) provides 30% of California's water needs. During instances of intense drought, the use of groundwater might rise by 60% or more. More than 850 million acre-feet (1,050 km<sup>3</sup>) of water might be stored in California's 450 recognized groundwater reservoirs.

There is a greater need for water during the dry summer with less natural precipitation or melting. California's unpredictable climate can result in prolonged droughts and significant flooding. These events can occur when atmospheric rivers, which have the potential to be dangerous yet are crucial to the state's water supply, are present.



Horseshoe Bend of the Colorado River in Arizona. The Colorado River flows through portions of seven states and Mexico. Most of its water is utilized to irrigate agricultural land southeast of the state's Palo Verde, Imperial and Coachella valleys. Photo courtesy of The Commons

Throughout its 1,440 miles, the Colorado River flows through portions of seven states, numerous Native American reservations and Mexico. Legally speaking, California is entitled to 4.4 million acre-feet of river water annually.

Southern California's metropolitan areas also rely heavily on the Colorado River, even though most of that water is utilized to irrigate agricultural land southeast of the state's Palo Verde, Imperial and Coachella valleys. The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California transports supplies to urban areas via the Colorado River Aqueduct.

Water responsibility is crucial to the growth of employment opportunities, scientific and technical advances, and the provision of basic needs such as food, health, education and shelter.

On the federal and state levels, governments in the United States face a serious issue with environmental degradation. This includes water-scarce regions, migration, settlement, deforestation, erosion, floods, sedimentation, land degradation, desertification, protracted drought, climate change, global warming, wildfires and sedimentation.

The national government must create and sustain effective agricultural and industrial development processes so that society can endure the stress caused by increasing food prices. To benefit everybody, governments must utilize their natural resources, especially water, before pursuing methodical and sustainable development. Water is a natural resource that all states have and is essential to the importance of agriculture and agro-based industries.

Finally, there is fear expressed by several sources that if the demand for fair distribution and water conservation is not addressed, the situation could deteriorate into a catastrophe. The states must negotiate and create a new water allocation based on the universal principle to reverse this tendency, set the groundwork for cooperation and optimally use their shared resources.

## International Water Rights

A fundamental guideline for using international watercourses is provided in Article 5 of the International Law Commission. It mandates equal participation of upstream and downstream states in the use, development and maintenance of a river.

The criteria set forth in Article 6 must be taken into account when determining whether usage is fair and reasonable.

"Obligation not to cause significant harm" in Article 7 serves as a restraint on riparian activity. States must use international watercourses responsibly to ensure that they do not significantly impair other riparian states.

Article 7 compels the state that caused the harm to consult with the affected states if significant harm still occurs. The procedure outlined in this article is designed to prevent significant harm as much as possible while ensuring a fair outcome in each individual circumstance. The commission's draft provides mandatory resort to nonbinding third-party fact-finding to support the execution of these articles.

Following this core principle, each state should be able to accept and discuss its shared resources. Water shortages and conflicts over water resources are likely in the absence of a thorough planning process that takes changing environmental deterioration and water scarcity into account at the state level.

We must thoroughly consider all options in order to strike a balance between the demands of development and an unstable water supply.

To address the current water shortage, a framework that ties together strong interstate cooperation and coordination is required. This framework should encompass transboundary activities such as new water allocation, capacity building, training, education, raising awareness, knowledge and information sharing, communications and environmental monitoring.

The lack of a structure to promote knowledge and information sharing among stakeholders creates the possibility of a serious interstate conflict over the shared water resources.

\*\*\*\*\*

Debay Tadesse, Ph.D., graduated with a B.A. in world history from Georgia State University and an M.A. in African history and a Ph.D. in African studies with a focus on public policy and development from Howard University. He is currently a lecturer at Fresno City College and Fresno State.



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# Neglect and Fatal Defects

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

The Fresno County Board of Supervisors (BOS) seems incompetent, indifferent and neglectful as they preside over a county care and service crisis. Several examples of the board's offensive and obdurate actions are outlined herein.

Generally, counties are responsible for law enforcement; the provision of social services on behalf of the state; the construction, maintenance and repair of roads and bridges; and general control of land use in unincorporated areas. Fresno County is responsible for the provision of social services.

The 2023-24 Fresno County budget is \$4.8 billion, with nearly \$2.4 billion allocated to the General Fund, which is the County's primary operating fund. Another \$1.8 billion is for special revenue/trust funds, and \$109 million is for capital projects.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) has been severely underfunded for years and remains that way. The Board refuses to raise salaries for social workers and adequately fund critical services, while continuing to waste public dollars.

On Oct. 12, at a town hall discussion organized by the Service Employees International Union called "Combating a County Care and Service Crisis," Fresno City Council Members Miguel Arias and Luis Chavez, both candidates for the BOS, were part of a panel chaired by Assembly Member Joaquin Arambula. The panel also included three DSS social workers: Lorraine Ramirez of Child Protective Services; Ocean Beverly, an eligibility worker; and Karen Shoji from the Department of Behavioral Health. Also on the panel was Socorro Santillan of Planned Parenthood Fresno.

Every panelist spoke of the need for more funding, ways to address staffing and recruitment of social workers and of the extreme poverty in Fresno. Everyone committed to making improvements.

The social workers spoke of high caseloads with up to 350 clients, staffing shortages, low salaries, high staff turnover and a lack of funding for the DSS.

"Folks who come to see us are in bad shape," said Shoji. "People just don't get better and things are at a breaking point. We need preventative care as opposed to cleaning up after tragedies.

"This week alone, I've witnessed dozens of people with behavioral health emergencies." She went on to say that sometimes when homeless people show up for services they are literally so hungry they cannot talk.

Beverly noted that "morale is so very low among social workers, the turnover rate is over 104%, there's very high workloads and call waits are very long with longer wait times in the lobby. Bus tokens and EBT cards are taking too long to get into people's hands."

Santillan added that people are winding up in the ER for healthcare and there's such a lack of mental health support that police have to respond to mental health crises.

As the unfolding tragedy continues, it's been business as usual at the BOS—incompetence, indolence and vain gloriousness. There are many examples.

In April, the BOS approved a raise for themselves of 10%. In 2022, BOS members made between \$144,000 and \$160,000 annually. Now, they will all receive full salary lifetime pensions. The supervisors behave as if they have a part-time position, and the self-serving board should not be giving itself any raises.

In another abuse of power, also in April, the BOS approved \$225,000 of federal American Rescue Plan funds for the Fresno Garlic Festival, a blatant misuse of taxpayer dollars. These funds could have been used to hire several social workers in a time of dire need. Supervisors Brian

## Take Action!

Contact your Fresno County supervisor about the following:

- Drop the frivolous lawsuit by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors against the State of California relative to the renaming of S— Valley to Yokuts Valley. Stop this abusive waste of taxpayer monies now.
- Withdraw the spring 2024 ballot measure that would give the BOS the authority to assign place names in unincorporated areas of Fresno County.

Call 559-600-2000

District 1	Brian Pacheco	district1@fresnocountyca.gov
District 2	Steve Brandau	district2@fresnocountyca.gov
District 3	Sal Quintero	district3@fresnocountyca.gov
District 4	Buddy Mendes	district4@fresnocountyca.gov
District 5	Nathan Magsig	district5@fresnocountyca.gov

Pacheco and Sal Quintero, to their credit, voted against the funding, and Pacheco said it was a misuse of federal funds.

In an example of incompetence, indolence and obdurateness, in April Supervisors Steve Brandau and Buddy Mendes voted to back Supervisor Nathan Magsig's attempt to overturn the renaming of S— Valley to Yokuts Valley by approving a lawsuit against the State of California. County taxpayers are now paying \$350 per hour to outside legal counsel to prosecute a frivolous and poorly written lawsuit.

The author is submitting a CPRA (California Privacy Rights Act) request to determine how many hours have been wasted on the lawsuit.

Below are sections of the demurrer (an objection that an opponent's point is irrelevant or invalid) from the California State Attorney General submitted to Fresno County:

"The plaintiff's complaint suffers from numerous fatal defects. As a threshold matter, it was brought by a party that sued the wrong entities, lacks standing to sue, and seeks relief this Court cannot provide. Even if Plaintiff County of Fresno could overcome those substantial hurdles, its amended complaint lacks any cognizable legal theory or valid cause of action. Accordingly, this case lacks merit and should be dismissed."

The demurrer continues: "In 2021, the Federal Board of Geographic Names (BGN) initiated a process to review and ultimately rename geographic place names under federal jurisdiction which contained 'SQ,' an offensive and derogatory term for Native American women.

"As part of that process, BGN invited comment and input from local and state boards concerning the renaming of an unincorporated locality in Fresno County formerly referred to as SQ Valley. In January 2023, the BGN formally renamed the unincorporated entity Yokuts Valley.

"No state entity was responsible for approving this change. Plaintiff thus erred in naming any California entities as defendants in the amended complaint, and the case should be dismissed on justiciability grounds.

"And, even if one or more Defendants had played a role in renaming SQ Valley, a long line of authority establishes that a county lacks standing to bring suit against state entities to vindicate alleged violations of federal constitutional rights because counties are political subdivisions of the State.

(See *City of Trenton v. New Jersey* (1923) 262 U.S. 182, 183, 187, 191-192 (Trenton).)

"As a political subdivision of the State of California, the County is barred by provisions of the California Constitution from bringing an action against the State except in narrow circumstances that do not apply here. Furthermore, the Court lacks jurisdiction to order injunctive relief to prevent administrative agencies from executing validly enacted statutes.

"The amended complaint also fails as a matter of law. Plaintiff's first cause of action, a challenge to state authority, is deficient for several reasons."

The lawsuit will be heard in state court on Nov. 2. The frivolous lawsuit, written by, some would say, incompetent lawyers, is a total waste of public dollars that could be used for much needed social services.

Incredibly, on Sept. 19, after realizing their lawsuit was a fiasco, the BOS, on a 3 to 2 vote, voted to place a measure on the March primary ballot to give the county the power "to establish or change geographic feature or place names within the unincorporated portions of the County of Fresno.

"For purposes of this subsection, 'geographic feature' means any location or publicly owned structure in the unincorporated County, including, but not limited to, navigable waters, geographic features, parks, local roads, bridges and publicly owned buildings. 'Place' means any natural geographic feature or street, alley or other road within the County of Fresno.

"This power does not apply to: Privately owned geographic features, places or land, nor to geographic features, places or land that are subject to the jurisdiction of federal, state or other local governments." This last sentence appears to recognize the authority of the BGN to rename SQ Valley, which brings into question the sanity of moving ahead with the ballot measure.

At the Sept. 19 meeting of the BOS, Magsig brought up the renaming of S— Valley and Cesar Chavez Boulevard as the impetus for the ballot measure. He continues to dishonestly and shamelessly pander to some of his constituents that are of a settler colonial mindset. And the BOS continues to throw away your tax dollars.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bob McCloskey is an activist and resident of Yokuts Valley.



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# Bitcoining Climate Change

BY KEVIN HALL

I don't envy Gov. Gavin Newsom. He has a young daughter counting on him to address climate change and safeguard her future. The burden of such a responsibility, so close to the heart, must weigh as heavily as that of the other 40 million Californians also relying on his judgment.

"Her lack of optimism," Newsom recently told a New York audience, "that's incalculable. And perhaps there's the greatest shame of all: her anxiety that she has and her friends have. A 13-year-old, who should be filled with idealism and optimism, is filled with dread and stress because she's seen her dad come back from too many wildfires, too many droughts and floods."

I can relate. My son was eight when I first read of the increasing risks our rapidly warming planet posed within his lifetime. For 24 years, I've carried a gnawing doubt in my gut that I believe the governor now feels, too.

Newsom's comments came in mid-September. He was back on stage at Climate Week NYC, this time with a parent's worries, a mea culpa and a furious assault on oil executives. The mea culpa was short and emphatic, a prelude to the attack.

"Now I know. I get it now. I get it. I get why three years ago when I stood on this stage quite literally a few inches from where I am sitting, I get why I was so naive," Newsom insisted. "Because I didn't know the depths of their deception...The issue is fossil fuels, and the issue is the deceit from these companies."

Apparently what finally opened our 55-year-old governor's eyes, first elected to the San Francisco County Board of Supervisors in 1997, is information found in the lawsuit he and State Attorney General Rob Bonta filed in September against California's five largest fossil fuel companies—Exxon, Shell, Chevron, ConocoPhillips and BP—and the American Petroleum Institute. Their crime? A half century of intentionally deceiving the public—and gullible politicians—about the impacts of burning fossil fuels.

I recognize Newsom's progression. I was 40 in 1999 when Pulitzer Prize winner Ross Gelbspan did me the same favor with his book, published two years earlier when Newsom first took office, *The Heat Is On: The Climate Crisis, the Cover-up, the Prescription*. Gelbspan meticulously lays out the Big Tobacco-style defense the people leading fossil fuel companies had unleashed. To this day, they continue to derail meaningful action and foster political corruption, from city councils to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Legal brief or journalistic exposé, the printed proof can pull back a layer of one's internal mental onion that in retrospect looks a lot like cognitive dissonance, even willful ignorance. And it's only one layer. The next is labeled "The Economy." It's a thick one, people having been conditioned for decades to insist on "win-win" solutions offering both private profit and environmental protection.

Like the state's last three governors in a row, Newsom embraces an ideology of technofixes financed through pollution credit trading and government subsidies. "There's simply no better place to invest in a low carbon, green future than the state of California," he exhorted his audience.

However, people living in the state's two smoggiest air basins, the San Joaquin Valley and the South Coast, can attest to the failures of "cap-and-trade" strategies to clear our skies of ozone and fine particle pollution. Phantom credits, false inventories, shoddy accounting, weak enforcement and exemptions for agriculture, shipping and developers have blocked success for 30 years. It's a rulemaking system delayed by politics and lawsuits, hamstrung by captive agencies and deferential courts.

At the global scale, comparable carbon-credit trading systems have emerged and with similar problems. Many function like shady cryptocurrencies built on independent trading platforms with no reliable oversight. Fraudulent credits have been widely issued, and not only does the system create a perverse incentive to increase the supply of credits, like crypto it actually increases energy consumption and environmental harm.

## Good News from the Pesticide Front

BY NAYAMIN MARTINEZ

The fight to protect California residents, especially those who live near agricultural fields, from the negative effects of pesticides is far from over, but it is important to pause and take stock of the progress that residents and advocates have accomplished in the last quarter of 2023.

### Giving Voices to Frontline Communities

AB 652 was signed into law. This law, authored by Assembly Member Alex Lee (D-San Jose) and strongly supported by pesticide and environmental justice advocates, will create the Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJAC) within the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR)—the state agency responsible for protecting human health and the environment by regulating pesticide sales and use.

The creation of this advisory group will allow the voices of those unheard until now to have a formal space to help ensure that the communities on the front lines of pesticide exposure can have a say in the department's policy-making process.

It is not a secret that the health impacts from pesticides are mostly borne by environmental justice communities—those living near the fields treated with these chemicals, those working in those same fields and those drinking water contaminated by these chemicals. It is fair and just for these residents to play a central role in how pesticides are regulated.

The EJAC will also enable communities impacted by pesticides to hold the DPR accountable, to have a formalized public forum to give recommendations and, ultimately, to help reduce health disparities from pesticide exposure.

As advocates who are constantly listening to the stories of how pesticides affect low-income communities of color, we are thrilled with this accomplishment and are now preparing to police the proper implementation of AB 652.

After all, it was not an easy undertaking because the bill encountered furious opposition from the powerful agricultural industry, that not only has paid lobbyists in Sacramento but also is used to having disproportionate influence over the DPR. And while this influence seems to be changing under the current DPR leadership, we remain vigilant to ensure that the right people and the right voices are represented in the EJAC.

### The Right to Know

Tulare County will pilot the pesticide notification project. Although the state continues to allow the application of more than 200 million pounds of pesticides every year, many of which are applied near schools and homes, residents have been deprived of vital information that could protect them from pesticide exposure.

Pesticides are applied and there is no requirement for farmers to notify people living, working or studying near the applications. That will change in 2024, when the DPR will launch a statewide notification program that will give residents "the right to know" before restricted pesticides are applied.

This program had been a demand of advocates and residents for more than a decade, but this demand had been ignored until 2021, when Gov. Gavin Newsom earmarked \$10 million in the 2021–22 state budget and instructed the DPR to develop a statewide notification program.

Since then, the DPR has engaged in a process of consultation with various stakeholders (e.g., agricultural commissioners, environmental justice organizations, residents living near agricultural fields, regulated industries) to determine who should receive the notifications and how.

It also launched in 2022 a series of pilot projects in four counties where ag commissioners had volunteered to try out various forms of notification systems. Although Fresno, Kern and Tulare counties are the top three users of pesticides in California, none of these counties wanted to be part of the first series of pilot programs.

However, thanks to the tireless efforts of residents and advocates, that changed. At the end of September 2023, the DPR announced that Tulare County would be one of the pilot sites. This announcement was received

## CLIMATE POLITICS



Gov. Gavin Newsom addressed the UN Climate Ambition Summit and others at Climate Week NYC in September. He took direct aim at the fossil fuel industry and delivered a tech-bro sales pitch for the state's carbon-credit trading program. Photo courtesy of the State of California

Nonetheless, back in New York Newsom was Bitcoining the state's greenhouse gas reduction plans with a Silicon Valley, venture capitalist, IPO, tech-bro sales pitch. He wants to rapidly scale up state programs through deregulation and massive investments of public and private cash. Not so coincidentally, a large new pool of credits is about to be created through passage of SB 253, the Climate Corporate Data Accountability Act.

The California Air Resources Board, which oversees the state's cap-and-trade program for carbon credits, will establish a new system for the state's 5,300 largest companies to begin reporting their carbon emissions in 2025, according to watchful website CarbonCredits.com. An accurate emissions inventory of California's largest companies is surely needed but not as a basis for continued reliance on carbon credit trading.

San Joaquin Valley residents will pay with their health and life spans as the 25,000-square-mile air basin continues to be converted into a carbon-credit enterprise zone for Big Oil and other major polluters. More companies looking to "offset" their greenhouse gas emissions—rather than being required to reduce them—will soon come shopping. Biomass plants, dairy digesters, methane-hydrogen, diesel, carbon capture and more are being labeled "renewable" and "green," their newly created credits auctioned off along with local air and water quality, particularly in rural communities and urban industrial zones.

This market-based response to climate collapse ignores the core problem: a needle-nosed, pyramid-shaped economy that needs its top lopped off, the wealth of its elites and executives used to close "the gates of hell" that UN Secretary-General António Guterres told Climate Week attendees humanity has opened. Guterres has repeatedly warned world leaders that the current economic system needs to be radically restructured.

Few politicians—even worried fathers—are willing to peel back that layer.

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Kevin Hall hosts Climate Politics on KFCF 88.1 FM every second and fourth Friday, 5 p.m.–6 p.m. He tweets as @airfresno and @sjvalleyclimate, coordinates an informal network of climate activists at valleyclimate.org and can be contacted at sjvalleyclimate@gmail.com for presentations and information.

with enthusiasm by residents of the small unincorporated community of Terra Bella, who had been meeting for more than a year and had identified pesticides as one of their top sources of air pollution.

Gathered at the cafeteria of the local elementary school on a June afternoon, concerned mothers repeatedly expressed their concerns to Celia Pazos, DPR assistant director for environmental justice and equity. One such example: "At least let us know before you apply the pesticides. I live near an orange grove, and when my kids play outside I hear them screaming, 'the airplane, the airplane.' I go out as quickly as I can because it is the airplane applying pesticides."

Testimonies such as this were repeated by another dozen parents. The message was clear to Pazos: Tulare County needs to be a pilot for the pesticide notification. It was rewarding for these parents to learn that their voices were heard when Pazos returned three months later to announce that indeed some Tulare County residents (150) would be able to sign up to receive notifications. She even had a sign-in sheet to register those interested.

Even with these victories, the work for environmental justice advocates never stops. We now need to ensure that Tulare County residents sign up to receive the notifications and ensure good representation on the EJAC.

Furthermore, the DPR is developing a new strategic plan. We need to ensure that it becomes a more transparent agency, one that really supports public health and is accountable to all stakeholders.

We are also following up on the rulemaking of Telone (a cancer-causing pesticide). A new rule will be announced in November 2023, and we need to ensure that the new regulation protects farmworkers and other occupational bystanders, something that the proposed rule that was released in January 2023 did not do.

Of course, top on our list of priorities is ensuring that the statewide notification system is robust and provides the information that residents need to be protected from pesticide exposure.

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Nayamin Martinez is the executive director of the Central California Environmental Justice Network.



# Naming a Street after Cesar Chavez Is a Privilege

BY RAUL PICKETT

I was raised in the areas encompassing the proposed Cesar Chavez Street. Due to the underlying motives of the opposition, I find it necessary to respond to the misinformation put forth by a member of the I Community Compact, Rev. B.T. Lewis. His generality that the City of Fresno's actions "to eliminate the names of existing streets is divisive and a travesty for our history" lacks merit and appears quite self-serving, especially as he seems to know little of the area's history.

It's hard to understand why Rev. Lewis would suddenly develop such a deep-rooted concern for these streets, especially given that they've been neglected over the years.

I am no stranger to the history of California Street, Ventura Avenue or Kings Canyon Road. During my youth, my family lived in West Fresno, initially on B Street, followed by a period on California Street and eventually on Poppy Street, one block off of California Street. California Street stretched to the east past Edison High School and to the west, crossing the area where my family would reside for several years.

Of the three streets, California was always a major part of my early years, including shining shoes at the local bars and walking to Irwin Junior High School and to church with my family on Sundays. Several cousins lived in or around the neighborhoods bordering Ventura Avenue/Kings Canyon Road, who we frequently visited.

In the 1950s, I resided with my family for a few years at Edison Manor, which is a government housing project located on California Street. During those years, the Mexican community was the dominant population in or around California Street and, for that matter, Ventura Avenue/Kings Canyon Road.

For decades, the Mexican communities that lived in the surrounding communities were and continue to be the dominant customers of the local businesses. The Mexican presence in these areas has existed since their inception, and we've shared the community with such groups as Russians, Germans, Asians, Armenians and, eventually, African Americans.

Edison High School at one time had several plaques on its front lawn, facing California Street, eulogizing the names of soldiers killed during World War II. All the names were of Mexican American students who attended Edison. Among those honored was my uncle, who was killed during the Normandy invasion at only 19 years old. These youth were from farmworker backgrounds.

The plaques are no longer there, and no one seems to know anything about them. Where's the I Community Compact commitment to "preserving the unique history and heritage" of West Fresno?

My grandfather settled in West Fresno in the early 1900s. The surrounding areas have always attracted Mexican immigrants that primarily worked in farm labor. In fact, the earliest settlers of Fresno included Mexicans, which reflects the name, *Fresno*, meaning "ash tree" in Spanish. For that matter, both *Ventura* and *California* are Spanish words.

For many years, large numbers of field buses daily lined the streets of Chinatown attracting hundreds of workers, the vast majority Mexican. Fresno was overwhelmingly a segregated city at the time, resulting in African Americans having a separate location for field workers outside of Chinatown on Tulare and C streets. These buses were also always full. Sadly, throughout most of Fresno's early history there were few African Americans within the city's limits.

Given this history, I can't help but be confused by Rev. Lewis's statement that our community is intelligent enough to understand the difference between honoring Cesar Chavez and choosing streets that have historical significance. It's hard to truly understand what he is seeking to say as "Chavez" continues to be one of the more "historical figures" of the San Joaquin Valley. For most of the nation, he is the only historical figure they recognize from our area.

Perhaps, it might be of value to remind the reverend that Christian love is leaping outside of the narrow confines of one's own needs and desires and embracing the other's good for the other's sake. As a man of God, it would serve him well to take a moment to truly reflect upon the history of Fresno through the eyes of others that have been here from the start, especially those who have worked the soil, so he can understand what is actually good for others.

Even more important, for decades the vast majority of residents of West Fresno worked in agriculture especially during the early years. These workers included African Americans, many of whom were subject to abusive conditions, for example, pesticides, snakes, spiders, water, no toilets and low pay, lacking most of the protections normally given to regular workers. Both groups shared this experience.

Cesar Chavez changed this abuse, giving field workers a voice, the fundamental right to unionize and to collective bargaining and, significantly, giving them respectability. His leadership had a far-reaching impact and extended to all groups, especially in the San Joaquin Valley where most residents worked in agriculture.

Let's be clear. Major changes have occurred due to the sacrifice and struggle of field workers, whose leader was Cesar Chavez. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and others, such as the Kennedys and labor and religious leaders throughout the country, have honored Chavez for his leadership, commitment and achievements.

There's a reason why we now have a holiday commemorating his contributions. He's known for his unquestionable commitment to nonviolence and his willingness to sacrifice his own health and well-being through numerous hunger strikes that eventually resulted in his early death.

His funeral brought together more than 30,000 people from throughout the United States in a matter of days after his death to pay their respects. They represented celebrities, elected officials, dignitaries and workers across all trades, walking hand in hand with the poorest members of our community. I walked with my daughters with Jesse Jackson on one side and Jimmy Smits on the other.

*Continues on page 12*

# Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act a First Step

BY C.J. WILSON

The end of September saw the revival of the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act by Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara). The act is a favorite among climate organizations, such as Citizens' Climate Lobby, that aim to sway the "center" of the American political spectrum by calling the bill a "market-based" climate solution.

But some progressives take issue with this market focus, as well as the timeline of the bill. It's too slow and levies the same capitalist system that got us into this mess. While these criticisms are valid, this bill is an important step in the right direction, and progressives would do well to use it as a launching pad for further change.

## Overview of the Act

The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act was introduced in 2018. Despite dying in January 2019, it garnered much support from groups including the Environmental Defense Fund and publications such as the *Washington Post*.

The act would impose a fee on the carbon dioxide emitted by fuels as far upstream as possible. The fee starts at \$15 per metric ton and increases by \$10 each year. There would be exemptions for agricultural fuels and carbon capture.

All revenues from this fee would be distributed to Americans with a Social Security Number (SSN) or a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) as a monthly dividend and a half share would be given to children. The intent is to offset any possible downstream costs caused by increased energy prices.

Finally, to prevent companies from offshoring their activities to somewhere without this fee, imported goods must

pay an "equalization" fee if their country of origin doesn't have a carbon fee, while exports will receive a refund.

While there are a few other details, these elements make up the core of the bill. The goal is to hit 90% emission reduction by 2050 and create job growth in the green energy sector, as well as downstream industries, while drastically reducing direct pollution-related deaths—something quite poignant to Central Valley residents.

## Problems with the Bill

For progressives, there are three notable criticisms of this bill.

The first is the timeline. Based on the Paris Agreement, emissions need to be reduced by 45% by 2030 and hit net zero by 2050. The Energy Innovation act does not meet those goals. Instead, it aims for 33% "within a decade" and 90% by 2050.

Second is the SSN/TIN requirement. This requirement would remove undocumented people, as well as others who don't have or can't access those numbers, as beneficiaries of the fee. While the carbon dividend is a huge step toward environmental justice that many other policies lack, it can't be allowed to leave out the 10-million-plus undocumented people who often undergird the country's workforce.

But perhaps the most worrying part, especially for those further left, is the predominance of the "market-centered" approach. Unchecked capitalism is what got us into the climate mess in the first place.

For many, utilizing that same market as a solution feels like a move in the wrong direction. Instead, we should move our culture away from the "market" and toward technologies focused on improving human life and the climate. Even for those not in that camp, there is a possibility that the market could, as it so often has, corrupt this effort, too.

These three criticisms have one thing in common: They don't actually think the bill will do harm, they just think it doesn't go far enough.

## The Danger of Dissatisfaction

Political strategists cannot underestimate this sentiment. Voters need to be energized. Trump's ability to energize voters (through hate and racism) is part of what catapulted him to fame, while Biden's lack of charisma is a major fear for Democratic strategists.



The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act will impose a fee on the carbon dioxide emitted by fuels. Photo by Peter Maiden

Those on the right are predisposed against policies they see as "regulatory" or "raising taxes," which will be easy criticisms of this policy. So, the bulk of support will come from the center and the left, but only if they're excited to vote for it.

This is a symptom of the political dissatisfaction that saturates our broader sociopolitical landscape. Seventy percent of the country believes the country is on the wrong path.

For some, propaganda has them convinced the whole process is illegitimate. Others are real victims of a hostile, violent sociopolitical world. To both groups, lukewarm strategies are unappealing.

They want big, structural change, and to have this system replaced with the equitable world we know is possible. Anything less feels like a concession on our part, acceptance of mere crumbs while we starve.

## Opening the Door

This train of thought is completely valid, but in our search for perfection we can't allow ourselves to miss a good opportunity.

As it stands, the act does no harm, but it's a big step in the right direction, and one we can use to push the discussion further toward the progress we need.

Right-wing propaganda outlets have long mastered shifting the "Overton window"—the ideas viewed as "acceptable" in

society. With this bill, we can push the Overton window back in several areas: toward the idea that companies should have to pay for damaging society, that we have a responsibility to the earth, that wealth should be redistributed rather than concentrated at the top and that we can levy prices on fossil fuel companies without an economic implosion.

Likewise, climate change is an issue with a clock attached. Short of a full-blown revolution, we're unlikely to rid ourselves of the "market" anytime in the near future. This policy actually has a decent chance of passing, and soon. It could make an impact now, by putting pressure on companies where it hurts them most: their bank account. That gives us more time to make the structural changes we want.

Idealism is important. It's the guiding star that points us where we need to go. But, getting to that point requires strategy and a path. This policy can be a substantial first step on that path. Instead of focusing on where it's insufficient, we should endorse it, then use it as a launching pad for further change.

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*C.J. Wilson is a freelance writer and outdoor/environmental educator in Fresno. When he's not writing stories, you'll find him out in nature, at a show or volunteering for groups such as Citizens' Climate Lobby. Contact him at connordjohnson2@gmail.com.*



# The “Other” Incarcerated Japanese

BY EDUARDO STANLEY

During World War II, more than 100,000 Japanese Americans were taken by U.S. authorities and placed in concentration camps around the country. The government argued that these Japanese Americans might act in solidarity with the land of their ancestors, perhaps as spies or conducting acts of sabotage. Neither accusation was ever proved. Yet, entire families were sent to the camps for years, in many cases losing all of their property and valuables.

All U.S. institutions supported this behavior, including the Supreme Court, and the few voices opposing it were either silenced or ignored.

## The “Other” Incarcerated Japanese

While the incarceration of Japanese descendants in the United States was outrageous, the kidnapping and detention of Japanese abroad was a bizarre, illegal and immoral act of imperial arrogance by the United States.

More than 2,300 people of Japanese origin residing outside the United States were kidnapped and sent to concentration camps in the United States. More than 80% of them were from Peru.

The Japanese immigration to Peru started in the early 1900s. Hundreds of men crossed the ocean looking for a better future. They worked hard, started businesses and built families.

But little did they know somebody was watching them. And when WWII started, they became targeted by the United States.

Washington lobbied most Latin American countries to cooperate with a plan of “controlling” citizens or descendants of immigrants belonging to countries at war with the United States and the Allies: Germany, Italy and Japan, the “Axis Powers.” The plan included the arrest of some of them and sending them to the United States.

Although this plan started in Panama, Peru was hit the hardest as it had the largest Japanese community in Latin America. In Peru, discrimination and racism against Japanese was rampant. By the mid-1930s, the country prohibited immigration from Japan and later prohibited all Japanese newcomers from becoming Peruvian citizens. During the 1940s, several businesses owned by Japanese descendants were attacked, as well as some individuals.

This racist environment helped the United States plan to arrest Japanese in Peru and ship them to concentration camps.

The United States knew that aspects of the war were being fought in Latin America too, so it pressured those countries to join a security agreement, which was controlled by the United States. This agreement included the arrest of “suspicious” individuals (and their descendants) from countries at war with the United States. This agreement framed the “legality” of the U.S. espionage and the arrests of suspected individuals.

The Latin American countries that cooperated were Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and the Dominican Republic.

“When I was living in Guatemala, I heard stories about Germans being taken and sent to the U.S. during WWII. Later, I also heard about Japanese from other Latin American countries going through the same experience,” said Mary Jo McConahay, a journalist from the Bay Area and author of a well-documented book about how the United States “fought” WWII in Latin America, a war that involved the kidnapping of Germans, Italians and Japanese. *The Tango War* is a must read to understand this little-known aspect of modern U.S. history.

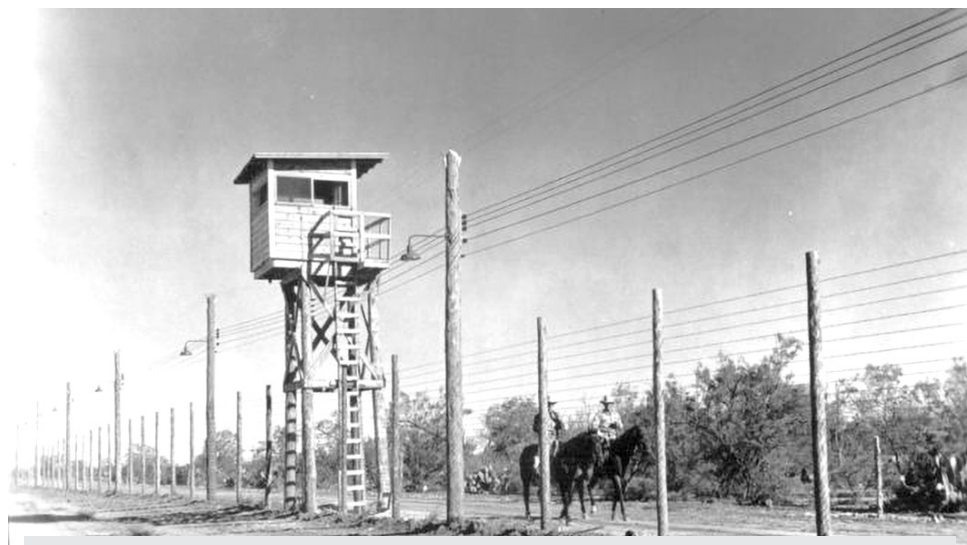
“The Japanese in Latin America, mostly from Peru, were kidnapped by the State Department, Special War Problems Division, under a secret program called Quiet Passages,” said McConahay.

“It was a program to forcibly capture people with the justification that ‘we don’t need a fifth column.’ Besides, Latin America was an important area of resources for countries involved in WWII (minerals, food, etc.), and they didn’t want the ‘Axis’ to put their hands on them.

“In such a context, the U.S. government was concerned about the Japanese spying on behalf of their original land. There was no evidence of this, and worst of all, they didn’t even have connections with Japan.

“That was the ‘reason’ to justify the kidnappings. But the real reason was that Germans and Japanese were good ‘customers.’ Some of them were prominent members of their communities and successful entrepreneurs. The U.S. was thinking not only of crippling their trade but [also] of taking over the trade.”

After the Pearl Harbor attack, Peru severed diplomatic relations with the Axis—Germany, Italy and Japan—and ordered some Japanese community leaders to be arrested. The list was prepared by U.S. intelligence. The United States compensated Peru with military assistance and opened a military base there. Even more, the Peruvian government closed Japanese schools and newspapers.



View of the Crystal City concentration camp where Peruvian Japanese were detained after being kidnapped in Peru by the United States. Photo courtesy of The Commons

Those arrested were sent to the United States by vessels on trips that could last weeks. Upon arrival, they were stripped of their documents, interrogated, sprayed with DDT and sent to a concentration camp.

Most Japanese from Latin America were sent to the Crystal City camp in Texas, a former labor camp that housed Mexican braceros harvesting spinach. The living conditions were deplorable; in some cases, 80 people shared a small barrack with only one bathroom. The Japanese were separated from detained Germans.

Although the State Department justified these incarcerations as part of national security, in fact Washington wanted to have enough Japanese detainees to trade them for American prisoners held by Japan. By 1942, the State Department estimated that 3,300 Americans were under Japanese control in Asia. By the same year, more than 1,000 Latin American Japanese were sent to Japan as part of a prisoner exchange.

“Quiet Passages was a program dedicated to getting Japanese people in order to exchange them with U.S. prisoners. They needed Japanese,” explained McConahay.

“Japanese Americans were [deemed not appropriate] for this trade—and they were incarcerated already. So they needed ‘other’ Japanese. And they found them in Latin America, particularly in Peru.

“They were taken out of their houses, off the streets...There was opposition, there were voices of resistance to this program within the U.S. government, people who thought ‘this is not right, it doesn’t seem legal—or at least ethical.’ But they were silenced.

“There was also a racist component to this plan. The U.S. always considered Latin America as ‘our backyard.’” So Washington didn’t care much about potential criticism from south of the border.

“The Peruvian Japanese were taken on fishing vessels—some belonging to an Alaskan fishing company,” said McConahay. “Because of the war, the U.S. government was able to take these types of vessels. These were not luxurious ships, but smelly, overcrowded vessels.

“And daily life at the camp in Texas was very difficult. Red ants, alacrans, roll calls three times a day...

“One testimony of an incarcerated person at the Crystal City camp mentioned that one time he helped place the body of a dead man outside the camp. Ironically, he stated, ‘it was weird the feeling of freedom thanks to a dead person.’”

## Not All Countries Cooperated

“The Peruvian government was willing to cooperate with the United States, however other governments didn’t,” noted McConahay. “Mexico, under Avila Camacho, refused to cooperate with the United States. And no military bases were established there.

“I talked to some Mexicans of Japanese origin who are still thankful for this. However, the Mexican government removed Japanese people from the Pacific Coast and from the U.S.-Mexico border.

“Argentina didn’t cooperate either. I am not sure if the Argentinian government was approached by Washington. However, Juan Peron was the president at that time and he had fascist sympathy.”

## The War Is Over

When the war was over, in 1945, the United States didn’t know what to do with the incarcerated Latin American Japanese. Peru didn’t want them. After long negotiations, some were sent to Japan and a handful back to Peru.

Before the end of the war, a group of about 300 Japanese were sent to work at a labor camp in New Jersey. Even though the working conditions were bad, they were free at least, and they were getting paid.

It wasn’t until 1953 when the State Department—without options—accepted to grant residency to those Japanese from Latin America who were left in the country.

In the 1980s, the U.S. government recognized its responsibility for the incarceration of the Japanese Americans during the war and issued an apology and compensation. However, the Latin American Japanese were not included in this reparation.

## Illegally Kidnapping Foreign Citizens

The excuse of protecting the country from foreign attacks is continuously used by the United States to pursue aggressive militaristic behavior. After the 9/11 attack, the George W. Bush administration implemented a program of kidnapping foreign citizens around the world. Those citizens, suspected of “terrorist activity,” were sent to the United States and later to the Guantanamo base. Some remain in captivity, with no charges or procedure to clarify their legal situation. They just were classified as “terrorists.”

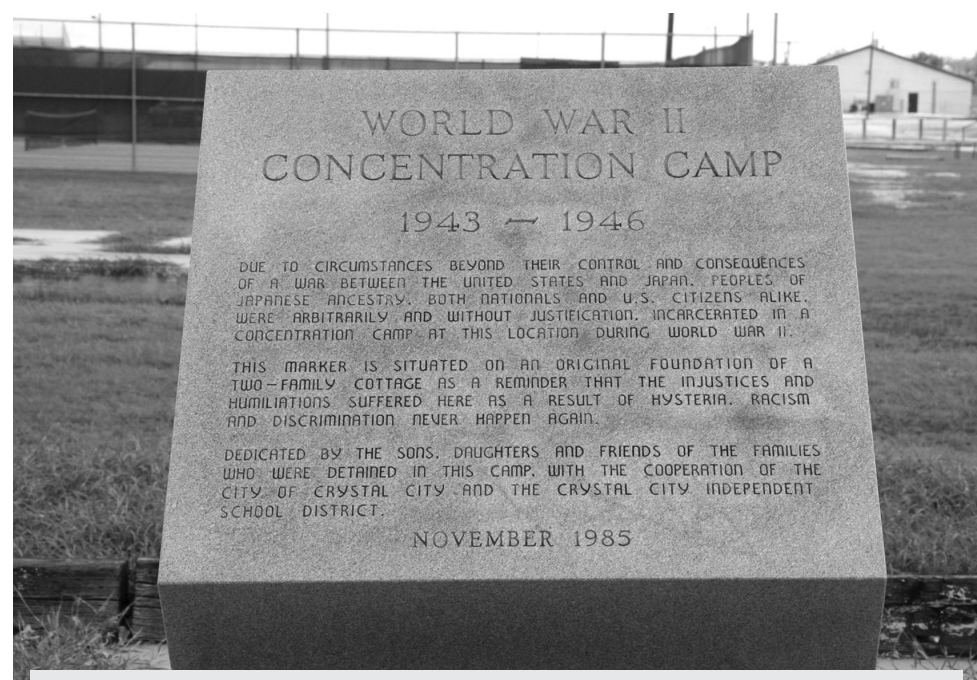
The invasion of Iraq, as revenge for the 9/11 attack, was completely illegal. It is suspicious why the International Court of Justice doesn’t charge any president of the United States as a war criminal.

The fact that during WWII and after the 9/11 attack illegal kidnapping took place around the world is a delicate and complicated issue that U.S. activists should alert our society about.

No country should be above international law. No citizen of any country should fear for their safety regardless of their political opinion.

\*\*\*\*\*

Eduardo Stanley is the editor of the Community Alliance newspaper. Contact him at editor@fresnoalliance.com.



A memorial at the former Crystal City concentration camp honoring the Japanese people detained there during WWII. Photo courtesy of The Commons









# Fresno Center for Nonviolence November 2023

Dedicated to PEACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE through  
SIMPLICITY ~ JUSTICE ~ INCLUSIVENESS ~ NON-INJURY

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- (559)237-3223. To see a more colorful and complete version of our page, go to our website.

Edited by  
Richard Gomez

## NATIVE AMERICAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Established in 1990, November is Native American Heritage month. Do you know that lawfully there are two types of Native Americans? Federally Acknowledged and Non-Federally Acknowledged. "Acknowledgement" is a legal term meaning that the United States acknowledges a tribal existence and recognizes a government-to-government relationship with a Tribe. Due to pressure from California delegates, in 1852, siding with early California legislators, Congress failed to ratify 18 California treaties. They repudiated the treaties and ordered them to remain secret. In 1905, the often referred to as "18 lost treaties" of 1851 and 1852, that set aside 8.5 million acres of land for reservations in California and were to be signed by President Fillmore, were instead discovered hidden in a secret compartment in a desk drawer in the Senate Archives.

Four years after Native Americans were granted U.S. citizenship, the California Indian Judgement Act of 1928-1933, tried to make up for the failure to enact the treaties of 1851 and 1852 by paying \$0.07 an acre, minus expenses, and divided between all the approved Native applicants for the census roll. This continued with the census in 1948-1950 and with the census in 1968-1972, as the U.S. government tried to remedy what their actions had caused. In 1978 the United States established a formal and lawful way for tribes to obtain Federal Acknowledgment. The Office of Federal Acknowledgement (OFA), within the Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior, implements an administrative process by which petitioning groups that meet the criteria are given Federal "acknowledgment" as tribes and by which they become eligible to receive services provided to members of American Indian Tribes. Since its establishment, no California tribe has successfully confirmed tribal Federal Acknowledgment through the petition process.

California is the most tribally diverse State in the Union. California has more tribes (66) who have submitted letters of intent to petition for Federal Acknowledgement than the remaining top five states combined (North Carolina (20), Michigan (18), Virginia (14), Louisiana (13)). One third of all Tribes currently seeking Federal Acknowledgement are from California. Half of all California tribes seeking such Federal tribal status are indigenous to the San Joaquin Valley. Fresno County has more tribes (9) actively seeking Federal Acknowledgment than any county in America. Yokuts Valley, just outside of Fresno city limits, in Fresno County, is the most populated geographic locale in America with tribes without Federal Acknowledgement. An estimated over 80,000 tribal members indigenous to California are affected by this plight.

The current Federal Acknowledgement system is widely considered broken. It is common to find tribes petitioning for nearly half a century with no significant progress toward Federal Acknowledgement. The Federal petition process systematically puts the burden of proof upon the tribes and the United States effectively removed itself from any fiduciary liability of the plight it created, while strategically positioning itself as both jury and judge of all future American tribal statuses. This continued denial of Federal tribal existence has created a silent genocide, with its most pervasive face being the devastating impact of the cultural ethnocide that persists in Non-Federally Acknowledged tribal communities. Without a tribal land base, petitioning tribes are often dismissed and depicted as families of a common genealogy and not a community, as justification for denial. These communities continue to shrink, languages face extinction, and tribes are routinely denied lawful tribal existence due to the ramifications of governmental policies enacted when the 18 treaties were not ratified. With no outside resources to preserve tribal existence, these communities are purposefully reduced in tribal population for future Federal tribal denial.

Happy Native American Heritage Month. Written by War Eagle. [acknowledgealltribes@gmail.com](mailto:acknowledgealltribes@gmail.com)



THE CONTENT IN THIS SECTION IS PAID FOR BY THE FRESNO CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE



## CVPPAC's Top Priority Is to Elect Progressive Candidates to Local Office



The Central Valley Progressive PAC urges you to **SUPPORT AND VOTE** for the candidates we have endorsed in this election cycle. To learn more about the positions they take on issues that progressives care about, visit [cvppac.org/candidate-responses](http://cvppac.org/candidate-responses).

The next Central Valley Progressive PAC meeting will be on Saturday, November 11, at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom. For more information, contact the following:

Simone Cranston-Rhodes  
CVPPAC President  
559-978-4504  
[simone.rhodes@seiu521.org](mailto:simone.rhodes@seiu521.org)

### These are our endorsed candidates



**Dr. Joaquin Arambula**  
State Assembly  
District 31



**Miguel Arias**  
Fresno County Board of  
Supervisor District 3



**E.J. Hinojosa**  
Fresno County Board of  
Supervisor District 3



**Bryce Herrera**  
Fresno County Board of  
Supervisors District 2



**Matt Gillian**  
Fresno City Council  
District 2



**Tyler Maxwell**  
Fresno City Council  
District 4

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# SIERRA CLUB

## TEHIPITE CHAPTER

### Sequoia Groves are in peril — but not from fire:

The biggest threat to groves in the Sierra is destructive, counterfeit “restoration”!

“Yes, fires raged through our Sierra forests in 2020 and 2021, burning through many sequoia groves. However, the fire was not uniform; it burned in a mosaic of low-, medium- and high-severity, and the vast majority of mature giant sequoia trees survived. Unlike most conifers, sequoia trees are uniquely adapted to fire, *requiring* fire to reproduce. As the heat from high-intensity fire rises into the forest canopy, sequoia cones dry and release millions of seeds which germinate in the rich ash created when the forest floor is burned. And sequoia seeds continue to fall and germinate even after several seasons.

**It's a forest miracle!** For the first time in more than a century, millions of sequoia seedlings are naturally germinating in the burned groves, some in a continuous carpet, up to three feet tall after just 16 months (see photo).

**The timber industry got ahead of us!** The commodity lobbyists and lawmakers they support are always alert for excuses to enter protected areas and sidestep pesky laws like the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In the past decade they have screamed “Emergency! Must log!” at every natural event — from drought, to pine bark beetle infestations, and now fire. But logging or “thinning” makes drought-stressed forests hotter and drier, and piles of logging slash can act as an incubator for species of pine bark beetle. But facts just get in the way!

**Now they have the “sequoia excuse.”** With the 2021 fires still recent, a coalition was formed by state and federal agencies that manage our forests while,

simultaneously, Rep. Kevin McCarthy introduced into Congress the deceptively named “Save Our Sequoias” bill into Congress. This legislation provides for logging, dense replanting, rodent control (strychnine) and the removal of “undesirable” shrubs, likely using Roundup herbicide. The bill would even amend the Wilderness Act to allow these destructive activities in our Sequoia and Kings Canyon (SEKI) National Parks.

**These sequoia trees are up to 1,000 years old,** having survived the recent fires and an incredible array of conditions, and still bear cones. But instead of studying natural grove recovery processes, the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service want to bypass laws requiring the scientific study of environmental impacts, and public participation, and gallop through the sequoia groves of the southern Sierra, including some in protected Wilderness areas. They insist on planting trees despite the obvious, abundant, natural regeneration we have pointed out to them. And the public is now shut out of these sequoia groves for up to 18 months (allegedly for our safety).

Park visitors cannot remove a single rock or flower from Wilderness areas, yet SEKI is using chainsaws to create clearcuts for helicopters to land in Kings Canyon National Park. Their project began October 18 to deliver 120,000 seedlings by helicopter and mule to two Wilderness sequoia groves, at taxpayer expense! These 3- to 4-inch seedlings will be outcompeted by the healthy, native sequoia saplings, now up to 3 feet tall. Worse, this replanting is **likely to harm** the sequoia groves, as some seedlings will inevitably carry potentially deadly root pathogens. Also, the U.S. Forest Service and Save the Redwoods League have authorized commercial “salvage” logging and the sale of thousands of trees. Dead sequoia



Ara Marderosian stands in a giant sequoia grove in Kings Canyon National Park. This patch burned in a high-severity fire in 2021 and is now regenerating 2-foot high giant sequoias. No replanting required! Photo by Chad Hanson

“snags” are needed to stabilize forests slopes, and to provide cavities for homes of multiple species and nutrients for the next forest generation.

**Volunteer alert:** At press time, our Tehipite Chapter is awaiting national Sierra Club approval to join a federal lawsuit which has been filed against the U.S. Forest Service by Sequoia ForestKeeper and the John Muir Project of Earth Island Institute to protect Nelder Grove, a sequoia grove close to Highway 41, south of Yosemite National Park. Our goal is to halt a so-called “emergency” logging project”

“proposed last winter when ten feet of snow covered the forest floor. The project’s emergency designation would exempt this project from *environmental review* by the Forest Service.

Another federal lawsuit filed by Wilderness Watch, Sequoia ForestKeeper and the Tule River Conservancy is requesting the court to order the National Park Service to comply with NEPA and the Wilderness Act and halt SEKI’s tree cutting in Wilderness areas. Multiple sequoia logging projects are in the works and more lawsuits are likely to come, so stay tuned.”

**“WHAT YOU CAN DO: The Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter welcomes volunteers for our giant sequoia protection campaign this fall season before the snows arrive. No experience is required — just a concern for the health of the sequoia groves! For more information, text or phone Gary at 559-790-3495.”**

*The Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter and Woodward Park Regional Library present:*

**Sierra Foothill Conservancy (Your LOCAL Land Trust)**  
**Thursday, Nov. 16, 2023 at 7 PM**

LIVE presentation at the Woodward Park Library, 944 E. Perrin, Fresno  
Free and open to the general public.

The grasslands, foothills, and forests between Yosemite and Kings Canyon National Parks provide land for farms and ranches, a home for

native plants and wildlife, and a source of clean water. Sierra Foothill Conservancy honors our natural and cultural heritage by protecting these resources for present and future generations.

**Allyson Brooks**, Community Engagement manager, and Ed Hampton, docent for Sierra Foothill Conservancy, will share with us some of their success stories, talk about resources (educational, natural, and cultural) and let you know how you can access and enjoy these wonderful lands for hikes, birding, photography, and other fun activities for the entire family.



# Kherson: A City in Ruins

BY ZARINA ZABRISKY

The city of Kherson, located in the south of Ukraine, is facing extensive destruction due to Russia's "scorched earth strategy." This strategy involves the deliberate burning, destruction and removal of resources that could be useful to an adversary in the region.

Russia's "scorched earth" strategy has included widespread destruction of cities and villages in Ukraine. The Russian military employs various tactics, including the use of banned chemical weapons and cluster munitions, and it has recently begun using guided aerial bombs.

On Oct. 15, the Russian military dropped 30 guided aerial bombs on the Kherson region, causing damage to critical infrastructure. Within hours, the city was subject to more bombings. The Russian forces used parachute explosives and launched attacks with multiple launch rocket systems, tanks and mortar.

In addition, on the same day, the Russian military launched 97 attacks, with 514 shells fired at the Kherson region from artillery, mortar, tanks, MLRS (Multiple Launch Rocket System), aviation and drones, of which 83 shells targeted the city of Kherson. Attacks often start at 4 a.m. in the morning and continue through 9 a.m., so the residents of Kherson suffer constant sleep deprivation. This is a typical day in the life of Kherson and the Kherson region.

As a result of the Russian aviation strikes, villages are reduced to rubble daily. The distinct sound of an approaching aerial bomb and a loud rumble followed by a thunderous explosion has become familiar in Kherson, its suburbs and the villages in the Kherson region.

The Russian military aims at the residential quarters of the populated areas of the region. In recent weeks, a building of Kherson State University was hit and the roof of the recreation hall was damaged. The university is currently working online as that was the fourth attack on the campus. Twelve of its schools were closed, so there were no casualties. Another college dormitory, evacuated a while ago, gets constantly targeted.

The Kherson Children's Hospital was targeted several times, and the neonatal department building was damaged. Patients are treated at a building next door. The General Hospital also suffered damages last month.

A farmers' market downtown was attacked two days in a row. Suburbs also face relentless attacks: Hospitals and educational institutions in the Beryslav district have been destroyed. The Russian military uses banned cluster munitions, and the dart-like fillings of the rockets are spread on the roads, mixed with broken glass.

Kherson holds a strategic position, situated on the Black Sea and the Dnipro River, making it a potential launchpad for Russian assaults on Ukrainian seaports such as Mykolaiv and Odesa, as well as Transnistria in Moldova. It is also considered a pivotal location for the control over Crimea, the peninsula annexed by Russia in 2014, central to the political and strategic landscape of the ongoing Russian war of aggression.

The Dnipro River divides the Kherson region, with Russian forces on the left bank systematically launching attacks on the city and suburbs on the right bank currently under Ukrainian control.

Russian forces occupied Kherson in early March 2022. Ukrainian forces and local fighters fiercely resisted the Russian advance, but despite a lack of coordination among various Russian units, their numerical advantage eventually led to the capture of the city on March 1, 2022.

After the occupation, Kherson's residents continued to rally in support of Ukraine's government. Russian forces responded with violence, firing shots and using tear gas to suppress dissent. Russian soldiers patrolled the city and conducted searches at checkpoints, monitoring phone transactions and scrutinizing residents' personal information. The Russian Guard's Special Rapid Response Unit (SOBR) carried out kidnappings and torture of locals while looting and destruction became widespread.

Some residents evacuated, whereas others chose to resist. Underground resistance was active, with partisans using explosives to target the Russian military and collaborators.

In September 2022, Russia forcibly annexed Kherson and other regions through illegitimate referendums, blocking access to Ukrainian media and influencing the population with Russian propaganda materials.

In November 2022, Ukraine liberated Kherson without a major battle. The city's residents welcomed the Ukrainian army and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy with flags and flowers.



The destroyed terminal of Kherson International Airport, near Chornobayivka. During the Russian occupation, the invaders set up a military base here. Photo by Oleksandr Tolokonnikov



Rusty spent ammunition in front of people inspecting the area of the Velyka Oleksandrivka village near Kherson. Photo by Oleksandr Tolokonnikov

In response, Russian forces attacked Ukraine's power grid. Post-liberation investigations uncovered torture chambers and mass graves in the region, as well as multiple war crimes committed during the occupation.

In the aftermath of the Russian retreat, Kherson is confronted with the task of clearing numerous landmines left behind, posing a threat to the region's agricultural enterprises. Demining efforts are under way, involving various units and organizations, albeit hindered by constant shelling. Safety remains a top priority for the demining teams so the process is relatively slow and might take years.

In June 2023, the Kherson region faced ecocide, after the Russian military blew up the Nova Kakhovka dam leading to severe consequences to the environment. Many areas in the city and suburbs are still filled with debris as the rescue teams cannot approach them due to the Russian shelling.

Faced with relentless attacks, many residents reluctantly agreed to evacuate, but fleeing Kherson is risky. On Oct. 15, the shockwave from an explosion shattered windows on a train heading to Kyiv.

Olga Maliarchuk, deputy for defense for the Kherson regional military administration, who had previously survived a Russian missile attack in Mykolaiv, interacts with the military and coordinates defense efforts, grappling with the ongoing threat of unpredictable shelling. Maliarchuk moved to Kherson after the liberation of Kherson in November 2022, as the front line moved from Mykolaiv to Kherson.

She said in an interview that the Russian military attacks civilians aiming to create panic in the Ukrainian population and provoke calls for peace negotiations. As the Russian Federation fails to advance at the front, the Kremlin is seeking ways to win time to regroup.

Maliarchuk also highlighted the ongoing evacuation efforts, supported by various volunteer organizations, local administrations and the police. The evacuation of families with children is compulsory in villages close to the front line.

Some Kherson Oblast residents have to travel by rubber boat under shelling to load on mini buses and travel to Kherson and further away from the front line. For the handicapped, elderly and families with children and pets, such journeys are often too challenging, and many prefer to stay in their homes despite the constant bombing. Many do not have the financial resources to leave.

With the cold season approaching fast, broken windows and damaged roofs present a big problem. Despite the ongoing efforts of city authorities and volunteers, the city cannot keep up with the Russian attacks. The yards are filled with piles of broken glass as the garbage bins can take only a certain amount per day.

Oleksandr Tolokonnikov, press officer of the Kherson Regional State Administration, documents Russian war crimes and evacuations of families fleeing from Russian attacks, sharing updates with national and international audiences. He takes photos of the devastation, and some of his work was shared by the office of the President of Ukraine.

"I see ongoing pain, death and destruction," Tolokonnikov said in an interview. "These photos must be seen by the international community in order to stop the Russian aggression. During the last month, it has increased and people do not hear about it enough."

Due to its proximity to the front line, Kherson rarely gets visits from the international media. Inadequate press coverage allows Russia to continue its daily attacks on Kherson. Urgent international intervention is needed to prevent the city's complete destruction.

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Zarina Zabrisky is an American journalist and an award-winning novelist currently reporting on the Russian war in Ukraine. She is a war correspondent for Bywire News (UK), writes a Daily Review column for Euromaidan Press, an online Ukrainian English-language independent newspaper since 2014, and contributes articles and podcasts on information warfare, reports from the sites and interviews military experts and eyewitnesses for these and other publications, including The Byline Times (UK).

## Naming a Street after Cesar Chavez Is a Privilege

Continued from page 7

As for the business owners who opposed the name change, it should suffice to stress that the vast majority of their clientele are still primarily Mexican immigrants and, most likely, farmworkers. Thus, it is disturbing and highly suspect as to why they are so opposed, especially as they are also beneficiaries of Chavez's campaign to improve the working conditions of farmworkers. Perhaps, some type of campaign should be instituted to educate their customers on their opposition to the name change. It's only right that they should spend their earnings in businesses that truly appreciate their patronage.

The next time you drive down the highway in your air-conditioned car and see field workers in temperatures surpassing 100 degrees, remember that someone took the initiative to advocate for them and eventually died building a union to protect their interest. Due to Chavez's efforts, most farmers now respect the dignity of farmworkers and the state government respects their right to collective bargaining.

Naming a street after Chavez, whether Kings Canyon Road or California Street, is not only the politically and historically correct thing to do but also represents just a small tribute to a man whose life's efforts were to make this world a better place to live. Just as Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez is worthy of this small tribute. Dr. King would be the first to recognize this gesture.

\*\*\*\*\*

Raul Pickett was born and raised in Fresno. He is a graduate of Fresno State and retired from the State of California as a staff service manager. He was also the CEO of El Futuro Credit Union.



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## MEET 'n GREET

The Art of Mac Mechem lampoons the social, political and cultural aspects of human nature and society. Mac believes art can be a tool for promoting cultural awareness and expediting social change. And so does KFCF Radio. We're bringing them together in an art show and social gathering. It happens on **Saturday, November 18 From 12 noon to 4 pm** at the **Sorensen Gallery at 2223 S. Van Ness Ave.**

There's easy access from freeway 41 south: just take the Van Ness exit, turn left and you're there in half a mile.

Bring a sense of humor and \$25 to support your community radio station. You'll get to meet Mac, enjoy his work and spend some time with your friends. Saturday Nov.18<sup>th</sup> from 12 N to 4 pm. Food and refreshments will be available.



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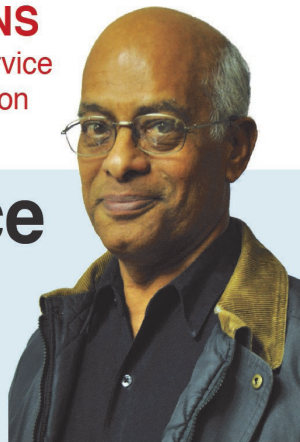
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# Severely Burned Giant Sequoia Groves To Be Replanted

BY VIC BEDOIAN

Kings Canyon National Park is moving forward with a plan to reestablish giant sequoia seedlings in groves that were devastated in the massive wildfires of 2020 and 2021. Park scientists estimate that 7,500–10,600 monarchs burned in those blazes.

The National Park Service says some groves burned so intensely that regeneration is not possible without human intervention. Seedlings grown in greenhouses are being planted in two groves in the coming months before winter sets in.

Three major wildfires in recent years caused unprecedented damage to the giant sequoia ecosystem in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National parks, along with the surrounding national forest and tribal lands. Now, the National Park Service is planting seedlings in hopes of restoring two of the most severely burned groves.

Park officials say the goal of this extraordinary effort is to point these groves toward a recovery that would have occurred naturally had they not experienced human-caused severe fire effects in recent years. It is a stunning acknowledgment from a government agency that fossil-fueled global warming is what drove the infernos that incinerated up to 20% of the world's giant sequoias.

Clay Jordan, park superintendent, explains why the project is so critical: "The fire burned at very high intensity and at unprecedented levels. And so, when you have large expanses of high mortality, then the concern is that there's insufficient regeneration that will occur naturally to replenish those trees, just because so many trees were lost."

Dr. Christy Brigham, the park's chief of science and resources, described the vast burned areas with no living trees in a post-mortem following the KNP Complex fire, "The nature of wildfire in the Sierra has changed, and this new wildfire is an incredible threat to the persistence of these giant sequoias, these thousand-year-old trees that we love so much."

If there are no trees, she mused, where will the seeds for new trees come from?

Jordan confirms that park officials are relying on field survey data gathered in the burned sequoia groves over



Kings Canyon National Park is moving forward with a plan to reestablish giant sequoia seedlings in groves that were devastated in the massive wildfires of 2020 and 2021. Photo by Vic Bedoian

the past two years. And, he says they will plant seedlings where the best available science indicates that insufficient regeneration of trees would take place on its own.

"We had 22 groves that burned in the Castle fire in 2020," says Jordan, "and in the KNP Complex the next year in 2021. Of those 22 groves, six groves burned at very high intensity.

"So, what we have been doing last year and this year is having survey teams in there to measure the amount of natural regeneration that has taken place to help us determine whether we need to replant in those groves."

After surveying the extensive damage, the park service drafted an environmental assessment and took in thousands of public comments to figure out the best way to preserve sequoias and endangered Pacific fisher habitat.

Crews will now begin planting giant sequoia and other mixed conifer seeds in the site-specific locations they have determined across 1,200 acres of previously forested areas and in an adjacent wildlife corridor. They are focusing first on the severely burned Board Camp and Redwood Mountain groves.

Jordan says that reestablishing those groves will be challenging. "The reality with giant sequoias is it takes a lot of seed, and it takes a lot of seedlings, incredible densities

of seedlings, in order to regenerate and to grow mature giant sequoias that take hundreds of years to mature.

"The mortality of seedlings in the first couple of dozen years of a giant sequoia is very significant; very few end up surviving. So, we know we need a high density of them."

Park scientists are looking at burned areas throughout the forest to see if natural regeneration is occurring, and several other groves are currently being evaluated to determine their suitability for replanting. A major concern is that large areas of barren, scorched ground will not come back as forest but rather as a shrub-type plant community that is fire-prone.

So, in addition to restoring giant sequoia groves, park officials emphasize their desire to avoid conversion of these expanses such that they could threaten surrounding forests with even more frequent high severity fires. Especially in a warming world.

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*Vic Bedoian is an independent radio and print journalist working on environmental justice and natural resources issues in the San Joaquin Valley. Contact him at vicbedoian@gmail.com.*

## Resurrecting a Library

BY I. SMILEY G. CALDERON

The Fresno County Public Library is a special place with 34 branches throughout Fresno County. The library's motto? "A place to grow."

The library is a place for anyone with something for everyone holding to its powerful mission to enrich lives and build community, which it does quite well throughout the year, transforming and strengthening communities with opportunities that help people connect and be inspired.

Yet, sadly, not every community has a library.

The Tower District, for example, does not have one of its own. However, this could change thanks to a group of local library lovers who have started a quickly growing grassroots movement to get a branch in their own backyard.

Brooke Payton, an instructor and board member at Root Access in the Tower District, is leading the cause. An avid library lover, she regularly visits libraries wherever she goes and carries around a scrapbook full of library memorabilia.

"I am a book lover and a library lover, a lover of the library system, what it adds to the culture where it is located, as well as the art and displays that are in the library," she says. "I love all the aspects of a library."

She's also quick to say that all her efforts are community-based advocacy and that she's not affiliated with the library, the City or the County and does not receive any related funding. Yet, her passion for libraries is contagious.

"To me, a library is more than just a stack of books. It is a cultural place that provides community enhancement.

"It does a great deal to create educational and economic opportunities, making Wi-Fi, computers, Internet, copiers and scanners available. There are people in our community who cannot afford any of those things but need them in order to find employment or supplement [their] education.

"The library can also be a safe space—something that we desperately need more of for our children, elderly, disabled and LGBTQIA+."

The Tower District has not always been library-less. For years, there was a branch on Olive Avenue at a west 100 block storefront. The Gillis Branch Library was founded in

1940 in a one-bedroom apartment in the Tower District, but since 1975 it has been at a commercial building at Fruit and Dakota avenues in central Fresno, across the street from Williams Elementary School. It's a nice little branch that world-famous Fresno writer William Saroyan frequented.

Of course, that branch serves its residents well and is a much needed community nexus with an active Facebook page to prove it—but that doesn't help today's vibrant Tower District. The Gillis Branch is about three miles from the heart of the Tower District.

That makes the Central Branch in downtown Fresno the closest library to Tower residents, about two miles away. But if you're a Fresnan without a car, it's too long of a walk to either branch. It's clear that the Tower District needs its own library—again.

"We have five elementary schools in Tower, and all of these children essentially don't have access to a public library since one is not in the neighborhood," Payton explained in a recent podcast interview.

"They're missing out on supplemental education opportunities, year-round events and all the summer programs that libraries organize and offer. It's a serious problem.

"We have underserved veterans, senior citizens, disabled people and children. What's great about Tower is its walkability or bikeability. We have tons of restaurants, shops and entertainment. What we don't have is a general-purpose library."

So, what can be done about that?

The Fresno County Public Library could simply create another branch and put it in the Tower District. But it's not that simple, even with Measure B county funds allocated for libraries. There is much planning and budgeting involved. Moreover, there are other locations that have been requesting a library for years and are first in line—such as Reedley and Highway City.

Another option is to move the Gillis Branch back to the Tower District, but that would disenfranchise the local residents who actively depend on it now in their neighborhood. However, moving the Gillis Branch somewhere else nearby could be a good idea and is something that even the librarians there support as the branch has outgrown its old storefront and the atmosphere immediately around it has changed over time. Currently, the branch shares a space next door to the Funkyshack Smoke

Shop—hardly the best neighbor for a library. Moving the branch closer to the Tower District could be a compromise.

Another viable option is to place a micro-branch library in an existing community space in the Tower District. One such space could be the Ted C. Wills Community Center, where the Talking Book Library for the Blind is located. A micro-branch would be a good addition to the community center.

The Fresno County Board of Supervisors (BOS) would have to vote on any option with the recommendation of the Fresno County librarian, Raman Bath. The decision ultimately boils down to demographics and need. And Bath is not opposed.

When appointed librarian by the BOS in 2019, Bath said, "I believe the public library's responsibilities don't end at our walls, but extend anywhere our services are needed to everyone in the community." Clearly, if the community need for a library can be demonstrated, there is hope for one in the Tower District.

Payton is hopeful but also realistic. "I understand that my request will take years, like the other places that have asked for a library—it requires lots of planning and money. This isn't gonna happen next year; it might not even happen in five years. This might take a long time, but I am building a framework, doing the groundwork."

Payton's team has created an online petition in support of a library for the Tower District, which can be accessed at towerlibrary.org.

"We have about 1,000 signatures now," Payton acknowledged. "But I want a million signatures—a million plus! I want people who don't even live in the county to say that they support the project because they just love libraries."

The people of the Tower District care about the history of the Tower District—a history that includes the Gillis library creation. And, today, the need for another one is dire.

"The [residents of the] Tower District have proven that they care about the Tower District," Payton affirmed. "And because we have proven that, it should lend weight to this desire to bring a library back."

It is time to resurrect a library for the Tower District.

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*I. smiley G. Calderon is a Gen X Chicano and lifelong educator who spent a career in academia in Southern California but is most proud of being a father. Contact him at smileycalderon@gmail.com.*





**WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM**  
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Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

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# What Is Really Going on in Guatemala?

BY EDGAR R. AYALA

You don't see the army on the streets, and there are no speeches being delivered by a military "junta" on "CNN en Español." How could a coup be happening, if the current president, Alejandro Giammattei, who is at the end of his term, is not dissolving Congress and, under international pressure, has said that he will "carry out a peaceful transfer of power"?

And why would a sitting president with three months remaining in office bother to orchestrate a coup?

It's simple: As an act of self-preservation.

After almost four years in office, Giammattei has mounting accusations and cases alleging corruption against him and his allies, but the cases are not moving through the courts. No wonder. Giammattei exerts total control of the prosecutor's office.

Only legal cases against his detractors have gained any traction, and only his opponents have been jailed. A winning presidential candidate, Bernardo Arevalo, who won a landslide victory with a campaign against corruption, is bad news if your administration is utterly compromised.

## Take Action!

How can people in the United States help stop the "soft coup" in Guatemala?

- Write your Congressional representative and request their support to advance a resolution condemning the soft coup in Guatemala. Demand concrete sanctions, not just symbolic travel bans. Demand bold actions such as placing Guatemala's sugar import quota on hold until President-Elect Bernardo Arevalo is inaugurated.
- Call or write President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, asking them to use their leadership to invoke the Interamerican Democratic Letter of the Organization of American States, which was designed to initiate collective actions from members when the constitutional order has been breached in a member country.
- Start an online petition or answer the calls of U.S.-based activists struggling to preserve and promote democracy in Guatemala.

In a monumental miscalculation on the part of Giammattei and that of his co-conspirators, a handpicked successor failed to make the cut in the first round of elections on June 25. He was supposed to go into a second election round against an unpopular opponent for an easy win.

Instead, Arevalo took the country by surprise, pulling ahead and winning second place. Then, Arevalo won the final election round and was declared president-elect by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal. His win triggered alarms up and down the state corruption apparatus, sending all corrupt politicians and their operatives into panic mode.

According to the Oxford dictionary, a *coup* is "a sudden, violent and unlawful seizure of power from a government." The most notorious are those where the military overthrows a government to install a military leader, or "junta," by force and violence, as has recently happened in African countries such as Gabon and Niger. In 2021 alone, there were six coup attempts in Africa, four of them successful.

Now we are faced with a new modality of a coup d'état in Guatemala. A "soft coup." This is when a sitting leader is conspiring behind the scenes, with the final objective of not ceding power to the rightful winner of an election, but to pass the office illegally to another person or entity, thus breaking the constitutional order and reversing the will of the people.

The conspirator weaponizes prosecutors and judges to violate electoral constitutional law and retroactively derail an election. According to constitutional scholars in Guatemala and international observers, what is going on in Guatemala now is a "soft coup."

Instead of using blunt force or violence, a "soft coup" is carried out under the veil of legality, misusing laws or overstepping legal jurisdiction to entrap the democratic process. To discredit or call into question an election that has already been certified and declared clean by an electoral authority and international official observers is part of a soft coup.

Guatemalans are no strangers to coup d'états of the traditional kind, having had several in its history, notably when the CIA helped to overthrow a democratically elected government, which led to decades of military rule. We are also aware of the U.S.-backed coups in the Dominican Republic in 1963, Chile in 1973 and Argentina in 1976. In 2009, Obama's secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, stage-managed a coup in Honduras.

Nor is the country unfamiliar with "self-coups." In 1993, President Jorge Serrano Elias, following the example of Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, dissolved Congress to stay in power that year.

Today, in "slow motion," Guatemala is again in the middle of a constitutional crisis. This time, outgoing president Giammattei is not dissolving Congress or ousting judges or magistrates. He planned the scenario ahead of time. He prepared for this.

During his first three years in office, he managed to stack the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court, lower and appeals courts, and the Office of the Attorney General



"I don't see a coup, I don't denounce it."  
Illustration by Edgar R. Ayala

with unscrupulous and obedient legal operatives that have weaponized their institutions to go after journalists, human rights defenders or protectors of the land. Dozens went into exile, mostly in the United States, including prosecutors and judges who wouldn't give in to the pressure.

Little by little, the current coup d'état is moving forward, despite mounting international pressure and condemnation by the Organization of American States, the United Nations, the U.S. State Department, the European Union and many, many leaders around the world.

If Giammattei and his handlers are successful, the presidency will not be transferred to the rightful winners of the elections in January. Instead, it will go to an interim government that will be selected by a sitting Congress with a political majority belonging to the ruling party. The "pact of the corrupt" is terrified of a champion who would charge them with legal liabilities for recent acts.

An interim government would provide Giammattei and others with cover to continue to profit by stealing from the country's treasury or maintaining their government-inflated contracts with bribes from the business sector.

The Guatemalan people have spoken loud and clear against corruption with their vote for Arevalo and are now in the streets demanding that their vote be respected. But peaceful popular protest of the soft coup can only go so far.

Time is short and the stakes are high.

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Edgar R. Ayala is a graphic designer, interpreter and community activist. He has been involved in several social justice causes in the San Francisco Bay Area for more than three decades. In 1996, he served as part of a team that organized a series of off-the-record alternative peace talks on Guatemala, serving as an interpreter and a facilitator.

# Mexican President Asserts Right to Trade with Cuba

BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

On Oct. 16, Mexico's president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, stated the right of his country to trade with Cuba and condemned the blockade established by the United States against the island.

"We don't have to ask permission from any foreign government because we are a free, independent and sovereign country," said López Obrador.

"We're going to do everything we can to help the people of Cuba, have no doubts about this, including petroleum, because this is a people that is suffering from an inhuman, unjust blockade, and we cannot turn our backs on the people of Cuba.

"If they say to us, 'Sell us petroleum because we have no way to acquire it,' then, of course, we say 'yes.' When we asked them, 'Help us, because we don't have medical specialists' including during the pandemic, doctors came and Cuban medical specialists are working in our country now, and we're very grateful."

## Clearing Up Some Distortions

A Spanish news agency, EFE, reported on Sept. 30 that Mexico had sent Cuba some \$200 million worth of petroleum in 2023, implying that this was a donation. Octavio Romero Oropeza is the general director of Pemex, the oil company owned and managed by the Mexican government. He stated that no donation of fuel to any foreign government has been made by Pemex and that Pemex exports oil to 26 countries.

He and President López Obrador both denied rumors started on Oct. 13 by Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar (R-Fla.), who sent a letter to Reta Jo Lewis, president of the U.S. Export-

Import Bank (EXIM), congratulating Lewis on refusing a loan to Pemex. In fact, Pemex withdrew the request for a credit, not a loan, on Aug. 23.

## México Nationalized Foreign Oil Companies in 1938

Pemex was formed in 1938 by nationalization and expropriation of all private oil companies in Mexico at the time. U.S., Dutch and British companies owned and controlled the oil of Mexico in 1938.

When Mexican workers went on strike for higher wages and benefits, the Arbitration and Conciliation Board ruled in favor of the workers' demands. Then the oil companies appealed to the Supreme Court of Mexico, which denied that appeal and affirmed the previous decision, but the companies still refused to comply with the law and settle with the workers.

Due to the companies' continued defiance of law, then-Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas invoked the Mexican Constitution to nationalize these foreign companies. Although compensation was offered to the foreign companies, many foreign governments closed their markets to Mexican oil in retaliation for the nationalization, until WWII made them drop their embargo.

## Cuba Nationalized U.S. Oil Companies in 1960

After the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in January 1959, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower canceled all U.S. oil exports to Cuba. Cuba then attempted to import oil from the Soviet Union, but Eisenhower ordered U.S. oil companies to refuse to refine oil imported by Cuba from the Soviet Union.

The Cuban government then nationalized all U.S.-owned refineries within Cuba as a result in August 1960. The first measures of the U.S. blockade of Cuba were instituted in October 1960. Cuba's oil resources are heavy crude and are less than half of Cuba's current needs, making Cuba an oil-importing nation. Attempts to convert to sustainable energy sources have been greatly hampered by the blockade and the heavy up-front investment required.

## Demanding Respect from the United States

On Oct. 16, at the end of a long press conference by President López Obrador covering many topics, a reporter asked



President López Obrador says that "we cannot turn our backs on the people of Cuba." Photo courtesy of La Jornada

whether the decision to export oil to Cuba had "created a hard-to-manage situation with the administration of President Joe Biden." President López Obrador responded, "No, no, the people from the government of the United States and President Biden are very respectful of us."

He then expressed the independence of Mexico, solidarity with Cuba and gratitude for the Cuban doctors, as quoted initially. He spoke of his desire for universal brotherhood, justice and humanism and criticized the right-wing upper class for being interested only in money and for making a rubber-stamp of religion, while they forget that Christ was for the poor and the dispossessed.

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Leni Villagomez Reeves is a local physician and activist. Contact her at lenivreeves@gmail.com. Check out her news and views about Cuba on Facebook (fresnosolidarity/).



# Peace & Social Justice Calendar November 2023

Sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence

**WED 01** KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!* 3 p.m. Community Alliance radio show hosted by Daren Miller. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**National Latina Civic Engagement Day** 5 p.m. 127 E. Tulare Ave. Community celebration to uplift the importance of this day and empower the community to engage in democracy. Theme: Dia de los Muertos. Organizations are encouraged to set up a small altar/ofrenda to honor our ancestors and/or bring a carnival game to make the event interactive with the community. Sponsored by Poder Latinx. For more info, contact 559-750-8076 or [oloza@poderlatinx.org](mailto:oloza@poderlatinx.org).

**THU 02** **The Americans and the Holocaust: A Traveling Exhibition** 2 p.m. Central Library, 2420 Mariposa St. Opening Ceremony. For more info, contact 559-600-7323 or visit [fresnolibrary.org](http://fresnolibrary.org).

**ArtHop Downtown/Tower District** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Museums, studios, galleries and other venues open their exhibits free to the public. For more info, visit [FACarthop](http://FACarthop) on Facebook.

**FRI 03** **CineCulture: Inside Russia: Traitors and Heroes** 5:30 p.m. Peters Educational Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussants: Paul Mitchell and Anastasiya Popova (co-directors) and Mikhail Kozyrev (producer). As antiwar protests are brutally suppressed across Russia, a local politician condemns the war on social media. The authorities decide to press charges. She must decide whether to face a criminal conviction or flee the country. A group of young graffiti artists begins a campaign of subversive art to mock the government's pro-war propaganda. Soon one of their members is arrested. Many thousands have fled Russia and those who stay have had to choose: to stay silent, or to oppose or support the Russian government. For more info, contact [mhusain@csufresno.edu](mailto:mhusain@csufresno.edu) or visit [cineculture.csufresno.edu/](http://cineculture.csufresno.edu/).

**SAT 04** **Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley** 9 a.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-435-4043 or [claval@comcast.net](mailto:claval@comcast.net).

**Dia de los Muertos** Noon–4 p.m. Calwa Park, 4545 Church Ave. Free community event. Health services, legal immigration services, community resources, live music, art, food, prizes and more. Organized by SIREN. For more info, contact [action@sirenimmigrantrights.org](mailto:action@sirenimmigrantrights.org).

**Dakota EcoGarden 10th Anniversary Celebration** 3 p.m.–5 p.m. Gazebo Gardens, 3204 N. Van Ness Blvd. Celebrating 10 years of providing community-supported transitional housing for the unhoused in Fresno. Sponsored by the Eco Village Project. Entertainment by Hillbilly Jazz. For more info, contact 319-266-2068 or [jlankford@csufresno.edu](mailto:jlankford@csufresno.edu).

**MON 06** **Democratic Women in Action** 6 p.m. Marie Callender's Restaurant, 1781 E. Shaw Ave. For more info, call 559-325-0540.

**TUE 07** **National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC)** 5:30 p.m. Los Amigos Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. Speaker: Fresno Unified School District Trustee Valerie Davis. For more info, contact 559-222-6212 or [joanne@pbyoga.com](mailto:joanne@pbyoga.com).

**KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro** 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**WED 08** KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!* 3 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence radio show hosted by Josh Shurley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**THU 09** **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)** 7 p.m. Online/in person, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. For more info, contact 559-360-8054 or [taca\\_03@ymail.com](mailto:taca_03@ymail.com).

**MON 13** **Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA)** 5 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact [swgamble@aol.com](mailto:swgamble@aol.com).

**TUE 14** **Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC)** 6 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-287-1308 or [bapacfresno@gmail.com](mailto:bapacfresno@gmail.com).

**Stonewall Democratic Club** 6 p.m., Los Amigos Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. For more info, contact 559-709-8016 or [conantm@aol.com](mailto:conantm@aol.com).

**The Americans and the Holocaust: A Traveling Exhibition** 7 p.m. Temple Beth Israel, 6622 N. Maroa Ave. "Fresno during WWII." For more info, contact 559-600-7323 or visit [fresnolibrary.org](http://fresnolibrary.org).

**KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro** 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**WED 15** KFCF 88.1 FM: *Speaking Truth to Empire* 3 p.m. Hosted by Dan Yaseen. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**San Joaquin Valley Democratic Club** 6:30 p.m. Denny's Restaurant, 1110 E. Shaw Ave. For more info, call 559-312-3925.

**THU 16** **ArtHop Metropolitan/Fresno Metro Area** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Museums, studios, galleries and other venues open their exhibits free to the public. For more info, visit [FACarthop](http://FACarthop) on Facebook.

**Clovis Democratic Club** 6 p.m. Seven Bar & Grill, 25 Shaw Ave., Clovis. For more info, contact 559-322-9740 or [jenikren@gmail.com](mailto:jenikren@gmail.com).

**Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter** 7 p.m. Woodward Park Library, 944 E. Perrin Ave. Topic: Sierra Foothill Conservancy, Your Local Land Trust. Allyson Brooks, community engagement manager, and Ed Hampton, docent for the Conservancy, will share some of their success stories, talk about resources (educational, natural and cultural) and let you know how you can access and enjoy these wonderful lands for hikes, birding, photography and other fun activities for the entire family. Free and open to the general public.

**CineCulture: Goldfish** 5:30 p.m. Peters Educational Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussant: David Gutnik (director). *Goldfish* is about forgiveness, memory, music, mental health and identity. The child of a mixed marriage—her father a British university professor and her mother an Indian singer—

**FRI 17** returns to the United Kingdom during the Covid-19 lockdown to deal with her estranged mother's dementia and the scars of her childhood. The film tells the delicate, timeless story of a mother, stuck in a land not her own, and a daughter, unsure of who she is because she lives between two cultures. For more info, contact [mhusain@csufresno.edu](mailto:mhusain@csufresno.edu) or visit [cineculture.csufresno.edu/](http://cineculture.csufresno.edu/).

**SAT 18** **West Fresno Democratic Club** 9 a.m. Democratic Party HQ, 1033 U St. For more info, contact 559-930-4909 or [ibedam@gmail.com](mailto:ibedam@gmail.com).

**WILPF Peace Community Crafts Faire** 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Free AME Church, 806 Collins Ave. Artisan wares, self-care boutiques, unique handmade holiday gifts. Visit old friends and make new friends. Live music, raffle, food. For more info, contact [taca\\_03@ymail.com](mailto:taca_03@ymail.com).

**Central Valley Progressive PAC** 3:30 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-978-4504 or [simone.rhodes@seiu521.org](mailto:simone.rhodes@seiu521.org).

**MON 20** **California Latina Democrats-Fresno** 6:30 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact [chaircalatinadems@gmail.com](mailto:chaircalatinadems@gmail.com).

**TUE 21** **Stop the Hate: Third Party Observer Workshop** 5:30 p.m. Visalia Friends Meeting, 17208 Avenue 296, Visalia. Stop the hate, be the love. Food, childcare, Spanish interpretation. Hosted by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). For more info, contact 559-707-1697.

**KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro** 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**WED 22** KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir-It-Up* 3 p.m. WILPF radio show hosted by Jean Hays. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**SAT 25** **Peace Fresno Street Demonstration** 12:30 p.m. Intersection of Blackstone and Nees avenues. For more info, contact [president@peacefresno.org](mailto:president@peacefresno.org) or 559-668-0591.

**MON 27** **Fresno County Democratic Women's Club** 11 a.m. Marie Callender's Restaurant Garden Room, 1781 E. Shaw Ave. For more info, contact 559-435-4043 or [claval@comcast.net](mailto:claval@comcast.net).

**TUE 28** **California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA)** 10 a.m. SEIU Local 521, 5228 E. Pine Ave. For more info, contact 559-360-5955 or 559-704-8384.

**KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro** 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**THU 30** **Peace Fresno** 6:30 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. In person/via Zoom. For more info, call 559-668-0591.

### Save the Date!

**DEC 08** **Community Alliance Fundraiser** 6 p.m. SEIU 521, 5228 E. Pine Ave. For more info, contact 559-994-9390 or [pamwhalen@comcast.net](mailto:pamwhalen@comcast.net).

**DEC 09** **LGBTQ+ Rights Are Human Rights** 9 a.m.–noon. Old Administration Building, Fresno City College. Commemorate Human Rights Day 2023. Sponsored by the Human Rights Coalition of the Central Valley.

Submit upcoming community activities to [calendar@fresnoalliance.com](mailto:calendar@fresnoalliance.com) by the 15th of the month preceding publication.

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# Republican Jesus

BY STEVEN ROESCH

It's one of George Bernard Shaw's better-known quotations: "England and America are two countries separated by the same language."

Given the divisions that have been festering in our own country for quite a while, though, Shaw's sentiments could arguably be updated. These days, we Americans are often the ones who are separated by a common language.

Such tensions become apparent when different groups use the same word in strikingly different ways—or when they view people in history in remarkably dissimilar ways.

Like the figure of Christ.

Given the statements of many prominent leaders in the GOP—sentiments that reflect intolerance and a dearth of compassion in many areas—one wonders how they can claim to espouse Christian views at all.

One central tenet of Jesus's teaching is the Golden Rule: "Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you." That precept is hardly reflected in right-wing attitudes toward the poor, disadvantaged minorities and refugees seeking to enter the United States.

So how can this circle be squared?

Three years ago, Professor Tony Keddie helped to shed light on this puzzle in his book *Republican Jesus: How the Right Has Rewritten the Gospels*.

A professor of early Christian history, Keddie makes a persuasive case that Republican influencers have fashioned a portrait of Jesus in their own image over the past several decades—one that runs counter to what a close reading of the New Testament in its historical context actually reveals.

"Republican Jesus," as he labels this construct, is a Christ who espouses limited government, lower taxes and business-friendly policies, while at the same time opposing government regulation and spending and frowning upon government support for the needy and downtrodden.

For Keddie, this portrait of a Republican Jesus originally appeared as a conservative response to Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s.

Church attendance, he notes, climbed in the late 1800s and into the beginning of the 20th century—but that trend went into reverse with the advent of the Great Depression.

Then came Roosevelt's New Deal. Suddenly robust government programs arose and offered economic assistance that raised the hackles of many conservatives.

Some right-wing Christian leaders reacted by stitching together passages from the New Testament that seemed

to buttress their opposition to FDR's vision of an expanded role for government.

Central to the dissemination of Republican Jesus was James W. Fifield Jr., a minister in Los Angeles whose congregation included leaders of insurance, chemical and mining firms. It was Fifield who led the movement "to save corporations from the evils of the welfare state—collective bargaining rights, Social Security, corporate taxation and transparent business dealings."

He helped to establish Spiritual Mobilization, an organization that aimed "to arouse the ministers of all denominations in America to check the trends towards pagan statism...which would destroy our basic freedom and spiritual ideals."

Not all Christians joined this cause, of course.

Keddie points out that progressive Protestants and Catholics supported FDR's New Deal initiatives. Roosevelt's programs dovetailed with some of the social ideas that they'd promulgated for many years.

Keddie goes on to document how later GOP administrations—notably those of Eisenhower and Reagan—opened the doors to conservative Christian leaders who espoused Fifield's ideas and developed them further. Among them were Billy Graham and Jerry Falwell, both of whom opposed the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

Which strategies did such ideologues use to assemble this Republican version of Jesus? Keddie identifies three key techniques:

"They garble the text by mistranslating or limiting the meaning of its words...they omit relevant parts of the text by extracting a verse from its literary context and sometimes cutting out sections of verses...and they patch this cut-up text together with other cut-up texts."

The influence of Fifield and his cohorts remains palpable in our time.

Russell Moore, the editor of *Christianity Today*, recently expressed his concern about an emerging group of conservative Christians who view Christ's teachings as being "too liberal." When several pastors that Moore knew preached about the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus's admonishment that one should "turn the other cheek," some members of the congregation approached him and wanted to know where such "liberal talking points" were coming from. When the ministers noted that these were the words of Christ himself, they would counter: "That doesn't work anymore. That's weak."

During Donald Trump's term as President, Bible study sessions took place each week in the White House, and they were often conducted by Ralph Drollinger, an evangelical



Christus Pantocrator, artistic representation of Jesus Christ, Cathedral of Cefalù (Sicily,) c. 1130. Illustration courtesy of The Commons

minister. Drollinger's organization, Capitol Ministries, had already been organizing such study groups for members of the House and the Senate. One such session maintained that "free market capitalism is God's blueprint for growing a nation's economy."

Keddie goes to great lengths to establish, however, that nothing like modern capitalism existed in Christ's own day. Nor does it make sense to posit that the United States is a Christian nation.

Years ago, as a guest student at the University of Tübingen in Germany, the author took part in a Bible study session in a nearby village. The attendees were farmers, shopkeepers and students. When it came to Biblical interpretation, none of them had a theological or scholarly background. What they did have, however, was a set of reference books—Greek-German dictionaries, concordances and the like—and a profound desire to uncover and grasp the sense of the verses under consideration.

It's hard to imagine a starker contrast to the Republican Jesus movement than that circle of believers and the rigor that fueled their impressive efforts.

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Steven Roesch is a retired bilingual teacher who's lived in Fresno since 1985. Contact him at [stevencroesch12@comcast.net](mailto:stevencroesch12@comcast.net).

# Crisis in the Middle East

BY BAYARD TAYLOR

The Oct. 7 surprise attack by Hamas. Israel's retaliation in Gaza. Horrible images. Emotions are sky-high. Fear. Revulsion. White-hot anger. Uncontrollable grief. We can let all this emotion control us in a negative way. Or we can use this emotion for good. It's not easy.

Traumatized people tend to lay all the blame on the other side, not allowing any hint of evil on "our side." We are currently witnessing a lot of demonizing and dehumanizing, the prelude to even more vicious acts.

Rhetoric that calls the other side "animals," "savages" or "Nazis" is language that leads to mass murder and genocide. Think the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, the Armenians, European Jews. Think of how the Americans dropped atomic bombs on the (non-white, non-European ancestry) Japanese.

Mass murder of civilians and genocide is a cynical, bloody and supremely shameful business. We don't want to go there in Gaza.

Some history to consider:

- We are experiencing collective trauma. It's not private.
- Collective trauma is not just one event; it carries the cumulative weight of atrocities and injustices from the past.
- Collective trauma pushes us to believe "the others" have no humanity and must be wiped out. It is a radical denial of the humanity of others.
- The "Holy Land" has a long history of outrages and atrocities, with plenty of blame to go around. No side is as innocent as the fresh-fallen snow. And no side is totally evil.
- There is no moral justification for targeting civilians for murder and hostage-taking. As bad as the Hamas attack was, it did not happen in a vacuum.
- We need to be honest about our history. Both the United Kingdom and the United States have had key roles in creating the present crisis.

Some other facts to keep in mind:

- Hamas is not "the Palestinian people." The Palestinian people as a people are not homicidal maniacs.
- Benjamin Netanyahu and the Israeli hard-liners are not "the Israeli people." There are many Israelis who wish to live honorably and peacefully with Palestinians.
- Israel is an apartheid state, like South Africa used to be, with laws structured to advantage Jewish citizens and to disadvantage and humiliate Palestinians every day of their lives.
- Those who advocate for peace on each side of the border are opposed by hard-liners.
- For the most part, our media sources tilt heavily in favor of Israel. And in war, the first casualty is truth. There's a lot of disinformation and fake news rummaging around. Let us seek to exercise wisdom in our media intake.

We need to look honestly at how religion and theology have been and are being misused to make the situation worse.

- Religious fundamentalism and religious nationalism—whether in Jewish, Muslim or Christian forms—are very much playing into the present crisis. Dogged, uncompromising beliefs in religious supremacy are practically guaranteeing continuing conflict.
- Among those beliefs is the failure of Jewish and Christian fundamentalists to accept that the "Israel" of old is completely different from the modern post-1948 state of

Israel. This dangerous belief "fits" Western (Judeo-Christian) ideas of white supremacy and a permission from God, just like in the Bible (see the Book of Joshua) to displace Indigenous peoples and to colonize the Earth with "settlers" who take over the land and its resources. The "settler colonialism" of European Jews moving to Israel in the 20th century mirrored the European powers' "settler colonialism" and other imperialistic projects from the 15th to the 20th centuries.

- Of particular concern are apocalyptic passages in Muslim sacred texts and in the Bible that appear to glorify violence against "infidels" in the Last Days.

Key at this point:

- Pressure our leaders to de-escalate the conflict.
- Advocate for human rights and civil rights for Palestinians.
- Forswear apartheid systems, wherever they are.

And, if we are Christians or align somewhat with the Christian tradition, let's not be knee-jerk war-makers. Instead, let's go deep into the tradition to affirm the peacemaking mission of Jesus and his disciples.

To do this, many of us will have to push hard against our cultural and religious conditioning in which our sympathy and empathy is easily granted to Israel, but only with great difficulty given to the Palestinians.

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Bayard Taylor is a resident of the 93675 zip code, a nature-lover, the author of two books, a former English teacher and a master of divinity graduate of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Contact him at [bayardtaylor1@aol.com](mailto:bayardtaylor1@aol.com).



Monthly meeting the first Tuesday of the Month. Check the web site or Facebook for details.

Fresno, National Women's Political Caucus is a pro-choice, multicultural, intergenerational, and multi-issue grassroots organization dedicated to increasing women's participation in the political process and creating a true women's political power base to achieve equality for all women.

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# Cynicism and Nihilism the Roots of Malaise

BY EJ HINOJOSA

Think back to Measure P. The proposal: a tax levied on sales transactions in Fresno to fund millions each year for parks, arts and recreation. A beautiful suggestion for a town seeking more culture and improvements to its quality of life. Green spaces, trails, youth and adult sports, cultural centers, music and art in public places—we could have it all. The imagination ran wild, the spirit soared, and people in our community came together under the banner of civic aspiration.

Meanwhile, the opposition to Measure P said that parks would fill up with drug addicts and homeless people and that the measure would rob Fresno's underfunded police department of needed inputs.

Talk about "imagination."

The No on P campaign bombarded our community with dire prophecies of vice, drugs, crime and homelessness, and they nearly succeeded. In fact, they were initially declared victorious, the Yes on P campaign having failed to cross the two-thirds vote share threshold.

But eventually the courts declared that the measure had passed with a simple majority,

and dollars are already being rolled out to build new public spaces throughout our beloved community. A close call, if you ask me. Too close. Measure P should have received 70% or more of the vote, but it didn't, and the reason for this runs deep.

We have become too cynical and too nihilistic in this town about our shared public life, and these mentalities have mired us in a political and social malaise. Rest assured, our community isn't the first to grapple with this. Cynicism and nihilism have been wielded against progressive action for generations.

In national politics, they've been deployed against major reforms such as the Civil Rights Act and the Affordable Care Act. Locally, it can be seen in action as a weapon against dense zoning and affordable housing. What makes it so effective is that it's easy to do, and most people can be influenced by it.

You can see it in the comments section of local Facebook posts:

Measure P to Fund Creation of New Park: "It'll be full of homeless people"

City Receives Millions from State for Downtown Improvements: "Downtown will never come back. Give up already."

County Proposes Expanded Rural Transit: "They should focus on crime instead of this"

The curt pessimism is delivered well in just a few words. And yet while in one breath the Facebook downers deride Fresno for lack of culture or commerce, with the next breath they voice opposition to cultural and economic development. "No we can't" they have learned to say, and they might

even call it pragmatism. Nietzsche called it "a will to nothing."

*Cynicism, nihilism*, whatever term you prefer, the point is the same—many among our neighbors have learned to feel helpless to improve our community. We've accepted a narrative about ourselves, and it's causing us to stand still, to strive for little and to accept less.

Fresno is in a position today to begin a new age of optimism, to reshape the narrative around the region and to chart a new course for a better future. We are a Valley brimming with talent and big dreams. We have to seize the potential of that talent, and create both a culture and an economy that empowers the pursuit of those dreams.

That starts with your vote. Elections are coming in March of next year, and Fresno's voters will be presented with a slate of new faces to consider for positions of leadership from City Council to Congress. Our community will bloom with culture and commerce if we elect leaders who have imagination, optimism and recent experience in the working world. A new direction needs new leaders, and voters here will have the opportunity to elect some in a few short months.

We should ask our elected officials to build new public spaces that will improve the quality of life here—markets for commerce, libraries for culture, parks for community and wellness. We deserve abundant and affordable housing. We deserve clean air and daily mountain vistas. We deserve good jobs and good industries that create them.

This is a working-class region. Profits are up, prices are up, executive pay is up,

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productivity is up, interest rates are up. It's time for the workers to come up, too. Let's expect better and demand more. And let's elect representatives from outside of the political class.

If you share this optimism about our community, then look closely at these newcomers to the local political landscape: Bryce Herrera, candidate for Fresno County Board of Supervisors District 2; Matthew Gillian, candidate for Fresno City Council District 2); and the author, EJ Hinojosa, candidate for Fresno County Board of Supervisors District 3.

All will be on the ballot in March. Together, we can be an antidote to cynicism. The time is now, and tomorrow's leaders are ready today.

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*EJ Hinojosa is a music teacher for the Fresno Unified School District and a candidate for the Fresno County Board of Supervisors District 3.*

Provide Feedback.  
E-mail editor@  
fresnoalliance.com.

# Chinatown Needs a Meaningful Vision and Dynamic Leadership

BY RAUL PICKETT

Fresno's Chinatown is unique among similar historical sites in the state. In the 20th century, it developed as a center of community life, integration and economic development for the state's central region.

During the early 1960s, Fresno was named the most "ethnically diverse" small city in the nation, attracting persons from 11 different cultural backgrounds. They came by the thousands, settling in communities in and around Chinatown. It served as a center for vital services, social and cultural activity, regional and national and international events, and for economic growth and employment.

Chinatown was truly the "Brooklyn" of the West Coast, a recognition that few other sites in the state could claim.

As Chinatown developed and grew, it supported the Central Business District (CBD), especially during downturns in the economy. Although the City has made continual commitments to the CBD, it has downplayed Chinatown's unique history, ignored its innate value to the region and

has continually failed to commit to a cohesive and visionary plan for its development.

The current plan to construct further housing in Chinatown is both shortsighted and inconsistent with the true needs of the area and, ultimately, of the entire community. Although there is a dire need for additional low-cost housing, it would be more efficiently located in other areas in the central district.

The current laws governing housing give both government and developers significant flexibility to construct housing in almost any location they desire. In addition, other areas potentially offer better schools and access to many more vital services. That would contribute to greater equity in Fresno's housing resources.

In a 2019 *Fresno Bee* article, the author proposed that Chinatown be designated a historical district and as a state park. This is consistent with what has been done in other places in the state, for example, Old Sacramento and Old Town San Diego.

These areas were designated as having major historical value and worthy of such recognition. Both eventually contributed significantly to the development of the cities they supported, triggering major economic growth and becoming among the state's most attractive tourist sites. Chinatown is potentially no different.

Also in 2019, Gov. Gavin Newsom earmarked \$15 million in the budget for a state park, preferably in central California. This was in response to the overconcentration of state parks in northern and southern California. Despite these efforts, Fresno and other communities in central California failed to avail themselves of this opportunity. The following year, all

but \$1 million was left in the budget, which was eventually given to Stanislaus County for a new state park in its east county.

The designation of Chinatown as a historic district and eventually as a state park would potentially trigger a new state center of entertainment, recreation, and cultural and educational activity, truly reflective of its unique contributions to California. Such a plan is visionary and no less than what the residents of Fresno expect from elected officials. Obviously, there is much support for such a proposal.

The proposal is consistent with the City's commitment to high-speed rail (HSR), which will include a major regional train station at H Street between H and G streets, and Fresno and Tulare streets. Construction has already affected Chinatown, greatly curtailing its traffic flow.

However, for the HSR plan to be successful, it will require a large volume of foot traffic. The current plans would merely increase the number of residents in the adjacent areas and encourage only limited use of the HSR.

The development of Chinatown as a historical district and a state park would significantly heighten its potential value to Fresno, bringing thousands of people to the city, and eventually stimulating major economic growth in the region.

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*Raul Pickett was born and raised in Fresno. He graduated from Fresno State and retired from the State of California as a staff service manager. He was also the CEO of El Futuro Credit Union.*

# Holocaust Museum Exhibit in Fresno

BY EVA W. MAIDEN

A traveling exhibition from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum will be at the Central Library in Fresno from Nov. 5 to Dec. 30. "Americans and the Holocaust" examines this country's slow response to Hitler's progress in early launching of a propaganda machine and military force. Before the actual outbreak of World War II, most Americans didn't want to think about it, including a reluctant President Roosevelt.

Holocaust education is now a part of the curriculum in all California schools. This history teaches us many lessons: the result of prejudice when it is not opposed, how to identify fascism in its earliest forms and the need for our powerful nation to play a leadership role in resolving international problems.

From 1933 to 1940, Jews in Germany and then Austria were desperately fleeing for their lives from Nazi tyranny. The restrictive immigration policies made it extremely difficult to come to the United States.

Fast forward to today's issues: refugees from authoritarian governments where their lives are endangered are being

stopped at our borders again. The irony is that America was built by refugees. Each wave of immigrants brought their imaginations and energies, enriching this country.

Of particular interest in the exhibition is the role played by organizations such as the Bergson Group. Before World War II, it was lobbying the American government and making the public aware of the danger presented by the rise of the National Socialist (Nazi) Party and its conquests. The exhibit demonstrates how the Group's efforts gradually showed results.

The Central Library is open 9 a.m.–6 p.m. Monday–Thursday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and noon–5 p.m. on Sunday.

A series of public events will accompany the exhibition:

- Opening Ceremony: Nov. 5, 2 p.m., Central Library (2420 Mariposa St.)
- Remembering the WWII Past through Popular Media: Nov. 8, 5 p.m., Fresno State Library (5200 Barton Ave.)
- Fresno during WWII: Nov. 14, 7 p.m., Temple Beth Israel (6622 N. Maroa Ave.)
- Survivor Stories: Dec. 3, 2 p.m., Central Library (2420 Mariposa St.)
- Author Talk with Dr. Bradley W. Hart, Ph.D. (author of *Hitler's American Friends: The Third Reich's Supporters in the United States*): Dec. 5, 7 p.m., Woodward Park Library (944 E. Perrin Ave.)



An American mass demonstration in support of German Jews in 1938. Courtesy of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

- Author Talk with Dr. Bradley W. Hart, Ph.D.: Dec. 6, 7 p.m., via Zoom
- For more information, contact 559-600-7323 or visit [fresnolibrary.org](http://fresnolibrary.org).

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*Eva Maiden is a retired school psychologist and psychotherapist.*



El periódico *Community Alliance* (*Alianza Comunitaria*) se publica mensualmente por San Joaquín Media Alliance, ubicada en 1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno, CA 93728. El periódico *Community Alliance* (*Alianza Comunitaria*) se distribuye gratis o por suscripción. Las suscripciones son de \$40 por año; \$60 por año para activistas; y \$15 para personas de bajos ingresos.

*Alianza Comunitaria* es una voz independiente para los trabajadores y grupos progresistas del Valle de San Joaquín. El objetivo de este periódico mensual es construir un poderoso movimiento progresista en apoyo a la justicia social, ambiental y económica; y también a los derechos de los inmigrantes y al de los trabajadores para lograr un salario justo. Buscamos exponer las injusticias políticas y sociales y conectar las diversas redes de activistas que trabajan en nuestra comunidad.

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*Alianza Comunitaria* es una entidad 501(c)(4).

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Cuba nacionalizó las compañías petroleras estadounidense en 1960

Mundial los hizo terminar su embargo.

extranjeros cerraron sus mercados al petróleo mexicano en represalia por la nacionalización, hasta que el comienzo de la Segunda Guerra Mundial los hizo terminar su embargo. extranjeros cerraron sus mercados al petróleo mexicano en represalia por la nacionalización, hasta que el comienzo de la Segunda Guerra Mundial los hizo terminar su embargo.

*Continúa de página 24*

# El Presidente de México se Planta por Independencia y Cuba

Los EEU a Cuba. Entonces Cuba hizo el intento de importar petróleo de la URSS, pero Eisenhower dio órdenes a las compañías petroleras prohibiendo el procesar petróleo crudo adquirido de la Unión Soviética. Por esto, el gobierno de Cuba nacionalizó todas las refineras petroleras en agosto de 1960. Las primeras sanciones del bloqueo impedito en gran medida por el bloqueo junto con la necesidad de hacer inversión de gastos grandes por adelantado.

Exigiendo el respeto de los Estados Unidos El lunes, 16 de octubre, al final de la larga conferencia de prensa que abarcó muchos temas, un periodista le preguntó al presidente López Obrador si “esta acción del gobierno mexicano de compartir petróleo con Cuba no había generado problemas con el presidente de EE.UU, Joe Biden”. AMLO respondió “No, no, ellos son muy respetuosos con nosotros”. Y expresó en términos muy claros la independencia de México, la solidaridad con Cuba y el agradecimiento por los médicos cubanos, citado en el primer párrafo de este artículo. Habló de ser partidario de la fraternidad universal, la justicia y el humanismo y criticó a los de la derecha, “los de arriba,” por interesarse solamente en el dinero, por su hipocresía y doble moral, cumpliendo con las formas de la iglesia mientras se olviden de que

La franja de Gaza es un pequeño territorio de 360 kilómetros cuadrados al sur de lo que antes de 1948 era el territorio de Palestina que ahora está provocando el bloqueo y la catástrofe humanitaria en la franja de Gaza. Desde cualquier perspectiva, la violencia desplegada por ambas partes demuestra el fracaso de la política y la diplomacia en la región por construir un Estado Palestino. Por la escalada militar con artillería sobre la franja han muerto 140 niños y niñas palestinas, incluso han muerto ya al menos 6 periodistas.

La guerra desatada entre el grupo de milicianos islámicos de Hamas y las fuerzas armadas de Israel ha dejado no solo más de 3 mil muertos de ambos bandos, sino también casi 150 rehenes secuestrados de nacionalidad israelí y otros internacionales. Además, se ha convertido en la oportunidad para que el gobierno de Tel Aviv se enfraque en una guerra que ahora está provocando el bloqueo y la catástrofe humanitaria en la franja de Gaza. Desde cualquier perspectiva, la violencia desplegada por ambas partes demuestra el fracaso de la política y la diplomacia en la región por construir un Estado Palestino. Por la escalada militar con artillería sobre la franja han muerto 140 niños y niñas palestinas, incluso han muerto ya al menos 6 periodistas.

POR JUAN TRUJILLO LIMONES

# Las Masacres, los Rehenes y la Asfixia de Gaza

Jesusristo estuvo a favor de los pobres y los desposeídos. \*\*\*\*\*

*Leni Villagomez Reeves es una médica local y activista. Puede contactarla en lenivreves@gmail.com. Chequee sus comentarios y noticias sobre Cuba en Facebook (fresnosolidarity/).*

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*Juan Trujillo Limones es periodista y antropólogo mexicano, su contacto es: xaurreme@protonmail.com.*

Hasta el martes 10 de octubre, la Agencia de Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados de Palestina en Oriente Próximo estimó que 263 mil 934 personas estaban desplazadas dentro de la propia Gaza y más de 175 mil 486 se refugiaron en 88 escuelas de la agencia en toda la franja. La intención del gobierno israelí de invadir la franja supone ejecutar un desplazamiento forzado de la población civil fuera de las fronteras con el pretexto de destruir los medios militares de Hamas. En caso de consumarse, se estaría realizando la ya conocida “limpieza étnica” común en tierra palestina. Esto, para posiblemente anexar la franja a Israel y hacer lo mismo paulatinamente con Cisjordania. Con ello, además Netanyahu y el grupo ultraderechista pretenden evadir su responsabilidad por articular una política de despojo, colonización y por ignorar los derechos del pueblo palestino. Lo mismo, intentarían omitir la negligencia en las irregularidades de inteligencia que fracasó para proveer seguridad a los ciudadanos nacionales e internacionales.

La ciudadanía israelí Galit Dan, cuya madre, hija y al menos dos sobrinos denunció: “No tenemos ningún contacto con el gobierno.” Muchos amigos y vecinos fueron asesinados, otros desaparecidos y otros secuestrados. Mi nieto Sagy tiene 35 años y tiene dos hermosas hijas. Él en la mañana de forma bárbara, ahí yo vivía con mis hijos y nietos. Muchos amigos y vecinos fueron asesinados, otros desaparecidos y otros secuestrados. Mi nieto Sagy tiene 35 años y tiene dos hermosas hijas. Él haga lo que penda del lado bueno”. A pregunta expresa de la prensa sobre si ha habido algún contacto con el gobierno israelí, un familiar dijo: “No han habido intención de contactarnos como grupo desde la embajada estadounidense. Ha habido cero comunicación por parte del gobierno israelí”. La tarde del martes, en otra comunicación, desde el pueblo de Givatayim y con su hermana secuestrada, Liri Romanann denunció: “No tenemos ningún contacto con el gobierno.”

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# El Secuestro de la Familia Nagannuma en Perú

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leche para nuestro hermano menor, Kazumu, que en ese momento tenía 20 meses, pero no le hicieron caso.

“Cuando llegamos al puerto no sabíamos dónde estábamos ni en qué país. Nos sacaron del barco y nos condujeron hacia un edificio parecido a un almacén. Estábamos asustados, sin saber lo que nos esperaba. En ese momento, nuestra madre pensó que posiblemente este podría ser el fin de nuestra familia. Cuando las mujeres y los niños entraron por primera vez al almacén, nos desnudaron y nos rociarón con DDT. Fue difícil explicar la humillación que sentimos debido a este trato inhumano”.

Sólo podemos recordar el trato que los nazis daban a los judíos llevados a los campos de concentración.

Después de soportar malos tratos y humillaciones, la familia Nagannuma no encontró adónde ir después de que terminó la guerra (1945). Las autoridades estadounidenses

## ¿Qué Pasa Realmente en Guatemala? Golpe o no Golpe?

POR EDGAR R. AYALA

Un “golpe blanco” está en marcha en Guatemala, donde el líder en funciones conspira entre bastidores para impedir la transición del poder al legítimo ganador de las últimas elecciones.

No hay ejército en las calles, ni discursos de una “junta” militar en “CNN en Español”. ¿Cómo puede estar ocurriendo un golpe de Estado en Guatemala si el actual presidente, Alejandro Giamattei, que está al final de su mandato, no disuelve el Congreso y, bajo presión internacional, ha dicho que “realizará un traspaso pacífico del poder” al nuevo presidente electo?

¿Y por qué Giamattei, presidente en ejercicio del país más grande de Centroamérica, al que sólo le quedan tres meses de mandato, se molestaría en orquestar un golpe de Estado?

Muy simple, como acto de autopreservación. Tras casi cuatro años en el cargo, se acumulan las acusaciones y los casos de corrupción contra Giamattei y sus aliados, pero los casos no avanzan en los tribunales. No es de extrañar. Giamattei ejerce un control total sobre la fiscalía. Sólo las causas contra sus detractores han prosperado, y sólo sus oponentes han sido encarcelados. El candidato presidencial ganador de Guatemala, Bernardo Arévalo, que recientemente obtuvo una aplastante victoria con una campaña contra la corrupción, es una mala noticia si su administración está totalmente comprometida.

En un error de cálculo monumental por parte de Giamattei y sus cómplices, un sucesor elegido a dedo, Manuel Conde Orellana, no dio la talla en la primera vuelta de las elecciones de junio. Se suponía que Conde iría a una segunda ronda electoral contra un oponente supuestamente impopular para conseguir una victoria fácil. En su lugar, Arévalo, líder del recién creado *Partido Semilla*, sorprendió al país, adelantándose y obteniendo el segundo puesto. Arévalo, socialdemócrata, ganó la última vuelta electoral en agosto y fue declarado presidente electo por el Tribunal Supremo Electoral, que consideró que la votación había sido libre y justa. Su victoria hizo saltar las alarmas en todo el aparato corrupto del Estado, provocando el pánico entre los poderosos políticos y sus agentes.

Según el diccionario Oxford, un “golpe” es “una toma de poder repentina, violenta e ilegal de un gobierno”. Los

mas notorios son aquellos en los que los militares derrocan a un gobierno para instalar a un líder militar o “junta” por la fuerza y la violencia, como ocurrió recientemente en países africanos como Gabón y Níger.

A lo que nos enfrentamos ahora en Guatemala es a otro tipo de golpe de Estado, un “golpe blanco”, en el que un líder en funciones conspira entre bastidores, con el objetivo final de no ceder el poder al legítimo ganador de unas elecciones, y en su lugar traspasar el cargo ilegalmente a otra persona o entidad, rompiendo así el orden constitucional y revertiendo la voluntad del pueblo. El conspirador arma a fiscales y jueces para violar la ley constitucional electoral y desbaratar retroactivamente unas elecciones.

En lugar de utilizar la fuerza bruta o la violencia, un “golpe blanco” se lleva a cabo bajo el velo de la legalidad, manipulando los resortes de la jurisprudencia, o sobrepasándolos por completo para entrampar el proceso democrático. Desacreditar o cuestionar unas elecciones que ya han sido certificadas y declaradas limpias por una autoridad electoral y observadores oficiales internacionales, forma parte de un golpe blanco. Los guatemaltecos no somos ajenos a los golpes de Estado del tipo tradicional, ya que hemos tenido varios



Toma de posesión del presidente Alejandro Giamattei en el Teatro Nacional, el 14 de enero de 2020. Foto cortesía del Gobierno de Guatemala

en nuestra historia reciente, en particular cuando la CIA ayudó a derrocar a un gobierno elegido democráticamente en 1954. Aquel golpe condujo a décadas de gobierno militar y fue seguido por golpes respaldados por Estados Unidos en la República Dominicana en 1963, Chile en 1973 y Argentina en 1976. En 2009, la Secretaría de Estado de Obama, Hillary Clinton, organizó un golpe de Estado en Honduras.

Tampoco nos son desconocidos los “autogolpes”. En 1993, el Presidente Jorge Serrano Elías, siguiendo el ejemplo del Presidente peruano Alberto Fujimori, disolvió el Congreso para mantenerse en el poder ese año. Hoy Guatemala se encuentra de nuevo en medio de una crisis constitucional, que el propio Presidente electo Arévalo describió como un golpe de Estado en una entrevista reciente.

En “cámara lenta”, el presidente saliente Alejandro Giamattei no está disolviendo el Congreso ni destituyendo a jueces o magistrados. Planeó el escenario con antelación. Se preparó para ello.

Durante sus tres primeros años en el cargo, se las arregló para llenar el Tribunal Supremo, el Tribunal Constitucional, los tribunales de primera instancia y de apelación, y la Fiscalía General con agentes jurídicos sin escrúpulos y obedientes que han armado sus instituciones y recursos para perseguir a periodistas, defensores de los derechos humanos o protectores de la tierra. Decenas de ellos se han exiliado, la mayoría en Estados Unidos, incluidos fiscales y jueces que no cedieron a las presiones.

Poco a poco, el golpe actual sigue adelante, a pesar de la creciente presión internacional y la condena de la Organización de Estados Americanos, la ONU, el Departamento de Estado de Estados Unidos, la Unión Europea y líderes de todo el mundo. Si Alejandro Giamattei y sus manipuladores tienen éxito, la presidencia no se transferirá a los legítimos ganadores de las elecciones en la toma de posesión en enero de 2024. En su lugar, pasará a manos de un gobierno interino que será seleccionado por un Congreso en funciones con mayoría política perteneciente al partido gobernante Vamos.

El “pacto de los corruptos”—como muchos guatemaltecos se refieren al círculo de acólitos de Giamattei—está

terrorizado ante la posibilidad de que un paladín les exija responsabilidades legales por actos recientes. Un gobierno interino daría cobertura a Giamattei y otros para seguir lucrándose robando del erario del país o manteniendo sus contratos inflados por el gobierno con sobornos del sector empresarial.

El pueblo guatemalteco ha hablado alto y claro contra la corrupción con su voto a Arévalo. Otros ciudadanos seguirán votando con los pies, emigrando, tal como lo han estado haciendo decenas de miles asqueados y cansados de un país que les niega las oportunidades básicas para vivir. Si el golpe blanco logra su propósito, el éxodo migratorio hacia el norte pasará de mal a peor.

Pero la protesta popular pacífica contra el golpe blanco sólo puede llegar hasta cierto punto. Entonces, ¿cómo ayudar a detenerlo?

Puedes escribir a tu representante en el Congreso y pedirle su apoyo para impulsar una resolución que condene el golpe blanco en Guatemala. Exige sanciones concretas, no sólo prohibiciones simbólicas cancelándole la visa norteamericana a personas señaladas por Washington, que ya no podrán viajar a Disney World. Exige acciones audaces como la suspensión de la cuota de importación de azúcar de Guatemala hasta que el presidente electo Arévalo tome posesión el 14 de enero. Estas medidas serían de gran ayuda.

Puedes llamar o escribir al Presidente Biden y a la Vicepresidente Harris, pidiéndoles que utilicen su liderazgo para invocar la Carta Democrática Interamericana de la Organización de Estados Americanos, que fue diseñada para iniciar acciones coactivas de los miembros de la OEA cuando el orden constitucional ha sido violado en un país miembro. O inicia una petición en línea o responde a las llamadas de los activistas con sede en Estados Unidos que luchan por preservar y promover la democracia en Guatemala. El tiempo apremia y es mucho lo que está en juego.

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Me pregunto hasta qué punto los recuerdos de la dramática experiencia que a través también participa en otras actividades humanitarias.

separados de sus familias. Algunos de ellos incluso fueron colocados en jaulas. Nagannuma México y Estados Unidos, donde niños inmigrantes estaban en centros de detención y En 2019, Nagannuma se unió a un grupo de ciudadanos para protestar en la frontera entre convirtió en diseñador y tiene su propio negocio en San Francisco.

donde se mudaron en 1947. Al principio tuvieron dificultades, como la falta de trabajo, institución. La familia Nagannuma consiguió tal patrocinador en una iglesia de San Francisco, acordaron liberar a los encarcelados si podían conseguir el patrocinio de un individuo o una



# Los “otros” japoneses

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la “legalidad” del espionaje estadounidense y el arresto de personas sospechosas. Los países latinoamericanos que cooperaron fueron Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haití, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panamá, Perú y República Dominicana. “Cuando vivía en Guatemala, escuché historias sobre alemanes que fueron enviados a Estados Unidos durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Más tarde también escuché sobre Mary Jo McConahay, periodista del área de la Bahía y autora de un libro bien documentado sobre cómo Estados Unidos “luchó” durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial en América Latina, involucrados en la Segunda Guerra Mundial (minerales, alimentos, etc.) y EE.UU. no quería que el ‘Eje’ les ponga las manos encima.

“En tal contexto, el gobierno de EE.UU. estaba preocupado por el supuesto espionaje japonés favor de su tierra original. No había evidencia de esto y, peor aún, esos ciudadanos ya ni siquiera tenían conexiones con Japón.

“Esa fue la ‘razón’ para justificar los secuestros. Pero la verdadera razón fue que los alemanes y los japoneses eran buenos “clientes”. Algunos de ellos eran miembros destacados de sus comunidades y empresarios exitosos”.

Después del ataque a Pearl Harbor, en 1939, Perú rompió relaciones diplomáticas con el “Eje” (Alemania, Italia y Japón) y ordenó el arresto de algunos líderes de la comunidad japonesa (la lista fue preparada por la inteligencia estadounidense). Estados Unidos compensó a Perú con asistencia militar y abrió una base militar allí. Es más, el gobierno peruano cerró escuelas y periódicos japoneses.

Los arrestados fueron enviados a EE.UU. en barcos en viajes que podrían durar semanas. A su llegada, les quitaron sus documentos, los rociaron con DDT y los enviaron a un campo de concentración. La mayoría de los japoneses de América Latina fueron enviados al campo de Crystal City, en Texas, un antiguo campo de trabajo que albergaba a prisioneros mexicanos que cosuchaban espionajes. Las condiciones de vida eran deplorables, en algunos casos 80 personas compartían una pequeña barraca con un solo baño. Los japoneses fueron separados de los alemanes detenidos.

Si bien el Departamento de Estado justificó estos encarcelamientos como parte de la seguridad del país, en realidad Washington quería tener suficientes detenidos japoneses para intercambiarlos con prisioneros estadounidenses por parte de Japón; en 1942, el Departamento de Estado estimó que 3.300 estadounidenses estaban bajo control japonés en Asia. Ese mismo año, más de 1.000 japoneses latinoamericanos fueron enviados a Japón como parte del intercambio de prisioneros.

“‘Quiet Passages’ era un programa dedicado a conseguir japoneses que pudieran ser intercambiados por prisioneros estadounidenses. Necesitaban JAPONESES”, explica McConahay por teléfono durante una entrevista con Community Alliance.

“Los japoneses-estadounidenses no eran lo suficientemente buenos para este intercambio, en parte porque ya estaban encarcelados. Entonces necesitan “otros” japoneses. Y los encontraron en América Latina, particularmente en Perú.

“Los sacaron de sus casas, de las calles... Hubo oposición, hubo voces de resistencia a este programa dentro del gobierno de EE.UU. Personas que pensaban “esto no está bien, no parece legal, o al menos ético”. Pero fueron silenciadas.

## El Secuestro de la Familia Nagannuma en Perú

POR EDUARDO STANLEY

“Tenía 20 meses cuando llegué con mi familia al campamento de Crystal City, así que no recuerdo esos eventos”, dijo Kazumun Nagannuma durante una entrevista con Community Alliance. “Aprendí de esta experiencia gracias a mis hermanos mayores”.

Según Nagannuma, Estados Unidos pagó 25 millones de dólares a Perú por gestionar el envío de cientos de ciudadanos peruanos-japoneses a Estados Unidos.

Su padre emigró al Perú en 1925 y trabajó duro para iniciar y desarrollar su propio negocio. “Mi padre se casó con mi madre mediante un acuerdo, que era una práctica común en aquellos días. Así que ella viajó desde Japón hasta Perú para casarse con un hombre que no conocía”, dijo Nagannuma en buen tono.

“Mi padre abordó un barco con muchos otros jóvenes hacia Perú con la esperanza de encontrar un trabajo. En aquella época no había tanta información sobre otros países como hoy”, explica Nagannuma. “Muchos de esos hombres regresaron a Japón porque no pudieron encontrar trabajo. Mi padre inició un negocio de lavandería que luego se convirtió en un éxito. Era dueño de tres tiendas de servicio de lavandería. Mi familia se volvió de alguna manera rica”.

En la década de 1940, había malestar social en Perú. Al gobierno, como explica Nagannuma, no le gustaban los japoneses, “quizás porque había muchos japoneses en el país”.

Sin embargo, tanto el gobierno de Perú como el de EE.UU. apuntaron a los japoneses exitosos. Muchos otros permanecieron en el país. “Mi padre fue muy influyente en la comunidad japonesa, ayudó a fundar la Escuela Japonesa en el Callao”, dijo Nagannuma. Un día, agentes del FBI se presentaron en uno de los negocios de Nagannuma preguntando por el padre y el hijo mayor. “Levaban rifles”. Esperaron pero el señor Nagannuma padre no apareció, por lo que regresaron al día siguiente. Querían que los hombres fueran separados de sus familias para poder controlar a toda la familia. Los agentes finalmente atraparon al señor Nagannuma y le dieron tres días para subir al barco.

“Lo que mi familia construyó en 20 años se destruyó en tres días”, dijo Nagannuma. “Le peor de todo es que no nos dijeron hacia dónde nos dirigiáramos”.

Y en qué condiciones.

“Nuestra familia fue llevada al puerto de salida en dos camiones separados, manteniendo a nuestro padre y a su hijo mayor separados del resto de la familia. Cuando abordamos un transporte del ejército estadounidense, guardias armados nos registraron minuciosamente de pies a cabeza. Kiyoka, la segunda hija mayor, recuerda que los guardias le quitaron el

“También hay un componente racista en este plan. Estados Unidos siempre consideró

a América Latina como “nuestro patio trasero”. Así que a Washington no le importaron

mucho las posibles críticas desde el sur de la frontera.

“Los japoneses peruanos fueron enviados en barcos pesqueros, algunos de ellos pertenecientes a una empresa pesquera de Alaska. Debido a la guerra, el gobierno

estadounidense pudo apoderarse de este tipo de embarcaciones. No eran barcos lujosos,

sino malolientes y abarrotados”, dijo McConahay.

“Y la vida diaria en el campamento, en Texas, era muy difícil. Hormigas rojas, alacranes,

países de lista tres veces al día...”

“Un testimonio de una persona encarcelada en el Campamento Crystal City mencionó

que una vez ayudó a colocar el cuerpo de un hombre muerto fuera del campamento.

Irónico, afirmó, “era extraño sentir libertad gracias a una persona muerta”.

No todos los países cooperaron con los EE.UU.

“El gobierno peruano estaba dispuesto a cooperar con EE.UU., pero otros gobiernos no

lo hicieron. México, bajo Avila Camacho, se negó a cooperar con Estados Unidos. Y allí no

se establecieron bases militares, dijo McConahay.

“Hablé con algunos mexicanos de origen japonés que todavía se sienten agradedidos.

Sin embargo, el gobierno mexicano expulsó a los japoneses de la costa del Pacífico y de la

frontera entre Estados Unidos y México.

“Argentina tampoco cooperó. No estoy seguro de si Washington se acercó al gobierno

argentino. Sin embargo, Juan Perón era el presidente en ese momento y tenía simpatías

fascistas”.

La guerra terminó

Cuando terminó la guerra, en 1945, EE.UU. no sabía qué hacer con los japoneses

latinoamericanos encarcelados. Perú no los quería. Después de largas negociaciones,

algunos fueron enviados a Japón y un puñado de regreso a Perú.

Antes del final de la guerra, un grupo de unos 300 japoneses fueron enviados a trabajar

a un campo de trabajo en Nueva Jersey. Aunque las condiciones de trabajo eran malas, al

menos eran libres y les pagaban.

No fue hasta 1953 cuando el Departamento de Estado—sin opciones—aceptó otorgar

residencia a aquellos japoneses de América Latina que quedaron en el país.

En la década de 1980, el gobierno de EE.UU. reconoció su responsabilidad por el

encarcelamiento de japoneses-estadounidenses durante la guerra y emitió una disculpa

y les otorgó una compensación. Sin embargo, los japoneses latinoamericanos no fueron

incluidos en esta reparación.

Secuestro ilegal de ciudadanos extranjeros, una comportamiento actual

Estados Unidos utiliza continuamente la excusa de proteger al país de ataques extranjeros

para perseguir un comportamiento militarista agresivo. Después del ataque del 11 de

septiembre de 2001, la administración de George W. Bush implementó un programa de

“actividad terrorista”, fueron enviados a EE.UU. y luego a la base de Guantánamo. Algunos

de ellos aún permanecen en cautiverio, sin cargos ni proceso legal ordenado a esclarecer

su situación jurídica. Simplemente fueron clasificados como “terroristas”.

No hace falta decir que la invasión de Irak, como venganza por el ataque del 11 de

septiembre, fue completamente ilegal. Es sospechoso que la Corte Internacional de Justicia

no acuse a ningún presidente de Estados Unidos de criminal de guerra.

El hecho de que durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial y después del ataque del 11 de

septiembre de 2001 se produjeran secuestros ilegales en todo el mundo es un tema muy

delicado y complicado sobre el que los activistas estadounidenses deberían alertar a

nuestra sociedad.

Ningún país debería estar por encima del derecho internacional. Ningún ciudadano de

ningún país debería temer por su seguridad, independientemente de su opinión política.

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# La Fiesta de la Madera

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“Estamos orgullosos de este evento histórico, creo además que tendrá un impacto cultural muy fuerte en nuestra comunidad”, afirma Mendoza. “No solamente entre los jóvenes, hemos notado que incluso entre personas mayores había mucha emoción porque nunca habían visto esta fiesta en Oaxaca. Y ahora tuvieron esa oportunidad”. Mendoza recaló la importancia del espacio donde las familias se congregaron a celebrar y compartir sus emociones y su cultura.

Y concluyó, “queda mucho por hacer, vamos a mejorar año tras año”.

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Elisa Mejía, alcaldesa pro-temp de Madera e integrante del Comité Guelaguetza Madera, habla a la audiencia durante la celebración oaxaqueña. Foto de Peter Maiden



Baile de la región de la Sierra del Norte de Oaxaca a cargo del Ballet Folklórico de Santa Helena. Foto de Peter Maiden

# Los “otros” Japoneses Encarcelados

POR EDUARDO STANLEY

Durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, más de 100.000 japoneses-estadounidenses fueron detenidos por las autoridades estadounidenses y colocados en campos de concentración por todo el país. El gobierno argumentó que podían actuar en solidaridad con la tierra de sus antepasados, tal vez como espías o realizando actos de sabotaje. Ninguna de estas acusaciones fue jamás probada. Sin embargo, familias enteras fueron enviadas a los campos durante años, perdiendo en muchos casos todas sus propiedades o valores.

Todas las instituciones estadounidenses apoyaron este comportamiento, incluida la Corte Suprema de Estados Unidos, y las pocas voces que se oponían fueron silenciadas o ignoradas.

Los “otros” japoneses que fueron encarcelados. Pero si el encarcelamiento de descendientes de japoneses en Estados Unidos fue escandaloso, el secuestro y la detención de japoneses en el extranjero fue un acto extraño, ilegal e inmoral de arrogancia imperial por parte de Estados Unidos. Más de 2.300 personas de origen japonés fueron secuestradas y enviadas a campos de concentración en Estados Unidos. Más del 80% de ellos eran del Perú. La inmigración japonesa al Perú comenzó a principios del siglo XX. Cientos de hombres cruzaron el océano en busca de un futuro mejor. Trabajaron duro, iniciaron negocios y formaron familias. Pero no sabían que alguien los estaba vigilando. Y cuando comenzó la Segunda Guerra Mundial, se convirtieron en el objetivo de Estados Unidos.

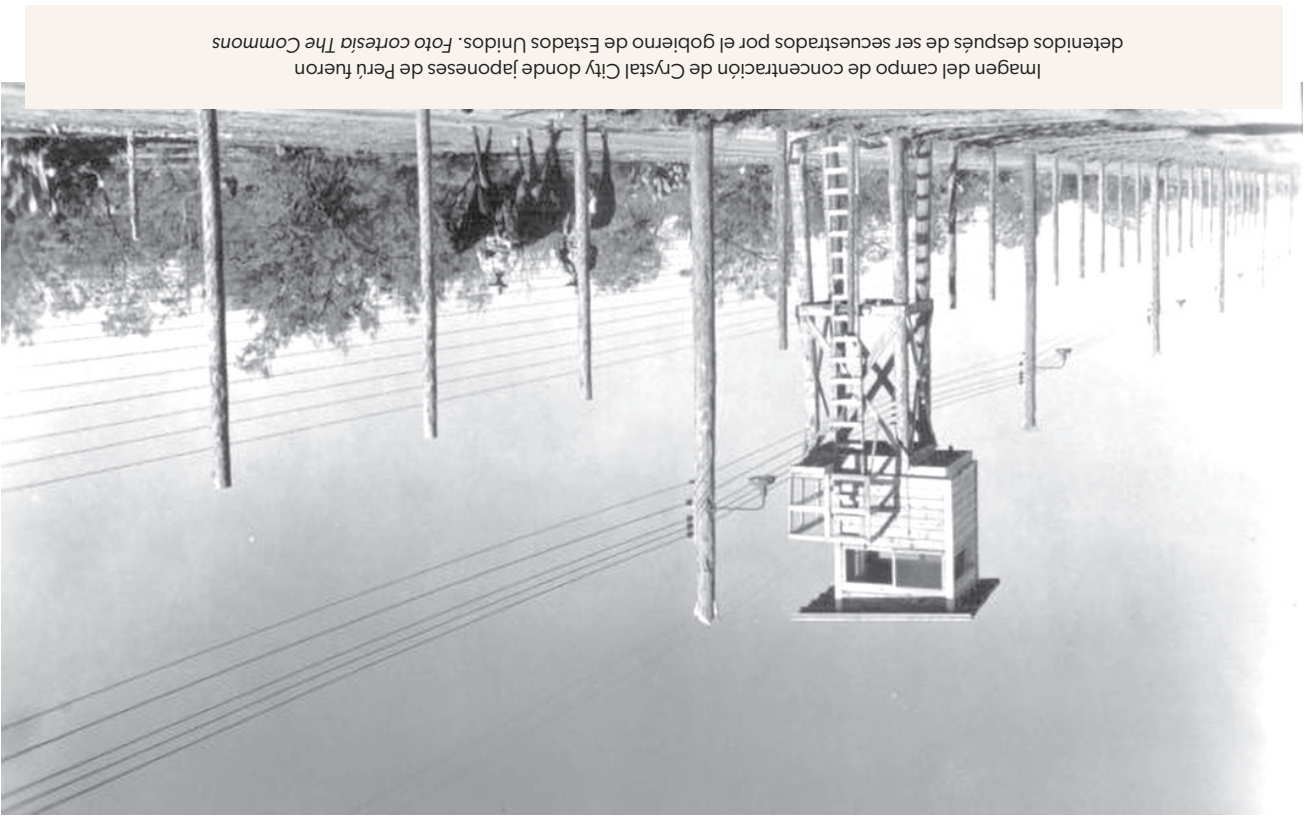


Imagen del campo de concentración de Crystal City donde japoneses de Perú fueron detenidos después de ser secuestrados por el gobierno de Estados Unidos. Foto cortesía The Commons

Washington presionó a la mayoría de los países latinoamericanos para que cooperaran con un plan de “control” de ciudadanos o descendientes de inmigrantes pertenecientes a países en guerra con Estados Unidos y sus aliados: Alemania, Italia y Japón, el “Eje”. El plan incluía el arresto de algunos de ellos y su envío a Estados Unidos. Si bien este plan comenzó en Panamá, fue en Perú donde tuvo un fuerte impacto: allí la comunidad japonesa era la más grande de América Latina. En Perú la discriminación y el racismo contra los japoneses eran rampantes. A mediados de la década de 1930, el país prohibió la inmigración procedente de Japón y posteriormente prohibió a todos los japoneses recién llegados convertirse en ciudadanos

Estados Unidos sabía que la guerra también se libraba en América Latina, por lo que presionó a esos países para que se unieran a un acuerdo de seguridad, que estaba controlado por Estados Unidos. Este acuerdo incluía el arresto de algunas personas. Este ambiente racista ayudó a Estados Unidos a planear el arresto de japoneses en Perú y enviarlos a campos de concentración.

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# LLAMAZA COMUNITARIA LA VOZ DEL MOVIMIENTO PROGRESISTA DESDE 1996

## La Fiesta de la Guelaguetza en Madera

POR EDUARDO STANLEY

El pasado domingo 8 de octubre tuvo lugar por primera vez en Madera la celebración de La Guelaguetza, la tradicional fiesta de Oaxaca con profundas raíces indígenas. Decenas de familias asistieron al evento donde además de los colores bailes hubo fuerte presencia de la gastronomía oaxaqueña y de organizaciones comunitarias que se acercaron a brindar información sobre recursos y apoyos ciudadanos.

La ciudad de Madera presentó una proclamación por medio del alcalde de la ciudad, Santos García. Y no era para menos porque este fue un esfuerzo totalmente local.

“Un grupo de residentes de nuestra ciudad se organizó para hacer realidad el sueño de traer La Guelaguetza a Madera”, dijo Elsa Mejía, alcaldesa pro-temp de la ciudad y primera concejal de origen indígena en EE.UU. “Creamos un comité con personas de diferentes edades pero la mayoría de origen indígena”, Mejía es de origen mixteco, una de las 16 etnias de Oaxaca, y afirma que los integrantes de este comité actuaron de manera voluntaria.

“Cuando empezamos—hace un año—no teníamos ni un centavo, pero muchas ilustres”, comenta Mejía. Y explicó que el equipo de voluntarios organizó una campaña de recaudación de fondos, al mismo tiempo que empezaron a trabajar en la logística y a contactar a grupos de bailes y de música.

“Esta es una celebración de nuestro orgullo como oaxaqueños”, explica Mejía. “He visto y vivido la discriminación, el bullying... Esta es una respuesta, nuestra cultura. Es bonito ver tantos niños identificándose con los bailes y la música nuestra, saber que se sienten empoderados”.



El Ballet Folklórico “El Valle” de Santa Helena, presenta un baile de la región central de Oaxaca durante La Guelaguetza Madera, el pasado 8 de octubre. Foto de Peter Maiden

La organización de La Guelaguetza fue posible gracias al intenso trabajo de un equipo de 25-30 personas que durante meses trabajaron sin cesar, bajo la orientación del Comité Guelaguetza Madera. Los bailes y la música estuvieron a cargo de grupos provenientes del Valle de Santa Helena, Milpitas, Sacramento, Los Angeles y, por supuesto, del Valle de San Joaquín.

“Desde el principio queríamos que este sea un evento gratuito. Nuestras familias son numerosas y no siempre pueden pagar boletos para ciertos eventos. Por eso pusimos énfasis en la recaudación de fondos”, dice Minerva Mendoza, presidenta del Comité Guelaguetza Madera, de origen mixteco y residente de Madera. “Recibimos mucho apoyo, de los comerciantes, de la comunidad, de Fresno, Bakersfield y ahora en Madera.

En el Valle de San Joaquín, la Guelaguetza se celebra en diferentes comunidades del país. Como a realizarse en EE.UU, esta celebración de la población oaxaqueña en EE.UU, esta celebración recíproca”. Gracias a la presencia cada vez más significativa es una palabra zapoteca que se traduce como “intercambio de bienes, su música y sus bailes representativos. Guelaguetza convergen para compartir sus frutos y productos, con sus una fiesta anual en la cual las ocho regiones de Oaxaca La Guelaguetza, o la fiesta de “Los Lunes del Cerro” es de sus gastos”.

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## El Presidente de México se Planta por Independencia y Cuba

POR LENI VILLAGÓMEZ REEVES

El 16 de octubre, el presidente de México, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, afirmó el derecho de su país a comerciar con Cuba y condenó el bloqueo establecido por Estados Unidos contra la isla.

“Y no tenemos que pedirle permiso a ningún gobierno extranjero porque nosotros somos un país libre, independiente, soberano.” expresó el presidente de México Andrés Manuel López Obrador en una conferencia de prensa 16 de octubre del 2023.

“En todo lo que nosotros podamos ayudar al pueblo de Cuba lo vamos a hacer, republicana María Elvira Salazar (ex periodista de la cadena en español Univisión) mandó una carta a la presidenta

está padeciendo un bloqueo inhumano, injusto, y nosotros no podemos darle la espalda al pueblo de Cuba.”

“Si nos dicen: ‘Venganos petróleo porque no tenemos cómo adquirirlo’, claro que sí. Cuando les pedimos nosotros: Ayúdennos porque no tenemos médicos especialistas... Incluso, cuando la pandemia, vinieron médicos y están trabajando médicos cubanos especialistas en nuestro país, y les agradecemos mucho.”

Aclarando algunas distorsiones

La agencia de noticias española EFE, reportó el 30 de septiembre que México había mandado petróleo a Cuba con valor de 200 millones de dólares en 2023, sugiriendo que fue una donación. Octavio Romero Oropeza, director general de Pemex, la compañía de petróleo nacional de México, afirmó que ningún regalo de combustible a gobierno extranjero se hizo por parte de Pemex, y Pemex exporta petróleo a 26 países. Tanto el como López Obrador desmintieron que el Banco de Exportaciones e Importaciones de Estados Unidos (Eximbank) haya cancelado un préstamo. Este chisme comenzó a circular cuando la congresista estadounidense republicana María Elvira Salazar (ex periodista de la cadena en español Univisión) mandó una carta a la presidenta



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