

# Who Will Stand in Solidarity with These Women?

BY MIKE RHODES

On May 23, Fresno City Council members heard from three traumatized women who were attacked by an Islamophobic man at Porchfest in the Tower District. (See “Hate Speech and Crimes” below.)

Speakers supporting the women were outraged that the District Attorney’s Office did not file hate crime charges against Francisco Samaniego, who was arrested shortly after the incident.

Zahra Al, one of the traumatized women, spoke at the City Council meeting saying that while distributing information at a table she “had to deal with this individual, Francisco Samaniego, for 20 minutes before he decided to become physically aggressive and start his assault on myself, my six-year-old son, my friend Lana and my other friend Mel.”

Al said that during the 20-minute verbal assault Samaniego used “white supremacist, racist rhetoric [and] racial slurs against Arabs, Latinos, Blacks and Muslims.” She was outraged that the DA did not file hate crime charges.

Layli Shirani, senior staff attorney on civil rights for the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), spoke at the public hearing via Zoom. She said that she is representing the three women who were attacked and that it “defies common sense to understand why the DA made this hasty choice [not to charge Samaniego with a hate crime].

“In our view, before reviewing all of the evidence and before meeting with all of the individuals who were directly affected and offering reasoning that is inherently flawed.”



Supporters of the victims of a hate crime in the Tower District show signs in the Fresno City Council chamber. Photo by Peter Maiden



Lana (left) and Zahra Al (right), victims of a hate crime during Porchfest in the Tower District, support each other as they listen to a speaker in the Fresno City Council chamber on May 23. Photo by Peter Maiden

The goal of those at the City Council meeting was to encourage City Council members to get the DA to reconsider adding hate crime charges against Samaniego. Although the City Council does not “hold prosecutorial powers over the suspect,” as Council President Annalisa Perea said, it does have political power and could influence the DA’s office.

This resource is supported in whole or in part by funding provided by the State of California, administered by the California State Library in partnership with the California Department of Social Services and the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs as part of the Stop the Hate program. To report a hate incident or hate crime and get support, visit [cavshate.org](http://cavshate.org).

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## Hate Speech and Crimes

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

Genocide and mass atrocities are commonly preceded and accompanied by “dangerous speech”—hate speech that has the potential to influence people to accept, condone or commit violence against targeted groups. Dangerous speech is consequently considered both a warning sign and an instrument of group-targeted violence.

Israeli government officials have said that they are “fighting human animals.” They talk of making Gaza a

“slaughterhouse” and of “erasing the Gaza Strip from the face of the earth.”

Sadly, some Americans support this hateful rhetoric and commit hate crimes that target Palestinians and their supporters on U.S. campuses (such as UCLA) and at demonstrations.

A recent violent attack in Fresno’s Tower District against three women staffing an informational booth at PorchFest about the Gaza genocide is an another such incident. The women were there to educate the public and to garner support for a ceasefire. Unfortunately, the American public does not know the extent of the mass murder of children in Gaza and of the dire circumstances for the people there.

Al Jazeera has a link called “Know their names: Palestinian children killed in Israeli attacks.” We must know their names. They are not just numbers, they are precious children.

The Al Jazeera link states that “the Gaza Strip is a graveyard for thousands of children, the United Nations has said. Since Oct. 7, Israeli attacks have killed at least 15,000 children, according to Palestinian officials. That is one Palestinian child killed every 15 minutes, or about one out of every 100 children in the Gaza Strip.

“Thousands more are missing under the rubble, most of them presumed dead. The surviving children, who have endured the traumatic impact of multiple wars, have spent their lives under the shadow of an Israeli blockade, influencing every aspect of their existence from birth.”

Out of respect for the dead and with love, say just a few of their names: Suzan Iyad Muhammad Al-Ashi, 0 years; Khahlil Ibrahim Fawzi Al-Nafar, 1; Hani Ahmed Rabbi

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# Hate Speech and Crimes

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Netil, 2; Bana Iyad Gamal Nasr, 3; Juri Rasmi Jabr Sobeih, 4; and Dina Abdullah Khader Musa, 5; and more than 15,000 others.

The three young women staffing the information booth, Zahra, Mel and Lana, were attacked for their advocacy of Palestinian children, basic human rights and resistance to our government’s complicity in genocide.

The alleged attacker, Francisco Samaniego, has been arrested and charged. Witnesses stated that Samaniego confronted several individuals who were attending PorchFest, was very vocal and, during the confrontation, assaulted three women and took a cellphone, later throwing it on the ground, rendering it unusable.

Samaniego has been charged with one felony count of second-degree robbery and three misdemeanor counts of battery. He faces a maximum of five years in state prison if convicted of these charges.

The Fresno County District Attorney’s Office, however, declined to file a hate crime. The DA’s Office concluded that the prosecution could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Samaniego committed a hate crime.

“It is our ethical obligation as prosecutors to file charges where the facts of the case can be proved beyond a reasonable doubt with the applicable elements of the law,” stated the DA’s Office. “In this specific case and after careful review of the reports, the facts do not meet that burden.

“Because a majority of the statements were directed at Hamas, the derogatory statements that were allegedly made by Samaniego referring to Palestine and Palestinian people, while despicable, are protected by the First Amendment.”

The three victims of the assault never mentioned Hamas, and eyewitnesses verify that the assailant repeatedly verbally attacked Palestinians, Muslims, “Arabs” and their supporters.

One of those attacked, Zahra, described the incident. “I was approached by the assailant at approximately 3 p.m. I was alone manning a booth providing information about Palestine and the current genocide that’s happening in Gaza.

“I was alone with my two children, my six-year-old son Adam and my two-year-old son Noah. [They] were with me during the entire period of the assault and the incident.

“Francisco [the assailant] came up to me demanding a cookie; we had cookies there. He said, ‘I’m going to have a cookie,’ in a very abrasive and direct manner. I [said], ‘Sure, you can have a cookie. Are you interested in what I have to offer? Are you wanting to talk or learn about the situation that’s happening in Palestine?’

“He then started his verbal attack. He said that I deserve to get raped. He said I should go back to where I came from. [I was dressed conservatively and wearing a hijab.]

“He started talking badly about the Islamic religion,

saying how all Muslims and Arabs are terrorists. He said that if I was in Palestine or in any other Middle Eastern country I would get raped and that I deserve to get raped.

“He went further and said that he would kill me and anybody that looked like me or stood for any of my ideas, like a free Palestine and to stop bombing the children in Gaza. I felt threatened and taken back, and I was in fear for my safety and my children’s safety.

“Two women finally approached after 20 minutes and extended their hands outward toward me. They said, ‘We’re gonna stay there with you; we feel the energy.’ He turns to them as soon as they approach, and he starts attacking them verbally as well.”

One of these women was Zahra’s friend, Lana. “As I approached the booth where Zahra was standing, [Samaniego] was at her side, very close to her,” Lana recalls. “I came in between them and I didn’t realize the level of vitriol that he was yelling.

“I said, ‘Hi sir, how can I help you?’ and he immediately responded by saying ‘what are you doing here, why are you here, you’re a terrorist supporter. If you went to Gaza, they would kill you gay people.’

“So, I didn’t say much to him. I said I don’t feel like you’re here to have a conversation. I said I don’t feel comfortable. I’m gonna ask you to leave.

“I have my arm pushing his body against his arm while trying to create space. We call this bracing and creating space and self-defense as [the assailant is] forcing himself onto [Zahra].

“I felt my adrenaline rise, and I threatened to call the police. I started to open my phone, but I was getting so fragile that I couldn’t. [Our friend] Mel walked up and she could tell that obviously something’s happening.”

Mel continues describing the encounter. “I told [Samaniego] I’m gonna call the police if you don’t leave. He [then] threw water in my face and he grabbed me by the hair and he hit me with the cup. He grabbed me by the hair and dragged me down to my knees and across the lawn [for about 4–5 feet].

“At some point, he put me in a choke hold and I don’t remember that, like I genuinely don’t remember. I think I blacked out for a second, and then I saw that [Zahra and Lana] were going toward the street.

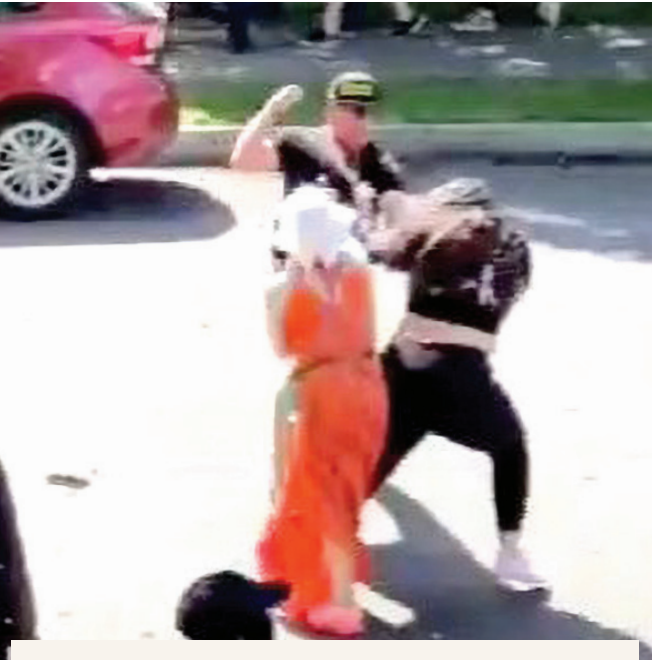
“I started running, and I realized my glasses were gone. They were lost at some point, and [maybe] he snatched them when he grabbed my hair. I am nearsighted and can’t see without my glasses.”

As the assailant followed Mel to the street, Zahra and Lana ran to her assistance. Video captured by bystanders shows the assailant throwing Lana’s phone to the ground and repeatedly punching the three women. Fortunately, by defending themselves, the three avoided serious injury. At this point, bystanders intervened to break up the altercation.

Lori Garcia, a friend of the three women and a member of the Palestine Liberation Group, made the following statement.

“The DA’s dropping the hate crime charge sends a message to our Muslim and Arab residents that they are not safe in the city of Fresno while wearing their cultural or religious clothing.

“If FPD (the Fresno Police Department) charged the



Francisco Samaniego was caught on camera attacking two women doing outreach about Palestine at PorchFest.  
Photo by Amy Oakley

assailant with a hate crime and violation of civil rights, the evidence is clear: the initial victim was wearing a hijab, keffiyeh, and standing in front of the Palestinian flag. How much more evidence does one need to prove a hate crime? They were assaulted for being visibly Muslim/Arab.

“The assailant has a right of speech, so he has the right to say whatever he chooses; however, he does not have the right to physically attack whoever he wants. What about these women’s rights to safety?

“The victims were simply hosting an education booth to teach others about the history of Palestine. Victim one was accompanied by her two young children.

“Imagine the trauma that the six-year-old feels; he witnessed his mother being verbally berated and then violently assaulted while proudly wearing her cultural and religious articles. This attack will stick with him forever and sends a message to the Muslim Arab community that Fresno is a hostile place to raise a family.

“Along with the recent anti-Palestinian rant by a [Fresno City] Council member, Arabs and Muslims are feeling disconnected here. Fresno took a giant step backward into history. We’re in a resurgence of post-9/11 Islamophobia.”

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## “Outside Agitators” and “Super Citizens”

BY JANET TRAPP SLAGTER

The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is an activist, grassroots, social justice organization founded to stop wars. Current campus protests against the war on Palestinians are aligned with positions that WILPF has taken and continues to press for.

How are the thousands of campus protesters, mostly students, organizing against Israel’s war on Palestine and what forms of resistance do they face? What can we learn from them, and how can we help them?

### Campus Protests

Given the dearth of journalistic coverage, it is impossible to count the number of higher-education campuses on which protests have been staged. There were at least 140 as of May 6. By May 16, more than 2,950 students, faculty and staff had been arrested on 66 campuses.

Student strategies vary and are creative. They have staged sit-ins, die-ins, marches, rallies, hunger strikes, occupations and graduation disruptions.

Students have made at least 120 encampments. Some were quickly removed by police. Some have lasted weeks and range in size from six to 100 tents.

Most universities have had the encampments removed. However, at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, professors have taught classes among the tents, and UC Berkeley has not threatened its students’ tent city. When officials at the New School in New York City took down its indoor student encampment, faculty established their own.



Protesters at the sit-in for Palestine at Fresno State on May 1. Photo by Peter Maiden

During this spring’s graduation ceremonies, students have subverted the usual order, turning their backs on speakers and walking out chanting “Free, Free Palestine.”

On some campuses, faculty have stood protectively between students and police, like Annelise Orleck, the 65-year-old Dartmouth College feminist labor historian and former head of Jewish studies, whom the police dragged to the ground.

### University and Police Responses

Beyond the 2,900-plus arrests, university officials have expelled students from classes and campus residences. They have attacked demonstrators and torn down encampments. They have beaten and tear-gassed students and closed campuses.

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# November Is Getting Close

It's little wonder so many people are fed up with politicians. And that's a bipartisan thing. Take, for example, the president's recent grandiose announcement about providing humanitarian assistance—mainly food—to Palestinians under siege in Gaza, while at the same time providing large amounts of weapons and ammo to Israel. This is incredibly hypocritical, to say the least.

Joe Biden's approach to the events in Gaza—when thousands of people around the globe are demanding a ceasefire—is cynical and will cost Democrats a significant number of votes in November.

On the other side, during Trump's criminal hush-money trial in New York, witnesses talked openly and in explicit detail about a sexual encounter between the former president and now presidential candidate and an adult film actress. What a show! I wonder what Trump's current wife might feel or think.

In any case, this is not a good moral example for our youth. Coming from a person who belongs to the Republican Party, which pretends to defend "family values" and pushes for legislation against abortion because it's against the "precious life" of potential or future babies, it seems extremely cynical.

But this is what we've got. Our options are bad and worse. Our political system isn't really democratic—and let's not talk about that obsolete

institution called the Electoral College or how six conservative judges at the Supreme Court make decisions affecting millions of citizens.

So, how are you going to vote next November? It seems like a simple question but...

Voting for Biden means keeping the same old vicious police attitude of military interventions around the world and the endless weapons-for-sale to "our friends." In short, Biden represents the Cold War at its best—and don't forget that now we have a "new" enemy, China, a situation that is helping Washington to maintain its militaristic behavior.

On the other hand, voting for Trump... Wait a minute, this sounds like a bad joke. How can a person who is facing so many indictments and accusations, who was forced to pay a multimillion dollar fine for fraudulent business practices (remember Trump University), who has failed in many business ventures, and is a bully, a misogynist and so many other things—not one good—be a candidate to the White House? Obviously, he wants to be the U.S. president because he wants the immunity to avoid more trials and the power to take revenge against his "enemies."

Trump's candidacy speaks volumes about our broken electoral system. The options aren't good, but a responsible citizenry can't allow Trump to become president.

And not voting isn't an option—lots of young people have expressed that they won't vote, which is a serious concern.

The next election is crucial. Although there is not a good candidate, we must not install a dictator as president and become a banana republic.

Till next month.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Not Rocket Science

The solution to the immigration problem, if we really want to solve it, is not rocket science. If the immigration problem is caused by political and economic oppression in other countries, America can and should use its overt and covert influences to fix those countries rather than support the oppressive regimes that are squeezing their population out and up to us.

Ah...but we know that the dictatorships and cartels in those nations like things the way they are. Those who are unhappy find it less dangerous to leave and chance being turned back at our border than to risk prison time or a firing squad at home.

Corporations here use the constant flow of these desperate millions to keep wages low and demands with unionization out of the discussion. It's the same people in both places. A national minimum wage here that was a living wage would end wage undercutting.

Kamala Harris made one trip to the countries south of us to broach the subject of reform. It was a disaster because we publicly announced our intention to interfere.

She came back with her tail between her legs and a clear message to leave it alone. Perhaps a more concerted effort, a true aggressive long-term policy of influencing these countries with trade sanctions, tariff deals that helped them, and covert support of progressive parties (rather than the oppressive ones, as we do now) would yield some results.

The "accidental demise" of dictators such as Marcos would serve to soften conditions in those countries. Raise the minimum wage, encourage free and fair elections, and allow unions.

Dr. Joel Eis  
Point Richmond

# The Passing of Activist Vickie Fouts

BY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STAFF

Vickie Fouts, a well-respected and committed local activist, passed away on May 23, "very peacefully with her teddy bear, my brother Preston and I at her side," wrote her daughter, Natasha Fouts, on Facebook.

"A friend recently posted that a good way to judge a person is to look at their kids," added Natasha. "Our mom raised two great kids. She taught us to work hard and be kind. She was a very proud Cal Fire mom.

"She loved her family, friends, garden, Facebook and fighting for social justice. She was stubborn and could be ornery, and we loved her just the way she was".

Vickie was a board member of the radio station KFCF 88.1 FM and the *Community Alliance* newspaper. She was also involved in local organizations such as the Pan Valley Institute.

Comments from some of her friends:

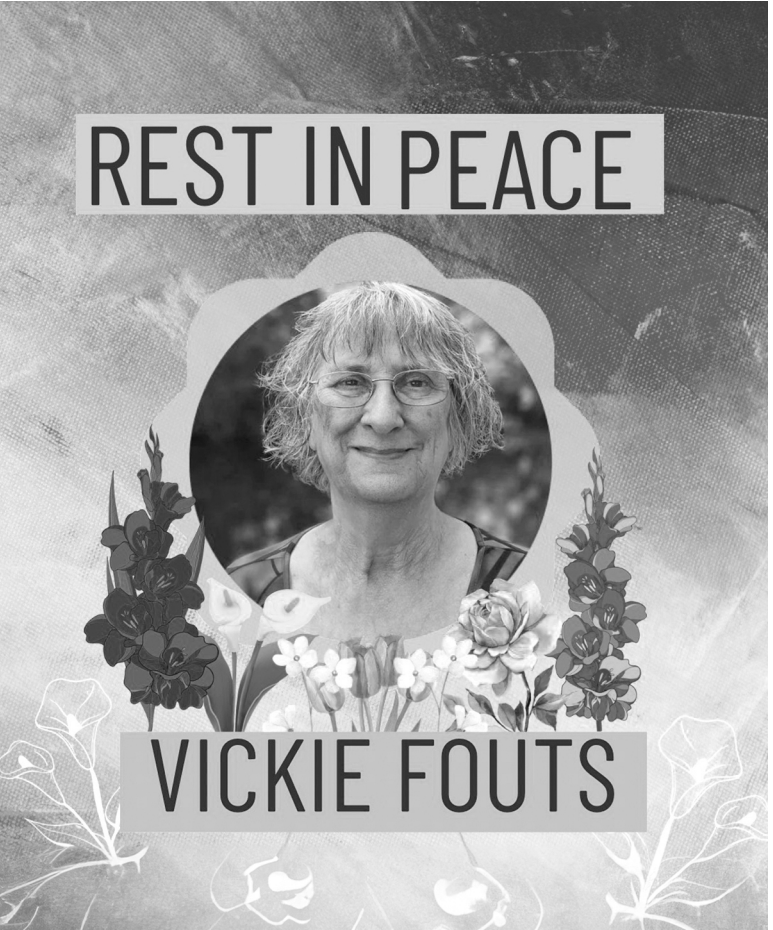
"She worked to make the world a better place. Very sorry to hear she's not here anymore."—Nancy Waidtlow

"Vickie's voice is still with us, and its impact on the work continues to inspire and support the fight for social justice!"—Kevin Duff Hamilton

"Sorry to hear of her passing. Always a passionate voice for justice and never afraid to speak out."—Chris Schneider

Vickie was a passionate voice for justice. She participated in demonstrations in support of our freedom and democracy, and against wars and power abuses.

She will be missed.



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Since 1996, the *Community Alliance* has been an independent progressive voice for the Central San Joaquin Valley. The *Community Alliance* advocates for

- Racial, social, environmental and economic justice
- Equal rights for all, including immigrants, the unhoused and the LGBTQ+ community
- Access to a free quality public education for all
- Access to healthcare for all
- A living wage for all working people

Our goal is to expose racial, social, environmental, economic and political injustices. We will help to build a powerful progressive movement that will make all our communities safer, healthier, more equitable and more livable.

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Articles 800–1,200 words.  
E-mail editor@fresnoalliance.com.

#### Peace and Social Justice Calendar:

Please submit all activities to  
calendar@fresnoalliance.com  
by the 15th of the previous month.

#### Letters to the Editor:

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

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# Sit-in at Fresno State to Stop Genocide in Gaza

BY MIKE RHODES

Students at Fresno State held a sit-in on campus to focus attention on the genocide taking place in Gaza and to call for an immediate end to the war. More than 150 students, faculty and community supporters joined as students on campuses across the country are protesting U.S. policy in Palestine, Gaza and Israel.

Loud chanting could be heard on campus. “No justice, no peace, hands off the Middle East. Occupation is a crime, from Fresno to Palestine. Free, free, free Palestine, free, free, free Gaza.”

Haneen, who did not want to give her last name, helped organize this sit-in and is with the campus group Students for Palestine Liberation. Haneen said that “we are here to stand in solidarity with Palestine. We are here because of the ongoing genocide against people in Gaza and the violence they are facing in the West Bank.

“Ultimately, our goal here is for a free Palestine. We want liberation, and I feel we have the power to do so.”

John Beynon, professor of English and president of the California Faculty Association at Fresno State, said he was there “because it is really important that we support our students. Given what we are seeing all around the country, we are seeing a lot of bravery, a lot of courage on the part of students.”

Beynon went on to compare this sit-in to the antiwar demonstrations that took place on campus in 1968.

There was no visible police presence at the sit-in, which took place in the Free Speech area on campus. However, there was one person who was covered with an Israeli flag, another person with a Trump mask who had several video cameras attached to his body and right-wing Proud Boy Josh Fulfer, who shot video of the crowd.

Will there be further antiwar demonstrations at Fresno State? Haneen said that we will just have to wait and see.



Haneen, spokesperson for a sit-in at Fresno State, speaks to the crowd. Photo by Peter Maiden

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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. His website is [mikerhodes.us](http://mikerhodes.us). Contact him at [mikerhodes@comcast.net](mailto:mikerhodes@comcast.net).

## “Outside Agitators” and “Super Citizens”

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Several universities have canceled, postponed or reengineered graduations, and canceled speeches, such as South Asian Muslim Asna Tabassum’s valedictory speech at the University of Southern California.

Many schools have sent in police. At UCLA, city police watched (and filmed) for hours as 100 pro-Israeli counter-protesters disassembled the student encampment, kicked and punched protesters, and used strobe lights, firecrackers, sound blasts, bricks, pepper spray, wooden planks and metal poles on them, leading to 25 hospitalizations.

Elsewhere, police have used rubber bullets and tear gas and “skunk,” a chemical munition developed in Israel. At Arizona State University, police officials have been charged with attacking and removing the hijabs of four Palestinian students.

For context, it is important to know that several states have passed new laws protecting police from any meaningful community oversight, making police into “super citizens” with rights and immunities other residents don’t have. In addition, both public access and press coverage are being restricted.

When Columbia University brought in police to end the occupation of Hamilton Hall and arrested more than 100, it prohibited press and the public from entering campus. And most of the press coverage is filtered through a bias that favors the state of Israel.

Though UCLA holds the arrest record, it is significant that some of the most ferocious attacks were ordered at elite universities with multibillion-dollar endowments, such as Columbia, Penn and Dartmouth, where many investments are connected to war profiteering.

National legislators are calling for protesters to be sent to Gaza and for international student protesters to be deported. They are threatening to remove federal funding from schools where students are allowed to protest the actions of the state of Israel, labeling these protests “antisemitism.”\*

In another official rhetorical strategy used to delegitimize protesters and infantilize students, New York City Mayor Eric Adams, a former cop, likes to label the protesters “outside agitators,” a trope familiar to 1960s antiracist and antiwar protesters. The label suggests that non-student participants are suspect and should not be on campus. It suggests students couldn’t possibly develop their understandings, beliefs and strategies themselves.

### Student Demands

The wide range of student demands reveals deep learning about political economy and university processes. In addition to calling for their respective universities to support a permanent ceasefire, students are demanding meetings with administrators to achieve the following:

- Divest from weapons manufacturing companies and others profiting from Israel’s occupation of Gaza
- Remove war profiteers from our universities
- Engage in financial transparency
- Accept no funding from Zionist organizations that stifle students’ free speech
- Create police community review boards
- Create an alternative model of crisis response
- Prohibit study-abroad programs to Israel, Gaza or the West Bank until Palestinian students can be admitted
- Admit students from Gaza to U.S. universities
- Support the International Criminal Court’s call for further investigation of Israel’s actions in the war
- Divest from all sites of settler colonialism
- End relationships and exchanges with Israeli universities and institutes, for example, Tel Aviv University, which designs weapons systems and holds the corpses of 60 Palestinians
- Guarantee free expression on campus
- Provide amnesty for students barred, expelled and arrested
- Create Middle East studies programs and Arab cultural centers
- Allow Palestinian flags on campus
- Acknowledge Palestinian students, specifically
- Hire Palestinian professors
- Remove all cops from campus indefinitely
- End “Palestine exceptionalism” limits on free speech

### Student Successes

There is no one tactic that is successful and context matters.

Students are strategizing for effectiveness and safety. As they plan actions, they hold discussions of how much risk each is willing to take, given that many students have been suspended, kicked out of campus housing and/or arrested.

Many Palestinian students are organizing in ways to minimize danger for themselves and their families, some of whom live in Palestine. For example, they choose not to use their surnames. To prevent administrative interventions and attacks by observers, some choose not to have speakers, but to hold quiet sit-ins where some leaders speak to the press.

With respect to divestment, a universal demand, some student groups have achieved guarantees of negotiations with boards of directors, usually in the fall. A handful of schools have already agreed to divest. A few universities have also agreed to financial transparency.

Successful negotiations have featured officials revoking student expulsions and desisting from legal prosecutions when students remove their encampments.

The greatest success is the knowledge acquired actively protesting, for example, learning how universities actually work in contrast to their polished published statements.

Students experience power laid bare. They acquire hands-on political awareness, local and global. They learn to be organizers, with all the creativity they can muster. They learn to work together toward peace and social justice goals.

Confronting power as they are brings lifelong transformations in thinking and action. We are watching future WILPFers.

### How to Be Allies

Many WILPFers are already involved. For those who are not connected to a campus already, some further suggestions are to exchange contact information with student activists and respond to their requests for physical, psychological, legal and other needs. Record their actions and share videos with other activists and with the media. Write and speak about what you see.

\*The Anti-Semitism Awareness Act, which easily passed the U.S. House of Representatives, contains a many-faceted definition of *antisemitism*, which lists, as an example pertinent to the current situation, “Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.” This definition relies on and is quoted from the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s “Working definition of antisemitism” (2016). More than 700 Jewish professors have signed a letter rejecting this definition.

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Janet Trapp Slagter, Ph.D., is professor emerita from Fresno State’s Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department. A lifelong peace and feminist activist, she is the Americas Region representative to the International Board of WILPF and board secretary of Rape Counseling Services in Fresno.

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# Fresnans Pay \$6.4 Million a Year to Fund War Crimes

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

On May 16, the Fresno Brown Berets held a press conference and demonstration in front of Fresno City Hall. They released the following statement:

### Statement on Brown Beret and Allies Action during the Mayor’s FY2025 Budget Presentation

The Fresno and Central Valley Brown Berets along with other natives of Turtle Island [North America], community members and activists were united in a protest during the [Fresno] Mayor’s fiscal year 2025 budget presentation to express our unwavering support for the people of Palestine, Sudan, the Congo and other lands under occupation. We stand together to highlight the direct link between the funding of policing, militarism and state violence at the expense of the basic needs of people, both here in Fresno and across the globe.

We unequivocally reject the use of our tax dollars to support the genocide of Palestinian people by Israel. We are deeply troubled by our city council’s refusal to advocate for a ceasefire in Palestine. Our condemnation extends to those council members who have turned their backs on standing in solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and sisters, particularly during the Palestinian flag-raising ceremony. The Islamophobic and Zionist rhetoric championed by certain council members, notably Garry Bredefeld, along with Council President Annalisa Perea’s refusal to denounce such rhetoric, compels our strong rebuke. It is unacceptable that our community’s resources, the tax dollars of Fresnoans, are being allocated to perpetrate occupation in Palestinian territories, while our council remains passive.

Furthermore, we draw attention to the potential for these funds to foster positive development within our own community here in Fresno rather than fueling conflict abroad. Through our taxes, Fresnoans currently send over \$6 million to Israel military aid. We call upon the Fresno City Council to prioritize investments in our community over funding the oppression of the Palestinian people.

We confront the illegal settler-colonial practices of the United States and its ally, Israel, with the following grievances:

- Whereas Palestine and Turtle Island are both currently occupied by illegal colonial states.
- Whereas the United States empire has committed genocide against the indigenous peoples of Turtle Island and aided in genocide around the world.
- Whereas the United States is directly supporting Israel’s genocide of Palestinians through taxpayer dollars, providing weapons and other military aid used in the destruction.
- Whereas the United States refuses to hold [Israeli Prime Minister] Netanyahu accountable for civilian casualties.
- Whereas generations of indigenous people around the world have had their lands stolen by illegal colonial empires.

We demand:

- The Fresno City Council divest from all companies doing business with Israel.
- An immediate ceasefire in the occupied land of Palestine, with self-determination and equal rights granted to all Palestinians.
- An end to the funding of the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) and Israel’s military campaigns in Palestine that are being supported by U.S. tax dollars.
- An acknowledgment that Israel has attempted genocide against the Palestinian people.
- Public support from Joe Biden and the U.S. UN ambassador that Palestine and Palestinians have a right to their land.
- All stolen lands in Palestine and on Turtle Island to be returned to the indigenous peoples, whom they rightfully belong to.

Our points of unity:

- Stand against U.S. imperialism, zionism and settler-colonialism.
- Respect a diversity of tactics in the struggle for liberation and landback: We know that freedom is something we have to take for ourselves by any means necessary.



Fresno Brown Berets at Fresno City Hall on May 16 calling for divestment and a ceasefire.  
Photo by Bob McCloskey

- Reject taxpayer dollars being spent on militarism and war here in Fresno and abroad: We recognize and condemn the fact that just like state and federal taxpayer dollars are sent to Israel’s military aid, a majority of our taxpayer dollars locally continue to be usurped by [the] Israeli-trained Fresno [Police Department] and away from community needs.

Through our collective voice, we reaffirm our commitment to the struggle for freedom, justice and the right to self-determination for all oppressed peoples. Together, we stand strong in our conviction and purpose.

### Local Funding of War Crimes

How much of the \$3.8 billion in annual U.S. military funding do Fresnoans pay through federal tax dollars? What community needs could be funded instead?

The \$6,393,681 in annual federal tax dollars from Fresno to fund Israel’s weapons could instead fund

- 760 households with public housing for a year
- 2,224 children receiving free or low-cost healthcare
- 69 elementary school teachers
- 18,202 households with solar electricity produced for a year
- 169 students with their loan debt canceled
- 5,559,722 face masks for pandemics

### City Hall Demonstration

“It’s easy for people to ignore [what’s happening in Gaza],” said Kyle Hunt, who attended the demonstration. “It’s happening somewhere out there. But, you don’t get to go ahead and turn a blind eye and act like it doesn’t matter. It will affect you before you realize it.

“What are you gonna do when it leaves there and comes here? [Will you be] silent then [like you are] silent now? At that point, you’re gonna be powerless.

“You’re going to be helpless because you did nothing before to try to stop it. You did nothing before to take action, so once you’re next, you’re gonna complain about it, but at that point you have no right to say [anything] because you didn’t do [anything]. At that point, you need to accept your consequences.”


Also at the demonstration was Aline Reed, president of the Fresno Freedom School, who said, “I’m out here to support. I want to protest the war that’s going on against the Palestinians, against the genocide. I think enough children have died. I think Rafah has been ravaged, and we need to do something now!”

As the attack on Gaza rages on, community members continue to “think globally and act locally.” *La lucha continúa!*

\*\*\*\*\*

Bob McCloskey is an activist and a reporter for the Community Alliance newspaper. Contact him at [bobmccloskey06@gmail.com](mailto:bobmccloskey06@gmail.com).

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**Sundays 9am-1pm Cedar & Barstow**  
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# What Did They Say About Palestine?

BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

### Nelson Mandela

I have come to join you today to add our own voice to the universal call for Palestinian self-determination and statehood.

We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians. All of us should be as vocal in condemning violence and the violation of human rights in this part of the world as we do with regard to other areas.

Yes, all of us need to do more in supporting the struggle of the people of Palestine for self-determination; in supporting the quest for peace, security and friendship in this region.

### Mahatma Gandhi

Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French. It is wrong and inhumane to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine today cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct.

The mandates have no sanction but that of the last war [World War I]. Surely it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that Palestine can be restored to the Jews partly or wholly as their national home.

I wish they had chosen the way of nonviolence in resisting what they, rightly, regarded as an unwarrantable encroachment upon their country. But according to the accepted canons of right and wrong nothing can be said against the Arab resistance in the face of overwhelming odds.

### Fidel Castro

The basis of just peace in the region commences with the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories and it presupposes, for the Palestinian people, the return of all their occupied territories and the recovery of their inalienable national rights, including the right of returning to their homeland, to free determination and the establishing of an independent State in Palestine.

The revolutionary movement has been brought up in the hatred of racial discrimination and pogroms of any kind, and from the depths of our souls, we repudiate with all our strength the ruthless persecution and genocide which, in its time, Nazism unleashed against the Jewish people.

But I can find nothing more similar to that in our contemporary history than the eviction, persecution and genocide that is being carried out today against the Palestinian people by imperialism and Zionism. Stripped of their lands, driven out of their own homeland, dispersed throughout the world, many of them being persecuted and murdered, they are an impressive example of abnegation and heroism, and they are the living symbol of the greatest crime of our times.

### El Hajj Malik El Shabazz (Malcolm X)

Did the Zionists have the legal or moral right to invade Arab Palestine, uproot its Arab citizens from their homes and seize all Arab property for themselves just based on the “religious” claim that their forefathers lived there thousands of years ago? Only a thousand years ago the Moors lived in Spain. Would this give the Moors of today the legal and moral right to invade the Iberian Peninsula, drive out its Spanish citizens, and then set up a new Moroccan nation...where Spain used to be, as the European Zionists have done to our Arab brothers and sisters in Palestine?

In short, the Zionist argument to justify Israel’s present occupation of Arab Palestine has no intelligent or legal basis in history...not even in their own religion.

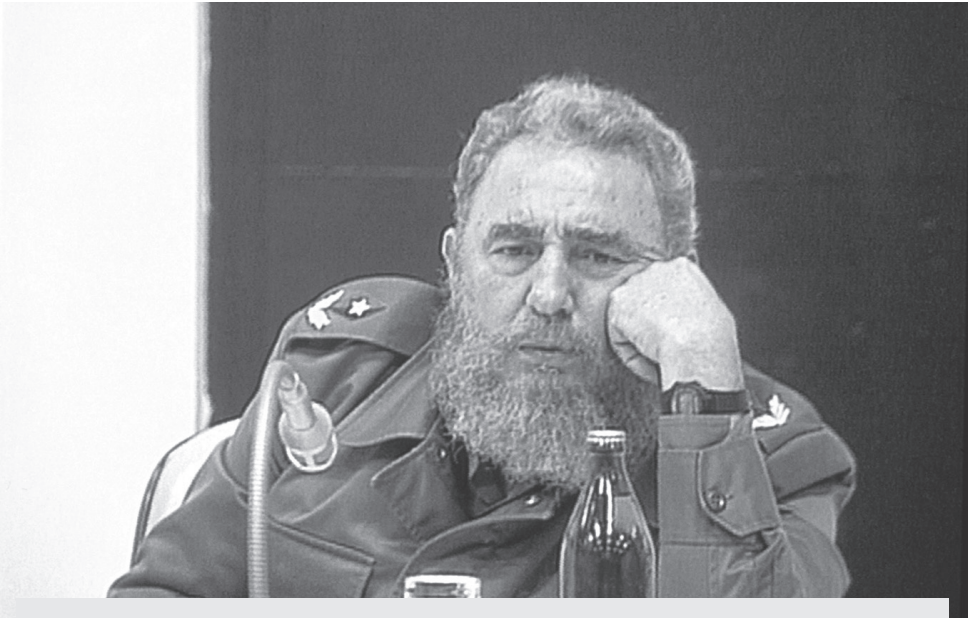
### James Baldwin

The state of Israel was not created for the salvation of the Jews; it was created for the salvation of the Western interests...

The Palestinians have been paying for the British colonial policy of “divide and rule” and for Europe’s guilty Christian conscience for more than 30 years.

### Alice Walker

The land taken  
Has never been returned.  
In fact, more stolen land  
Has followed the first assaults  
And thefts.  
Palestinian children, after years  
Of throwing stones  
At grown up assassins  
In helmets and armored tanks  
Are killing themselves  
These days  
To save their murderers  
The trouble.  
Unlike most Americans  
I have witnessed Palestine  
Under Israeli rule. It is demonic  
To the core.



Fidel Castro was among the strongest supporters of Palestine statehood and independence. This image is a still from the Swiss documentary *Ricardo, Miriam y Fidel* by Christian Frei. Photo courtesy of Christian Frei/The Commons

### Angela Davis

Most of us had been involved for many years in Palestine solidarity work, but we were all thoroughly shocked to discover that the repression associated with Israeli settler colonialism was so evident and so blatant. The Israeli military made no attempt to conceal or even mitigate the character of the violence they inflicted on the Palestinian people.

Gun-carrying military men and women—many extremely young—were everywhere. The wall, the concrete, the razor wire everywhere conveyed the impression that we were in prison. Before Palestinians are even arrested, they are already in prison. One misstep and one can be arrested and hauled off to prison; one can be transferred from an open-air prison to a closed prison.

There are currently some 5,000 Palestinian prisoners and we know that since 1967, 800,000 Palestinians—40% of the male population—have been imprisoned by Israel. The demand to free all Palestinian political prisoners is a key ingredient of the demand to end the occupation.

### June Jordan

I was born a Black woman  
and now  
I am become a Palestinian  
against the relentless laughter of evil  
there is less and less living room  
and where are my loved ones?  
It is time to make our way home.  
They blew up your homes and demolished the grocery  
stores and blocked the Red Cross and took away doctors  
to jail and they cluster-bombed girls and boys  
whose bodies  
swelled purple and black into twice the original size  
and tore the buttocks from a four month old baby  
and then  
they said this was brilliant  
military accomplishment and this was done  
they said in the name of self-defense they said

### Ernest Ché Guevara

Gaza became the symbol of Palestine as this tiny fragment remained the only place raising the flag of Palestine. Guevara visited Gaza in 1959, shortly after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

Guevara told Palestinian refugees they must continue the struggle to liberate their land. There was no way but resistance to occupation, he said. “The right must eventually be restored,” he affirmed. He offered to supply arms and training.

Mustafa Abu Middain, Al Bureij camp leader, took Guevara to visit the camp and showed him cases of poverty and hardship.

“We have a worse case of poverty,” Guevara shot back. “You should show me what you have done to liberate your country. Where are the training camps? Where are the factories to manufacture arms? Where are people’s mobilization centers?”

After the visit, Cuba gave scholarships to Palestinian students, granted citizenships for stranded Palestinians and held many conferences in support of Palestine.

During the Israeli war on Gaza in the summer of 2014 Cuba sent tons of humanitarian aid to Gaza and received the injured.

**Evo Morales, Eduardo Galeano, Silvio Rodriguez, Rev. Raul Suarez, Fidel Castro Ruz, Atilio Boron and many others**  
Against Israeli terrorism and U.S. imperialism, in defense of the right of self-determination of Palestine and of all the peoples of the world!

\*\*\*\*\*

Leni Villagomez Reeves is a local physician and activist. Check out her news and views about Cuba on Facebook ([facebook.com/fresnosolidarity/](https://facebook.com/fresnosolidarity/)).

Support the *Community Alliance* newspaper by becoming a subscriber. See page 3.



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# The Guillotine of Our Time

BY PAULINA DEEDS ORTIZ

On May 6, some of the most influential and wealthy individuals of our country gathered in front of cameras, making their way past protestors and up red carpeted stairs to flaunt their opulence in intricately made outfits they could barely move in. The Met Gala was like a scene out of the *Hunger Games* saga.

Bizarre “fashionable” images of the rich enjoying a party they paid \$75,000 to get into. The “fundraiser” for the Costume Institute (a collection of costumes housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art) made more than \$26 million. That same night, Israel was again bombing Gaza.

The theme of the night was “The Garden of Time,” inspired by the short story written by J.G. Ballard. The story follows an aristocratic couple in their large estate. From a distance, they can see an angry mob approaching, so the couple begins picking and using the “time flowers” in their garden. These magical flowers push back, time-keeping the danger at bay.

Eventually, they run out of flowers, time resets and everything (having been turned back in time for so long) turns to stone. By the time the mob arrives, there is nothing there for them.

Some theorize that the story is about creation and destruction. Or it could be a relevant allegory for economic inequality. A story about the rich hoarding and taking—preventing anyone from sharing in their wealth until there are no more resources for the rest of us.

Perhaps the celebrities who attended the Met Gala were too busy editing their pictures for Instagram to read the short story. Perhaps this is why they took the theme so literally, covering themselves in expensive decorative flowers or, like Camila Cabello, carrying a block of ice with a gold rose valued at \$22,500.

The prices of their gowns and accessories are almost laughable—especially when considering Cabello’s block of ice was meant to be carried like a purse but the handle broke right away. Presumably, she saved the receipt.

No one quite embodies the irony of this over-the-top ridiculous event like Haley Baylee. Despite having several million followers, many might not know this influencer. Invited as a host for the Met Gala, she decided to post a TikTok showing off a dress that can only be described as what it would look like if spring vomited on someone.

Moreover, she used an old sound that trended a while back on the app, lip-synching the famous words “Let them eat cake.” Yes, the phrase that people attribute to Marie Antionette as a response to being told that her people were starving and didn’t even have bread.

This tone deaf and ignorant TikTok sparked outrage. Wasn’t it enough that we’ve been watching civilians, doctors and babies being bombed, starved and shot at for months?

Wasn’t it enough that we watched rich people play dress-up for \$75,000 while we struggle to pay rent or afford groceries?

Wasn’t it enough that the colleges we have become indebted to in exchange for an education won’t tell us where our money is going?

Wasn’t it enough that our politicians lie and spend our money on weapons that kill children across the ocean?

Influencers like Baylee—whether or not aware of it—showed us how completely out of touch they are from the rest of us. Especially when she went on to apologize and claimed to be a “normal person,” despite the fact that she rents a \$17,000 per month N.Y. apartment. It was simply the last straw. Within hours, the hashtags #Digitalguillotine and #blockout2024 were trending.

The idea behind #blockout2024 is simple:

In modern capitalism, attention has become another form of currency. Followers, watches, streams, likes—it all translates to money somewhere.

Although the genocide in Gaza has a multigenerational history, the last eight months we have essentially watched live as homes, hospitals, schools and lives are destroyed.

We have also noticed how many celebrities, influencers, politicians and so-called activists and leaders have stayed in silence. There are many possible reasons for their silence such as support for Israel or not wanting to lose contracts with Israeli funders or not caring.

Many of these public figures have spoken out on humanitarian issues in the past—which makes their silence on this genocide particularly disappointing. At the end of the day, it doesn’t matter anymore. If you have stayed silent or made excuses for the genocide while being someone of influence—you will be blocked.

The #blockout movement does not aim to bully anyone into caring about what is happening to Palestinians because at the end of the day you cannot force someone into caring. The movement is simply about not wasting our time and attention on people that clearly would not spend it on us. It is about no longer spending our time and money on people who are standing still and instead uplifting each other’s voices.

People following this movement are not only boosting and posting videos on ways to help Palestinian families to evacuate but also calling attention to other genocides like the ones in Congo and Sudan.

There are many criticisms of this movement. Is it performative? Is it really making a difference?

TikTok creator @adonaicaimmloch has made various videos relating to the #blockout movement, including a 7.5-minute video in which he details the importance of the movement in our current socioeconomic structure. He breaks down how celebrities perpetuate and benefit from the systems that keep us struggling to survive and how they’re used to distract us from real issues, as well as the importance of focusing on each other instead of rich people who don’t care about us.

“[Social media] have become pillars of celebrity worship, consumerism and corporate worship. In order for the imperialist system to function, they require us to be 1) pacified and 2) distracted amidst the violence that is committed against us and against people across all the world...

“Celebrit[ies] represent...the idea that those of us who work hardest will be justly rewarded for our hard work. But if you’re poor like me you understand that the hardest workers are often the poorest.

“The celebrity...is the goal. We’re all supposed to try to achieve this level of fame, recognition and wealth, but the gag is that wealth is always, in every single circumstance, at the expense of someone else’s poverty and the violence committed against that person to ensure the profit from their labor.

“And this is where the #blockout movement comes into play. We, the working class, are tired and aware of what is going on. And the reason why is because we are affected by it—we’re also being oppressed.

“After we get off our 9–5 shift, where we’re making money to barely afford groceries, barely afford rent, barely afford our phone bill, we go on social media and see what is happening all across the world and it’s not that hard to draw the connections.

“The only currency of real value is not the dollar, it’s not the yen, it’s not the euro, it’s our attention. If we stop paying

## OPINION & ANALYSIS



Singer Ariana Grande, one of the many celebrities who attended the frivolous \$75,000 ticket event called the Met Gala while Israel was bombing Gaza.  
Photo courtesy of The Commons

it to them and pay it to each other, we can uplift each other, we can survive the crisis that is gonna happen soon. We have to save ourselves.

“What is happening with the #blockout movement is that we are shifting the consciousness and taking control over our lives and what we will see on our social media—while we still have it...We can talk to each other about how we are going to survive.”

For those who don’t believe change can really happen this way, such celebrities as Lizzo and such influencers as Chris Olsen have already started talking (in fear of losing followers for their previous silence) about Gaza and programs like Operation Olive Branch (a grassroots collective that can connect you with a family raising funds to evacuate Gaza).

The movement has already cost thousands of public figures millions of followers. Kim Kardashian alone has already lost more than three million followers thanks to #digitalguillotine.

The genocide in Palestine is pulling our attention toward atrocities around the world and away from celebrities. Our attention must stay focused on the injustices in Palestine, Congo, Sudan and here. We cannot continue wasting our time on people that only care if we’re alive when it is affecting their revenue. So, who’s on your block list?

\*\*\*\*\*

*Paulina Deeds Ortiz is a former fellow with the Community Alliance newspaper. She is a Mexican immigrant currently attending Fresno State, working on an anthropology major with a minor in psychology. She spends her free time writing poetry or painting.*

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## WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

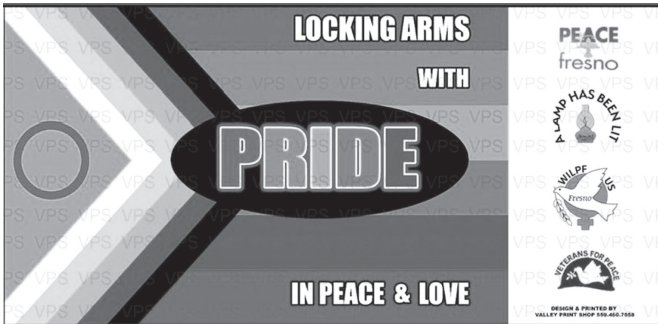
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Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

### FRESNO WILPF WILL BE THERE!

#### Marching with Pride June 1

WILPF Fresno joins forces with other peace groups to better support and participate in the Fresno Rainbow Pride Parade and Festival. The Fresno Center for Nonviolence, Veterans for Peace Chapter 180 and WILPF-Fresno will show pride and unity under a single banner on June 1, as the Parade starts at 10 a.m. at Olive and Palm avenues. (Gather at 9 a.m. if you don't want to miss the chance to march with peace and pride; contact Teresa for details.)



### RAGING GRANNIES

The Fresno Gaggle has been singing everywhere in the past year, and there's no sign of any slowdown. They were most recently seen at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence 32nd Anniversary Celebration on May 11 and



Pat Wolk and Kay Pitts

are scheduled for some special June events, including Juneteenth and the Stone Fruit Jubilee, plus some important birthdays. Check with Nancy Hatcher for details!

### TEATRO DE LA TIERRA

Patricia Wells-Solorzano with Teatro de la Tierra/Generaciones has been learning, teaching and sharing music everywhere. They were featured at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence 32nd Anniversary Celebration on May 11, with Familia Vasquez. Classes with the Generaciones Music Project take place every Friday evening at the FCNV. Instructional videos for online use are being filmed, too.



Patricia Wells-Solorzano with Leoncio, Angel and Dhalia Vasquez

### WILPF NATIONAL CONGRESS

Check the Congress schedule at [wilpfus.org/35thCongress/schedule](http://wilpfus.org/35thCongress/schedule). This year is the WILPF-US 35th Triennial Congress, from May 29 to June 2. The theme is Water on the Frontlines for Peace. Two National Issue Committees with WILPF Fresno members among the leaders will be organizing presentations.

Fresno WILPF member Jean Hays is part of the leadership team of the Earth Democracy Committee. WILPF-Fresno's Earth Democracy Committee would like to share some of the many worthwhile presentations with other environmental group members. Check the WILPF Facebook page for the time and location of the viewing party.

The Cuba and the Bolivarian Alliance Committee with Leni Villagomez Reeves will be presenting a webinar on Cuba as a Zone of Peace as part of the Congress. This will be an interactive presentation. What do you know or believe about Cuba? What questions

do you have? Did you know that Latin America and the Caribbean have been declared a nuclear-free area and a Zone of Peace by all 33 nations of the CELAC? Is there a reason why the United States should conduct siege warfare against the nation that leads the world in women's rights and LGBTQI+ rights, a nation that shares doctors with poor countries all over the world?



THE CONTENT IN THIS SECTION IS PAID FOR BY WILPF. THE WILPF PAGE IS USUALLY COMPILED AND EDITED BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES (LENIVREEVES@GMAIL.COM).

### LIBERATION THROUGH SOLIDARITY

#### Commemorating the 99th birthday of Malcolm X with a call to end the genocide in Palestine

This event took place on May 18 at the Free AME Social Hall in Fresno. There was a potluck, excellent speakers, unity, community and a chance to see the tree we planted for Malcolm one year ago.

Malcolm X el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz was born on May 19, 1925. He traveled to Gaza on Sept. 5, 1964, and afterward wrote an essay including the words, "Did the Zionists have the legal or moral right to invade Arab Palestine, uproot its Arab citizens from their homes and seize all Arab property for themselves just based on the 'religious' claim that their forefathers lived there thousands of years ago?"

In his spirit, we recognize and express our solidarity with the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people against the Israeli attempt to exterminate them and to rip away the shreds of their homeland that still remain.



Planting a tree to commemorate the birthday of Malcolm X. Photo by Peter Maiden

### LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Chaired by Jean Hays, this committee has identified a legislative threat to free speech in a current attempt to falsely conflate criticism of Israel with antisemitism and is delivering the following letter to our California senators:

*WILPF Fresno is extremely concerned with the recent attempt to repress the constitutional rights of WILPF and all Americans calling out Israel's genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. We strongly urge you to do everything you can to prevent H.R. 6090 from being brought to a vote on the Senate floor. Free speech is one of America's core values and you must protect it!*

*This anti-free speech bill would set the stage to criminalize protests that demand an end to Israel's genocide in Gaza and support for equal rights in Palestine.*

*The "Anti-Semitism Awareness Act" has an extremely misleading title, and would criminalize language that is, really, not antisemitic at all. Introducing this bill to the Senate would prioritize the interests of a foreign nation, Israel, which is committing genocide in Gaza, over the constitutional rights of Americans. This legislation would adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Act definition to bring together anti-Semitism or bigotry against Jews with anti-Zionism or political opposition to a state that privileges one ethnicity over another. It is clearly in response to the movement in the US against Israel's genocide as well as its occupation of Palestine. Americans should be able to protest and speak freely without fear of repression. Israel has murdered nearly 40 thousand Palestinians in Gaza since October 7, and it is every person's responsibility to call attention to it, not repress those that do.*

*Again, we strongly urge you to NOT bring this anti-free speech bill to a vote in the Senate—and to pledge to vote no on the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act should it ever hit the Senate floor. Please, please protect free speech!*

You, as members and supporters, can also contact the Fresno and D.C. offices of Senators Padilla and Butler and express your opinion on this issue.

#### RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW! HERE'S HOW

Send dues to WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755. WILPF-US membership is \$35/year. WILPF-Fresno sponsors a low-income rate of \$20.

For questions and/or information updates, contact Nancy Hatcher at [nhatcher46@gmail.com](mailto:nhatcher46@gmail.com) or Kyla Mitchell at [kyla.noelle@gmail.com](mailto:kyla.noelle@gmail.com).

#### WILPF MEETING

June 13 (second Thursday), 7 p.m., Zoom, and usually also at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. This meeting is open to all members. Watch your e-mail for an announcement. For info on the in-person option, contact Teresa at [taca\\_03@yahoo.com](mailto:taca_03@yahoo.com).

#### STIR IT UP-WILPF KFCF 88.1 FM

June 26 (fourth Wednesday), 3 p.m. Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

#### UNPACKING RACISM

With Dr. Jean Kennedy. Moving toward community event participation. To join, RSVP with your e-mail address to [drjeankennedy@yahoo.com](mailto:drjeankennedy@yahoo.com) or text 559-270-1023.

#### WOMEN IN BLACK

June 5 (first Wednesday), noon, Courthouse. Check first with Sue Kern at [skern@netptc.net](mailto:skern@netptc.net) or 559-349-3777.

#### Find us on Facebook!

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# SIERRA CLUB

## TEHIPITE CHAPTER

### Great Sierra Mines and Trails Along Tioga Pass Road

Wed. June 12 at 7 PM at  
the Woodward Park Regional Library

Join us for our last IN-PERSON meeting before the summer hiatus. Adventurer Tony Krizan will present on "Great Sierra Mines and Trails Along Tioga Pass Road" on Wed. June 12 at 7 PM at the Woodward Park Regional Library.

From the 1860's more than 350 active mining claims were recorded in the areas around Tioga Pass Rd.

introducing the gold boom of 1880. This new activity lasted until 1884, generating more than \$300,000 in gold and silver from the Great Sierra Mines. There are two old forgotten mining towns. One is called Dana City (Great Sierra Mines) which is a three mile trek in and above upper Gaylor Lake. The second area is called the town of Bennettsville, and the mine is only a half mile from Tioga Pass Rd.

Learn about these mines and more from presenter, Tony Krizan, local adventurer, author, and photographer. Tony has written for the Sierra Star Newspaper, Mariposa Gazetter Newspaper, California Explorer Magazine, and has authored three books on hiking. His presentations focus on California wilderness and aviation history. Don't miss this one!



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# Nu’u Yavi: Oaxacan Food Fest

BY EDUARDO STANLEY

In the past 20 or so years, the cultural presence of Oaxaca in the San Joaquin Valley has become increasingly evident, particularly in Madera and Arvin (Kern County). Thousands of farmworkers have arrived to work in the Valley’s fields from Oaxaca, a southern state of Mexico with a large indigenous population. In Oaxaca, there are at least 16 different indigenous communities with their own languages and traditions.

One of those traditions is food. Oaxacan cuisine is not only delicious but also colorful, with a distinctive flavor in part due to the herbs used in it. In the past few years, we have seen a surge of Oaxacan cuisine at upper-scale restaurants on both sides of the border and many books and articles dedicated to that.

But as we all know, one thing is the food you can find in a restaurant and another thing is the food your mom makes. And that’s why a group of Oaxacan women in Madera—led by cultural organizer Rosa Hernandez—decided to create a traditional market in the park, with food, refreshments, freshly made tortillas, bread and desserts, and, of course, fresh farm produce. They called it Nu’u Yavi, which is marketplace in Mixteco, one of the indigenous languages spoken in Oaxaca.

“We invited women who we know cook keeping the traditional flavors, who like to keep the recipes of their mothers and grandmothers,” said Hernandez, a Mixteca from Santiago Juxtlahuaca, Oaxaca.

“The idea was to offer traditional dishes using the ingredients from our towns—if possible—while maintaining the atmosphere of our kitchens. And to introduce these dishes with pride, keeping our ancestral legacy.”

Nu’u Yavi took place on May 3 at the Court Park in downtown Madera. About one-third of the city’s 61,000 inhabitants are believed to be of Oaxacan origin. Madera also has the first city council member of Mixteco origin to be elected in the United States.

Seven Oaxacan women—six Mixtecas and one Triqui—cooked their favorite dishes and sold them to the public: *tortillas*, *mole rojo* and *amarillo* (red and yellow mole), *pozole*, fresh refreshments (or *aguas*), *yiqui* (a stew made of softened corn, avocado leaves and barbequed meat), *tamales* and *huachimole* (a dish made with tomatillos, *guaje*—the green pods of a tree—chile and pork meat).

The event was sponsored by the Pan Valley Institute of the American Friends Service Committee. The food stands were distributed as a semi-circle around the gazebo of the park, which became the center of the event. Many people attended, not only to eat but also to enjoy the conversation while children played around. There was soft Oaxacan music in the background.

“To me, [this] was an experience oriented to educate the public about our food and our cooking techniques,” said Daisy Mejia, who prepared *huachimole*.

“It’s like chile verde but it’s cooked with *guaje* seeds and *chile costeño*. My mom taught me how to cook it, so it means a lot to me. I hope our new generations don’t lose these recipes.”

How difficult is it to get the original ingredients? “Now, you can get *guaje* in some stores; that wasn’t the case a few years back,” explained Mejia. “Even *guaje* trees have been planted in the area.”

It’s not difficult to understand. Immigrants not only bring their working skills and energy but also reproduce their cultures—including, of course, their food.

So they create a market for new products that end up being planted locally. However, there are some exceptions. “Ideally, the *huachimole* is cooked with *chile costeño* (chile from the coast of Oaxaca). My mom brought them from Oaxaca because it’s not produced here,” said Mejia.

“What I liked from this event is that several women got together to cook and share our traditional food. It’s food we know, however, each one has a special touch they learned from their mothers,” said Mejia.

And, of course, there were tamales. The traditional types, and *Oaxaqueños*, which are made with banana leaves.



The women who participated in and organized Nu’u Yavi in Madera on May 3.  
Photo by Tudor Stanley

“When I cook, the smell, the colors, the flavors—they transport me to my homeland,” said Mireya Agustin, with a nostalgic tone. She offered tamales and *pozole amarillo* (pozole made with yellow chiles). “They are very popular during festivities celebrated at the plaza back home.”

These women have something in common when they cook for events like Nu’u Yavi. They have their families’ help.

Agustin mentioned that, although more Oaxacan ingredients are now produced here, “they don’t taste the same.”

She used to sell her food from home and at special events. “I like to share my food; people enjoy Oaxacan food and this makes me happy,” she said.

There is something else besides good food. “This effort—to organize the event—is part of a struggle, a struggle to get recognized as a community which is part of the community at large. This is also part of our contribution, we are not just working hands,” concluded Hernandez.


She suggested that participants are interested in repeating the experience in July.

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Eduardo Stanley is the editor of the Community Alliance newspaper. Contact him at [editor@fresnoalliance.com](mailto:editor@fresnoalliance.com).



A general view of the main area of the Nu’u Yavi event at the Court Park in Madera.  
Photo by Eduardo Stanley



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## Conserving Water and Preparing for Heat in California – Frequently Asked Questions

Our climate is shifting, causing weather conditions like extreme heat to become more common. Extreme heat is a hazard to human health, worsens drought conditions, and exacerbates wildfires. As we move into the summer months, how can we work together to adapt to this new normal, stay cool, and conserve our limited water supply?

VISIT [SAVEOURWATER.COM](http://SAVEOURWATER.COM). OR DOWNLOAD A FREE COPY OF SAVE OUR WATER COLORING BOOK AT [WFRESNOFRC.ORG](http://WFRESNOFRC.ORG)



### How can I conserve water in my daily life?


-  Fixing leaks at home can save up to 90 gallons a day.
-  Wash full loads. Running the washing machine only when full saves up to 45 gallons per load. Running the dishwasher only when full saves 24 gallons per load.
-  Install water efficient fixtures around the home - aerators can save up to half a gallon per minute, and high-efficiency toilets can save up to 35 gallons per day.
-  Wash your fruits and veggies in a bowl with water instead of running them under the faucet.

### Are there rebate programs for yard transformation?


Check with your local water agency to see if they can offer financial assistance with water-wise yard transformation, such as planting water-wise plants which are drought-resistant and adapted to California's climate.

### Where can I learn more about extreme heat preparedness and water conservation?


Get heat ready at [HeatReadyCA.com](http://HeatReadyCA.com) Find out all the ways to conserve water at [SaveOurWater.com](http://SaveOurWater.com)



### How can I cool down my home during extreme heat?





-  Set air conditioning to 78 degrees or lower. If air conditioning is unavailable create a darker, cooler environment by closing blinds and drapes, closing doors to unused rooms, using fans, including bathroom and stove fans to help circulate air, and avoiding using your stove.  
For information about how to get help with your electricity bill, visit [climateaction.ca.gov](http://climateaction.ca.gov) or [csd.ca.gov/lihwap](http://csd.ca.gov/lihwap).

### Where can I go to get cool?

-  Keep cool by visiting a cooling center or other air-conditioned building, such as a local library, shopping mall, or community center. Public parks with shady areas or pools also can provide relief. Protect yourself further with a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, and by staying hydrated.

### What are the warning signs of heat-related illnesses, like heat stroke?

Warning signs of heat illness vary, but may include heavy sweating, muscle cramps, feeling weak, headache, nausea or vomiting, tiredness, or dizziness. If experiencing symptoms, stop physical activity, move to a cool place, change into light, loose clothing, sip water and, if symptoms worsen, get immediate medical help. If you have a fever of 103 degrees or higher, you may be suffering from heat stroke and should call 9-1-1.



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Heavy Sweating

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# Palestinian Christians Reject Excuses for War Against Civilians

BY BAYARD TAYLOR

On Oct. 20, 2023, a little less than two weeks after Hamas’s attack against Israel, Palestinian Christians published “A Call for Repentance: An Open Letter from Palestinian Christians to Western Church Leaders and Theologians.” Seven months later, their Open Letter is as pertinent as ever.

The letter challenged basic and unquestioned assumptions promulgated especially among white evangelicals.

The letter decried the double standard in the West that sets a higher value on Israeli lives than Palestinian lives.

The letter rebuked Western Christians for showing sympathy for only one side in this conflict and invoking God’s name to promote violence and religious nationalism.

The letter noted with horror that church leaders’ uncritical support of Israel was leading to genocide.

The letter pointed out that the stance of some Western Christian leaders toward the violence in Gaza has severely harmed Christian witnesses worldwide.

The letter

- says that Israel is waging war against civilians, especially against defenseless families and children—while Western church leaders barely notice or protest;
- accuses Western Christians of refusing to condemn the genocide that Israel has been conducting against the Palestinians for 70-plus years;
- says, instead, that too many Christians have legitimized Israel’s ongoing indiscriminate attacks, the wholesale destruction of neighborhoods, the denial of food, fuel, water and medicine—and the forced removal of more than one million Palestinians from their homes; and
- reminds readers that Israel’s military is using extreme violence, including white phosphorus and bombing schools, hospitals and places of worship.

The letter categorically rejects Israel’s genocide against the Palestinians. Sometimes it continues at a slow pace; sometimes the pace of ethnic cleansing is accelerated. The goal of the Israeli government is to create a religious nation state that strangles the life out of the Palestinians, as much as possible cleansing the land from their presence.

The letter refers to how the world condemned the crime of apartheid in South Africa—Israel is doing the same thing.

Then the letter denounces the theological rot in Western theologies that promotes a wide range of Zionist theologies that claim, according to their interpretations, that Israel is key to end-of-the-world scenarios and that if Palestinians are killed en masse, it is just collateral damage and something that God approves.

The letter makes explicit that many prominent Western church leaders’ and theologians’ human-rights-denying ideology takes precedence over their human-rights-denying theology. It’s not theology at all; it is power politics.



Palestinian Christians are against the killing of civilians in Gaza—and elsewhere. This image is a view of the Swedish Christian Center in the old city of Jerusalem. Photo courtesy of The Commons

And the letter links this ideology to “colonialism.” American Christians don’t like to think of America as a colonial power or as an empire that would act in ways inimical to justice and human dignity. But colonialism thoroughly infects our history.

Colonialism presupposes racial supremacy, cultural supremacy and religious supremacy. It’s not just a European thing. Just look at how we enslaved Africans and practiced genocide against our own Indigenous peoples for hundreds of years.

That same colonial mindset—supported with religious justifications—is driving the American-supported Israeli genocide against its own Indigenous peoples. American church leaders and theologians don’t notice it or talk about it much because they have a giant blind spot. But Palestinian Christians, absorbing the full brunt of American-Israeli violence on a scale that fits the definition of *genocide*, see things much more clearly.

The colonial mindset, using the just war theory, makes violence by the colonial power as justified and good, but violence on the part of those who are resisting colonization (= dehumanization) as “savage” and “evil.” This monopolistic view of the legitimacy of use of violence favors the rich and powerful, and disadvantages those oppressed by colonial systems.

The Palestinian Christians want American church leaders and theologians to acknowledge that it is Western Christian society that dropped the atomic bombs over civilians in

Japan during World War II; it is Western Christian society that destroyed Iraq’s infrastructure and killed untold millions. Our hands as a Christian nation are not clean of blood.

The Palestinian Christians’ Open Letter finishes by pointing out that “entrenched colonial discourse...has weaponized the Bible to justify the ethnic cleansing of indigenous peoples.” It goes on to say that colonial theologies are not innocuous—they lead to violence and terrorizing Indigenous peoples.

Western Christians (along with anyone who wants to follow the way of Jesus) need to repent of our complicity in violence and oppression—in our history and up to and including the present war in Gaza.

Regrettably, too many Western Christians across wide denominational and theological groups cling to colonialist and Zionist theologies. It is hoped that Christian young people and others who embrace equality and humanization of all can help us get beyond this horrible cycle of violence that we are in. We need more creative nonviolent resistance that employs the logic of love and justice.

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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’s of divinity graduate of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Contact him at bayardtaylor1@aol.com.

## When All Hope Vanishes

BY RUTH GADEBUSCH

When all hope vanishes, desperation and despair set in. That is the seed for an organization like Hamas. With all good intentions of atoning for its failure to protect the Jews from the Nazis in World War II, the victorious West gave little thought as to how that seed would develop. Today, we reap the product. Furthermore, it was done basically in the name of religion!

Cloaked in the righteousness of religion, we have an untenable situation in the Mideast today from that seed sowed in 1948. There is no peace in the region.

There is only more chaos sustained by bigger and better weapons to say nothing of deeper hate and determination. And it belongs to us, the West, including the United States, which is now busily backtracking for our own sins of earlier disregard for the rights of humankind as we practiced slavery of one group and seized the land of another. It would seem we are slow learners.

We simply announced that our religion said that Israel was the homeland of the Jews and therefore those occupying the land in

1948 must move on. They, in turn, said an emphatic no: Our religion decrees it is our homeland. Where do you expect us to go? Our haughty answer was that perhaps their Arab neighbors would offer them sanctuary.

Three-quarters of a century later the language has hardly changed with arguably even more vitriol. After all, who can argue with religion?

Perhaps even more sad is that these two groups share the same roots. Alas, as humankind seems to find it so easy to do, they took different paths to fulfilling their need of worship with little to no margin for reaching the same goal from a different perspective.

Then, too, the surrounding countries, while hardly showing love to each other, were not inclined to make it any easier for the Western world that was assigning an unwanted role to them in a territory where we had no rightful claim, at least not from their standpoint.

Now we, an ocean apart, wonder why they can’t just draw a few lines and set up separate governments. Alas, if it was ever that simple the atrocities committed by a few with all paying the price always seem to demand revenge—first from one side, then another assuring a no end situation.

At this time, the situation is far beyond the usual weapons of war with an entire area being told to do the impossible. With no

place else to go they move from one place to another only to find the direct sanctuary to be on the list for annihilation.

Where is there hope? It is not to excuse the behavior that it is in human nature to do anything to survive. There is nothing left when there is no hope for a better day some way, somehow.

Atrocities beyond imagination are perpetrated because there is nothing left. Ridiculous as it seems, there are even rules of war intended to make wars sound nicer, less daunting and more acceptable, such as protecting the innocent women and children and providing the basic human needs of food, water and sanitation, among others.

First, Hamas, deprived of any hope whatsoever, used the situation to its own benefit, and now the “other side,” our side, is equally guilty.

Actually, we should have no side. This nation founded on rights for all is hardly living up to our own principles when we accept different tactics for the same conditions. Oh, what we wrought when we meddled in “the Holy Land” for our own mistakes attempting to make right without adequate consideration for those already living there. Where, how can we find hope for all in this ongoing massive inhumanity?

We fail at our own peril.

### ONE WOMAN'S VIEW



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Ruth Gadebusch, a former naval officer, is a community activist having served as a trustee of the Fresno Unified School District, a member of the Board of the California School Boards Association and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and president of the Association of the California Urban School Districts. She is an emeritus member of the Board of Directors of the Center for Civic Education.



# Searching for Lost Kinjo

BY VIC BEDOIAN

It has always been known in Fresno as Chinatown, or the West Side, or the Other Side of the Tracks. But the fading facades of old buildings hide a rich history. If those old walls could talk, they would tell fascinating and even mysterious stories reaching back decades into the past. Many of those stories would tell of the lives of people in the Japanese diaspora to California.

Japanese immigrants formed communities that they called Nihonmachi wherever they settled, each with its own unique character. There were more than 40 Japantowns in the state, stretching from Marysville to San Diego. They were in the urban centers of San Francisco and Los Angeles. They were in the fishing towns along the Pacific coast and the farm towns of the San Joaquin Valley.

Only remnants are left now, but they are symbolic of what Japanese Americans achieved and then lost due to the xenophobia and the winds of war. Struggling against a plethora of obstacles, Japanese Americans forged an indelible and far-reaching presence in California and locally.

Why and how this transpired is the subject of a remarkable project called Lost Kinjo that is dedicated to rediscovering the lost Japantowns of California. It is sponsored by the California Public Library Civil Liberties Project and the Takahashi Family Foundation. Researchers have uncovered historical information about many of the lost Kinjo, publishing a series of articles in the AsAm News.

That is what brought Dr. Raymond Douglas Chong to Fresno on a recent warm spring day. One goal of the Lost Kinjo project is to educate and involve local communities in this process of rediscovering our own fascinating Nihonmachi stories that are now lost in the mists of time.



Lynn Ikeda is the third-generation owner of Kogetsu-do, a shop started by her grandparents that makes traditional Japanese sweets. *Photo by Vic Bedoian*

Interestingly, the building where Dr. Chong's talk was held was built in the 1910s by a man named Hidekima Iwata. It originally was two stories tall, and it is like the other Iwata building across F Street, the still intact Nippon Building.

What drove the establishment of Chinatowns and Japantowns in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was xenophobia and racism. Those emotions ran strong among most of the Caucasian majority population in California.

Along with the surge in Chinese immigration in the mid-1800s to work in gold mines, build railroads, and construct levees in the Bay Delta and other infrastructure, bigotry against them reached a fever pitch. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act restricted immigration from China.

Dr. Chong affirms that this opened the door for Japanese immigration from 1886 to 1924. "They legalized through Hawaii and came ultimately to the mainland. Those who came early were working the sugar and pineapple plantations at that time.

"Once they reached the mainland, they got involved with basically four trades: salmon canneries, lumber, sawmills and mining camps."

Mostly, it was men who comprised Japanese immigration, whether they were coming from Hawaii or Japan. Dr. Chong described an arrangement concocted by the U.S. government.

"It was largely before 1908 a bachelor society. You would say roughly 95% of the Japanese were men. So, there was the infamous 1907 Gentlemen's Agreement between President Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese Empire to limit Japanese labor.

"But there was an escape clause, or a loophole, that allowed you to bring your picture bride based on a photo and have blessed harmony and happiness.

"[However,] the reality is some of these brides, when they came through San Francisco, it was like a toxic reaction. When they met their husband, it was like total shock.

"On the plus side, it created a boom in the Nisei community, the second generation." The picture bride program was only allowed from 1908 to 1920 because the white power structure saw the growing numbers of Japanese American families as a threat.

The concept of a "red line" to segregate those considered undesirable by the dominant Caucasian society was invented by Bay Area real estate magnate Duncan McDuffie in the early years of the 20th century.

Many of California's ruling elite were not only racist but also actively involved in the eugenics movement, which sought, in an organized fashion, to eliminate people they



Dr. Raymond Chong recently spoke in Fresno's Chinatown regarding the Lost Kinjo project. *Photo by Peter Maiden*

considered inferior, which included most varieties of non-WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) human beings. These were the captains of industry who owned and operated nearly everything of consequence in the West: timberlands, mines, railroads, steamship lines and large swathes of real estate.

It was a made-in-America product that later became the blueprint for Nazi sterilization and extermination programs in Europe.

Fresno was no exception to the practice, and the Southern Pacific railroad tracks became the red line that segregated the city after white landowners pressured the Southern Pacific not to sell or lease land to Chinese and other people of color.

Local ruling elites officially designated that people who had emigrated from these areas could only live west of the railroad tracks: Africa, Armenia, China, Greece, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, the Basque nation and Volga Russians from Germany. It is sobering today to contemplate such a society.

Legal measures, such as the 1913 California Alien Land Act, were also used to exclude Asians from owning property. Later, they were forbidden to even lease land.

"That was the first white farmer prescription because they realized Japanese farmers were very successful in raising produce," says Dr. Chong, "in particular, the niche truck crops, as they called them, especially in Los Angeles."

In the San Joaquin Valley, many Japanese Americans became farmers, whereas others started businesses to serve the expanding Japanese population whose commercial centers were growing inside Fresno's Chinatown and scattered small towns around the Valley.

Dr. Chong says this was a natural course of action. "Of course, farming is the basis. And the Japanese farmers became very successful. Coming from Japan, they knew how to farm already. So, they were successful with many of the crops.

"And the white growers saw them as competition. They were finding ways to diminish Japanese influence. Imagine over 6,000 farms all through this state, and the size of ownership or leases on 200,000 acres of land.

"And the value at that time of the crops being generated, whether it's vegetables or fruits or nuts, in 1942, was roughly \$73 million. So, this was the magnitude of the consequences before the concentration camps of 1942 to 1945."

In 1922, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Takeo Ozawa, a 20-year resident, could not become a naturalized citizen of the United States because he was not Caucasian, upholding a 1790 law. Then, in 1924, an immigration act passed by Congress effectively ended all Japanese immigration to the United States.

Where there was a will, there was a way to get around the racist laws, Dr. Chong points out. "Originally, the way the Japanese community tried to bypass it to buy land, they would leave it to the children who were born here.

"And then when they were succeeding in that, they started working with progressive members of the white society and would buy things under their name. And they were successful [with that as well]."

Dr. Chong observes that each Nihonmachi was unique, but there were comparable features, "You always have to have restaurants, sukiyaki and chop suey places, whether it's produce, fish, Japanese products and hotels that could be for boarding or visitors. This was typical all across the Japantowns in California.

"In terms of society, the Buddhist church was a powerful force in keeping a cohesive community." The large Buddhist church in Fresno's Japantown became a center for community activities, education and sports.

Although known as Chinatown in Fresno, Japanese and other ethnic groups lived and worked side-by-side. "In Fresno, they were pretty much integrated," notes Dr. Chong. "It's



Morgan Doizaki, a family member of the original owner of Central Fish in Fresno's Chinatown. *Photo by Peter Maiden*



not only Japanese or Chinese businesses, but you see Armenian and Mexican businesses; it’s all layered together.”

Until May 1942, Fresno’s Chinatown and Nihonmachi area was a thriving place, the Lost Kinjo project research shows. Dr. Chong writes that Chinese workers for the Southern Pacific railroad settled west of the tracks in 1873, and the first Japanese pioneers arrived in 1880 to farm Muscat grapes, replacing the Chinese workers after the exclusion law took effect.

Eventually, as the ethnic enclave grew so did the variety of shops and services. A look at the map of Fresno in the Japantown Atlas reveals the amazing diversity of small stores selling tofu and sushi, and hardware for carpenters, gambling joints, photo studios, laundries and bathhouses.

The center of Japanese life was on Kern and G streets and along Chinatown Alley within Fresno’s Chinatown. By 1940, Fresno’s Nihonmachi flourished with eight hotels, three boarding houses, 19 restaurants, 27 markets, five barbers, three bathhouses, three beauty shops, two theaters, three churches, six sewing schools and 120 other businesses. Komoto’s Department Store was a prominent business among the one- or two-story brick structures.

At its peak, 797 Japanese Americans lived in the city. Of course, many others lived on farms in the region and other Japantowns in Fowler, Visalia and Bakersfield.

After the war, many Japanese Americans did not come back to Fresno’s Nihonmachi, but a few did. Today, one business from the prewar era survives—Kogetsu-do, which makes traditional Japanese sweets.

Lynn Ikeda is the third-generation owner of the shop started by her grandparents. “They came from Hiroshima in the early 1900s. In 1915, they started the business on Kern Street. Then in 1920, they moved to F Street and it’s been here ever since. September of this year will be 109 years.”

Ikeda learned the exacting art and craft of making confections as she grew up working at the shop with her father. “Japanese pastries are made with rice flour or cake flour, and some have beans, Japanese red beans. There’s some fruit with pie fillers, which is cinnamon, apple, peach, apricot, blueberry, blackberry, raspberry and cherry.”

Their family was one of the lucky ones that could return when the war ended. “During the war, my grandparents and my parents were in relocation camps,” says Ikeda. “And when they came back, they had rented the store and their home. So, they were able to get it back when they came back to Fresno.”

Central Fish is also from this wayback era. It has achieved iconic status in Fresno as customers come from all over the city for the professionally curated fresh fish, Japanese food staples or to grab lunch.

Morgan Doizaki, part of the original family, is the manager. He celebrates all local cultures but says there should be some recognition of the Nihonmachi. “I still consider this Japantown. And not for ethnicity’s sake, but for historical reasons.

“It should be Japantown and not to take anything away from Chinatown because Chinatown is what we always decided to call this. But Kern Street should be something that has Japantown Street to signify the Japanese significance.”



Marlene Jones Cannon talks with Dr. Raymond Chong after his lecture on the Lost Kinjo project. Photo by Peter Maiden

Chinatown still suffers from the lingering resonance of racism and neglect by local economic and political powers. The blighted and abandoned buildings, once proud, cry out for attention and tender loving care.

There are people who do care about Chinatown and who have been working toward a better deal and a better day. The Fresno Chinatown Foundation is involved in several endeavors to improve this unique and essential part of the city. It will take money and commitment by City officials to make that happen.

To help achieve such goals, Chinatown business owners are on the steering committee of the Transformative Climate Change project. That is a \$70 million fund intended to rejuvenate neighborhoods around the proposed high-speed rail station.

Even as it stands today, Chinatown and the echo of Japantown, with such a vibrant history and current mix of restaurants and shops, is a pretty cool place with a lot of soul.

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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.

# June Is National Gun Violence Awareness Month

BY JAMES MENDEZ

June 2024 is National Gun Violence Awareness Month.

Fresno resident Yvonne Calvillo lost her 14-year-old daughter, Breanna Gomez, to gun homicide on Jan. 3, 2021. In 2022, she worked with Fresno City Council Member Miguel Arias to have Fresno proclaim June 2022 as National Gun Violence Awareness Month for the City of Fresno. The proclamation was signed by Mayor Jerry Dyer and Council Members Nelson Esparza, Tyler Maxwell, Arias, Esmeralda Soria and Mike Karbassi.

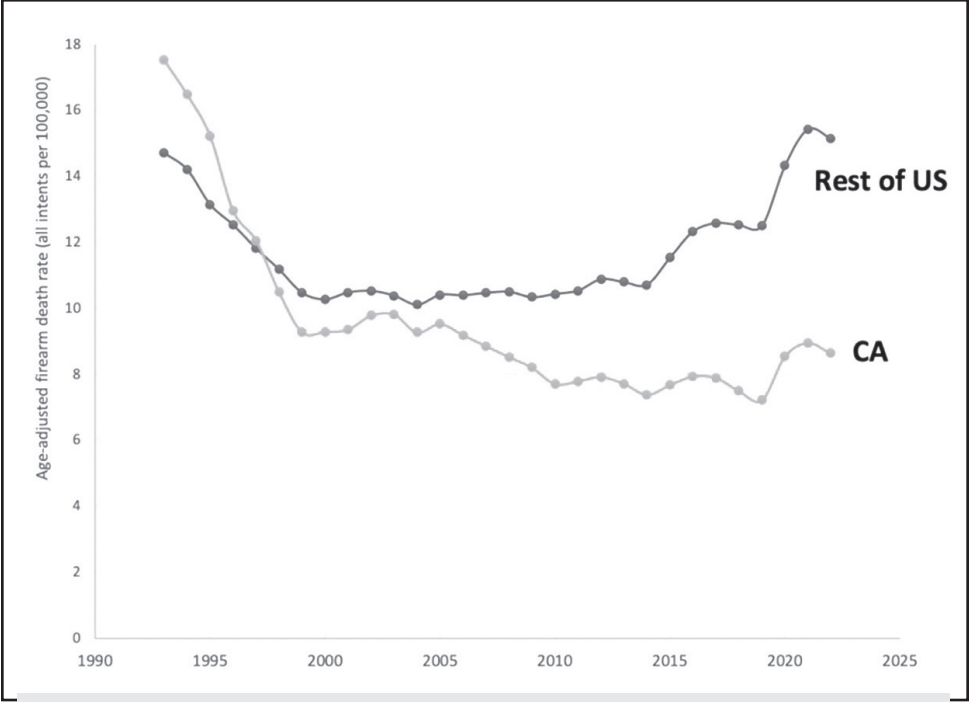
This year, June 7, 2024, is the 10th National Gun Violence Awareness Day. The Mayor’s Office will proclaim June 2024 as National Gun Violence Awareness Month. The City of Fresno will also have the Fresno Water Tower lights orange for the weekend of June 7–9, which is the Wear Orange Weekend to call for an end to gun violence.

EGV/BGF hopes that having the City of Fresno call attention to these activities will help raise public awareness about gun violence and the need to educate our communities on all that can be done to prevent further gun-related deaths. EGV/BGF is the local chapter of Brady United. Brady United is a national organization that for 50 years (under different names) has worked at the local, state and federal levels to pass comprehensive gun safety legislation.

As a Brady chapter, EGV/BGF uses scientific data to oppose all forms of gun violence and to support evidence-based measures that have been proven to decrease gun violence (e.g., community violence intervention/interrupter programs, extreme risk laws, safe storage laws, universal background checks on all firearm sales).

California has shown the nation that states with strong gun laws have fewer gun deaths. Since the late 1980s, through gun safety legislation, California has brought the gun death rate down from one of the highest in the country to one of the lowest.

## Overall Firearm-Related Mortality Rates 1990–2022



Source: August 2023 report from the Office of the Attorney General, California Department of Justice, Office of Gun Violence Prevention

In 1992, California had 17.5 gun deaths per 100,000 people. The rest of the country had 14.7 gun deaths per 100,000. Data for 2022 show that California’s age-adjusted per capita gun death rate of 8.7 per 100,000 was almost half the rate for the rest of the country (15.2 per 100,000), and the seventh lowest of all 50 states.

Since 2020, every day 200–300 people in the United States are directly impacted by gun violence: suffering gun-related injuries or gun deaths due to suicide, homicide or unintentional shootings. “Gun Violence Awareness Month was created to draw attention to this tragic reality and demand life-saving change.”

The first annual Gun Violence Awareness Day took place on June 2, 2015, on what would have been the 18th birthday of Hadiya Pendleton. She was a 15-year-old honor student who had just returned from performing at Obama’s second inauguration.

Pendleton was mistakenly shot and killed on Jan. 29, 2013, as a result of a gang rivalry. She and her friends were under a playground pavilion trying to get out of the rain in Harsh Park, a mile from President Obama’s Chicago home in the Kenwood neighborhood.

In 2015, Pendleton’s friends organized a commemoration to honor her life and the 100 lives a day that are cut short every year by gun deaths from suicide and homicide. In addition, they wanted to bring attention to those wounded by gun violence and raise awareness of the toll gun violence is taking on Americans.

They decided to wear the color hunter’s orange (also called safety orange and blaze orange) to commemorate her life as a symbol. Hunters wear that color in the woods to protect themselves and others from gunfire. Pendleton’s friends chose that color to bring attention to the need to protect themselves and others from gun violence.

Since 2015, as a call for the end to gun violence, the first Friday in June has been designated National Gun Violence Awareness Day, the first weekend has been designated Wear Orange Weekend and June has been designated National Gun Violence Awareness Month.

EGV/BGF is disappointed that the Fresno City Council has not gone on record to further oppose gun violence but will continue its work to educate the public on what can be done to decrease gun violence in the city, the state and the nation.

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James Mendez is a retired physician, community activist, husband, father and grandpa. He is also the secretary of Enough Gun Violence/Brady Greater Fresno.



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CENTRAL VALLEY BRIEFS

Rent Control in Delano?

In a groundbreaking effort to address the housing affordability crisis, concerned citizens of Delano have turned in thousands of signatures to qualify a rent control initiative for the November ballot.

The rapid spread of unaffordable rental prices at the hands of corporate landlords has reached Delano’s front doorstep. Indeed, 62.6% of renters in Delano are rent-burdened, paying more than 50% of their income on rent and needing protections from runaway rent hikes.

Skyrocketing rents have been indiscriminate in leaving families struggling to make ends meet, including elders living off Social Security benefits, and putting long-term residents at risk of displacement.

Johnny Itliong, son of legendary labor organizer Larry Itliong, said, “My father always said this fight is about housing. We cannot afford to wait another 60 years to bring a solution to the housing crisis!”

Citizen-led initiatives are rare in Delano, but with more than half of renters considered rent-burdened (including 85%–90% of low-income and farmworker families), many residents feel they have no choice but to take on corporate landlord greed themselves.

The proposed rent control initiative aims to stabilize housing costs, protect vulnerable communities and foster a more equitable city.

Taxpayer Deception Act

On May 23, Fresno City Council Member Luis Chavez announced he is putting forth a resolution for the City to join hundreds of local governments in opposing a forthcoming ballot measure, the Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act. The act has been more appropriately referred to as the Taxpayer Deception Act.

Chavez was joined at a press conference in Fresno organized by the Alliance for a Better California by civil rights icon Dolores Huerta, labor leaders and community organizations.

The Taxpayer Deception Act would wreak havoc on the ability of local governments to sufficiently fund local services by placing barriers to raising revenue.

“We have to remember we have a government of the people, by the people, for the people,” said Huerta.

Fresno State Professor to Research Political Polarization

A Fresno State political science professor, Dr. Lisa Bryant, was named an Andrew Carnegie Fellow and will receive a stipend of \$200,000 for research related to political polarization. Her research seeks to understand how and why

society has become so polarized and how strengthened cohesion can fortify democracy.

Bryant’s project is titled “Polarizing the Process: Partisan Effects on Election Officials and Trust in Elections.”

Bryant says that her research will examine how partisan polarization is affecting the administration of U.S. elections and how it affects career bureaucrats who serve the public as local election officials.

“When we lose faith in the processes that secure our democracy, democracy itself is threatened,” Bryant said. “I deeply respect and admire the work of election officials and the impartial way most of them perform their duties.

“I hope my research can help explain why trust in their profession has declined so that we can rebuild trust in election officials, administrative processes and election outcomes.”

Organic Stone Fruit Jubilee and Small Farm Expo

The opportunity to meet and support local small family farmers and to help promote healthy sustainable living is the focus of the Organic Stone Fruit Jubilee.

The event takes place on June 22 from 4 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Kingsburg Historical Park (2321 Sierra St., Kingsburg). Tickets are \$10 at the gate and \$8 online (fruitjubilee.com) ahead of the event with children 12 and under free. Single entry is free with an EBT card.

Eight local fruit farmers and several vegetable farms will be showcased along with numerous varieties of stone fruit including white and yellow peach and nectarine varieties, plums, pluots, apriums and other specialty organic tree fruits.

Taste and purchase some of the sweetest and most delicious stone fruit in the region, if not the world.

This is a family-friendly event with a Kids Craft Corner, live music by Good Medicine and local food trucks and beverage vendors, as well as fruit popsicles made by The Gnarly Carrot from the participating farmers’ fruit. For more information, visit fruitjubilee.com.

Radio Bilingüe Names New Co-Executive Director

José Martínez-Saldaña joined Radio Bilingüe as co-executive director in April. Previously, he was deputy director of operations at the Youth Alliance in Hollister, where he provided leadership in the areas of finance, human resources, IT and youth impact centers.

A social justice minded transformational leader, mentor and coach, Martínez-Saldaña is grounded in community-centered collaboration and service and has decades of administrative experience directing educational programs at various colleges, from community colleges to universities.

From 2010 to 2015, he was executive director of the Salinas United Business Association, where he focused on securing long-term sustainability for small business in a

former redevelopment zone committed to revitalizing the community.

A Mexican immigrant, Martínez-Saldaña was born in Michoacan and raised from the age of eight in a farmworker family in East San Jose. He has a master’s in higher education leadership from American Intercontinental University and an Ed.D. (ABD) in organizational leadership from the University of La Verne.

Dr. Kapoor Recognized

A special event in early May honored Dr. Sudarshan Kapoor, professor emeritus of Fresno State’s College of Health and Human Services, for his recent designation by the National Association of Social Workers as a Social Work Pioneer for his groundbreaking work in the field of social work and peace enhancement.

“Dr. Kapoor was, and continues to be, at the forefront of Fresno’s civil rights movement,” says Eddie Varela, president of El Concilio de Fresno. “He was an ardent and vocal supporter of Cesar E. Chavez and La Causa.”

Social Work Pioneers are chosen for their contributions to exploring new territories and building outposts of human services across the United States.

Dr. Kapoor’s commitment to advocacy and peace has stretched across the decades and left an indelible legacy, most notably at Fresno State, where he has spent the past 56 years teaching and inspiring.

Born in Punjab, India, his grandparents, teachers and Mahatma Gandhi inspired his lifetime approach of nonviolent advocacy.

“[Gandhi] was a major influence in my life when I was growing up in India, and particularly after his assassination,” says Dr. Kapoor. “That he became the victim of violence, that he was preaching nonviolence...that hit me very hard and affected me very much, and his teachings have always been a part of my life.”

Fresno Bee to Cut Back Print Edition

Last month, the *Fresno Bee* announced that it would be scaling back its print edition from six days per week to three days: Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Delivery will be through the mail, with the “Sunday” paper arriving on Saturday.

The *Bee* says that the quality of its print edition will be enhanced.

“This transition will allow us to invest in making our digital experiences better, including a big update to the digital edition,” says Christopher Kirkpatrick, senior editor of the *Bee*, “and a new tool for commenting on stories.”

Kirkpatrick says that the *Bee* must transform its business “to thrive in 2024 and beyond.”

Cell Phones:  
Haidt Book

BY STEVEN ROESCH

“It’s what the research shows.”

I heard those words a lot during my 30 years as a Fresno Unified School District teacher.

Sometimes they popped up at monthly faculty meetings or during day-long faculty Buy Back Days. Many times, guest speakers at our sessions would use them when introducing a novel way to lead class discussions or assess student achievement.

I didn’t spot these exact words in Jonathan Haidt’s new book—*The Anxious Generation*—but they would have fit in with his agenda perfectly. Subtitled *How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*, it closely examines and evaluates recent research into the sweeping impact of smartphone use on the young—specifically Generation Z, the cohort that was born after 1995.

The evidence that he presents is nothing short of chilling. Generation Z, he notes, was the first to move through puberty with the 24/7 access to cyberspace that smartphones provide. Statistics reveal that, compared to earlier generational cohorts, Generation Z’s members in the United States have been marked by higher levels of anxiety and depression as well as more frequent instances of self-harm and suicide.

“Suicide rates in the United States began rising around 2008 for adolescent boys and girls,” Haidt reports, and “they rose much higher in the 2010s.”

He spots similar trends that appeared at about the same time among teens in the United Kingdom, Canada and other English-speaking countries, as well as the Nordic nations in Europe.

So what often makes smartphone use so detrimental to young people’s psychological well-being? The author delineates four key harms:

*Social deprivation.* Following the introduction of smartphones in 2007, research has established that young people started spending less face time with their friends. Time spent actually interacting with friends clocked in at

more than two hours per day in 2012; by 2019, that number had slipped to 67 minutes a day.

*Sleep deprivation.* Regular smartphone use can easily lead to use late at night, which disrupts sleep patterns. Poor or insufficient sleep has been shown to increase the risk of depression, cognitive deficits and lower grades, among other things.

*Attention fragmentation.* The transition to adulthood involves the growth of an individual’s executive function—the capacity to forge plans and then realize those plans. Phones offer distractions—lots of them—and hence threaten the development of these important skills.

*Addiction.* Social media apps are often designed with the help of sophisticated behavioral techniques that nudge users to stay engaged with them. Even if many don’t get addicted, strictly speaking, they become increasingly dependent on apps to provide them with a satisfying dopamine rush. Such behavior can negatively impact their interactions with family members and peers and undermine their overall emotional well-being.

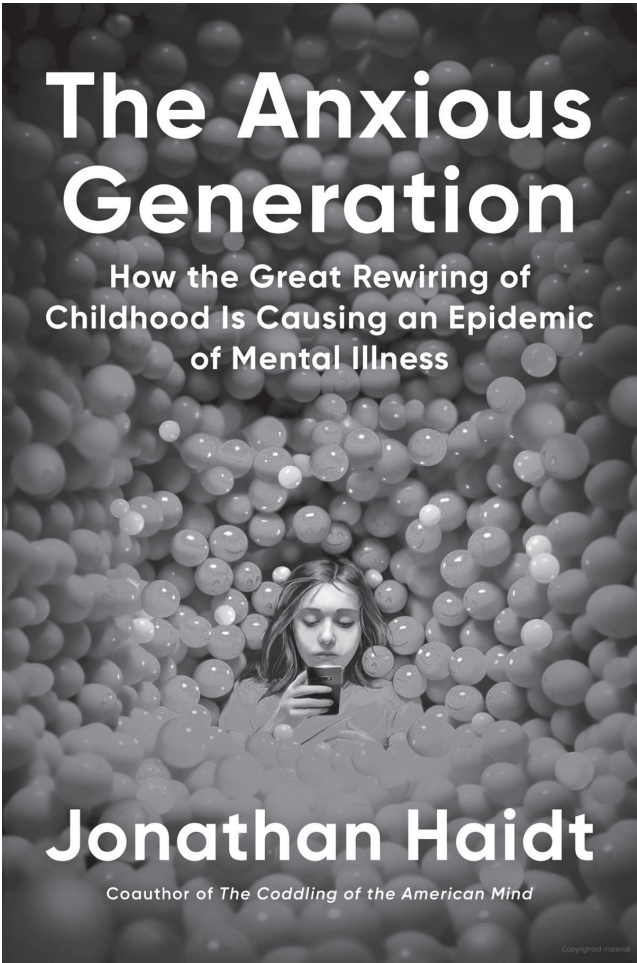
Three years ago, Frances Haugen, a whistleblower at Facebook, released internal documents showing that Facebook management sought to keep its adolescent users engaged—and showed no concerns about the potential downsides of heightened levels of use.

But does digital technology truly lie behind the statistics Haidt has assembled? He considers other key factors that might account for them—economic upheavals, for example—but concludes that none of these alternative explanations is particularly credible. For him, the widespread access to the Internet—coupled with the marginalization of free play and an excessive emphasis on childhood safety in our society—best accounts for this troubling development.

As he puts it, “overprotection in the real world and underprotection in the virtual world” both contributed to the emergence of an anxious Generation Z.

To be sure, Haidt’s book has met with its share of critics and detractors. One of them, David Wallace-Wells, wrote a detailed critique for the *New York Times* a few weeks ago. He notes that data from other countries don’t always support the notion of a mental health emergency, and he takes Haidt to task for promoting a “monocausal” explanation.

Internationally, statistics definitely paint a varied picture of what’s going on. Haidt himself notes that Asian nations haven’t been affected in the way he describes for the United



States, and he doesn’t even speculate as to why that’s the case.

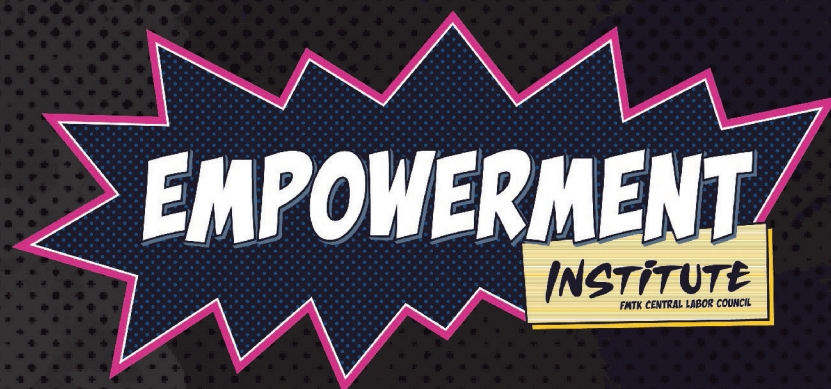
But the evidence regarding U.S. youth, while perhaps not meriting the metaphors such as “tidal wave” and “epidemic” that Haidt employs, clearly merit our attention and our concern. It would be irresponsible to ignore them.

Regarding Wallace-Wells’ criticism of Haidt’s monocausal stance, it’s worth noting that Haidt also places part of the blame for the current circumstances on the dwindling amount of free play that children and teenagers now enjoy as well as a counterproductive culture of “safetyism.”

The quality of Haidt’s work demands that it be taken seriously.

Continues on page 17





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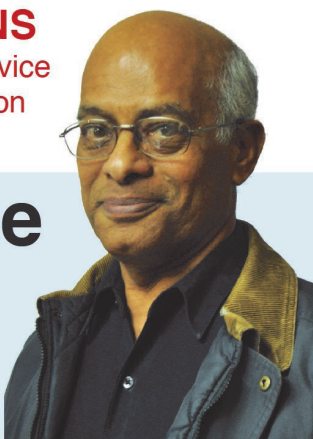
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# Cell Phones: Haidt Book

Continued from page 14

The book’s final section suggests ways to tackle this situation. Haidt’s four central recommendations look like this:

- No smartphones before high school
- No social media before 16
- Phone-free schools—which includes procedures that eliminate student access to digital devices during passing periods and lunch. By no means is he suggesting that schools ban Internet use entirely, given the benefits that Internet resources clearly provide.
- Far more unsupervised play and childhood independence

Of course, phone use has now become entrenched in many schools, and changing that reality will take effort and earnest commitment.

Some recent developments, however, provide reasons for optimism.

In early May an article in the *Washington Post* reported that Illing Middle School, a site in Connecticut, has made significant progress in eliminating the nonacademic use of phones and related devices during the school day. The key to its success: the introduction of Yondr pouches. Students are now required to lock their phones into these pouches at the start of the school day, and they remain sealed until the school day is over.

At the beginning, there was pushback from students as well as their parents.

Then things changed.

One girl reported that she could now concentrate more on her classes. Several have shared that they’re now making more friends.

One of Illing’s administrators concedes that some students skirt the rules by stashing phones in their backpacks. ““But the students also know that taking out their phones leads to an automatic detention.””

Last year, according to the company, the number of U.S. schools using the Yondr pouch strategy climbed to 2,000.

Here in Fresno, Bullard High instituted Yondr pouches a few years ago, and individuals that I’ve spoken with feel that the move has improved the learning environment in classrooms.

Most sites in the district, however, haven’t followed suit. The district’s current phone directive, which hails from 2004, suggests that site administrators “may have the Equipment confiscated and/or the student may be prohibited from possessing the Equipment.”

It does not, however, establish a binding policy for all Fresno Unified schools. Rather, as district spokesperson Nikki Henry put it, “[S]chools have the authority to build upon these policies for what works at their campuses.”

This laissez-faire stance has led many instructors to throw in the towel when it comes to digital distractions in their midst. As one teacher put it, “More and more teachers...are resigned to just dealing with electronics mischief. The alternative is a permanent state of exasperated frustration.”

It remains to be seen how the district’s new permanent superintendent will address this issue—whether curtailing phone use will be a priority for him or (as some have speculated) Her.

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Steven Roesch is a retired German and English teacher who taught in the Fresno Unified School District for 30 years. Contact him at [stevenroesch12@comcast.net](mailto:stevenroesch12@comcast.net).

# Africa’s Position in the New Climate Accord at COP28

BY DEBAY TADESSE

Beneath the surface of Africa lies a wealth of enormous mineral resources. The African continent contains up to 90% of the world’s platinum, chromium and gold deposits and 40% of its total gold reserves. Africa has the world’s most significant cobalt reserves, diamonds, platinum and uranium.

Ten percent of the world’s internally renewable freshwater supply and 65% of its arable land are found in Africa. The resources of Africa are essential to the global economy, particularly to the West and the United States.

This explains the numerous foreign invasions of Africa throughout history, the most recent in the 20th century when Europeans invaded and occupied the continent for almost a century. Africa saw a tremendous deal of big-power competition during the Cold War.

In the current era, China, Russia and India are showing a greater desire to compete in this region with the West and the United States specifically. This transformation will have a significant impact on the world order.

Demand for many essential minerals is rising quickly on a global scale. Most predictions of increased demand are based on the assumption that fuel-based energy sources will gradually vanish globally and be replaced with high-quality batteries for electric vehicles and power storage.

Critical minerals are necessary to operate several consumer gadgets, medical devices, high-performance metals and engines, including those employed in the military and defense sectors.

The U.S. economy and national security depend on a steady supply of important minerals from Africa, which provide the basis for many goods and services critical to the rapidly changing dynamic modern economy. The United States primarily relies on imports for some important minerals, including cobalt, graphite and manganese.

### Climate Finance

Adopting the New Collective Qualitative Goal, a new climate finance target, most of the financial issues were handled at the COP28 summit from Nov. 30 to Dec. 12, 2023. The 2009 pledge made by industrialized countries donating \$100 billion in climate funds to developing countries annually was replaced by this new goal.

The negotiators during COP28 in Dubai offered more details on defining a new target rather than working through alternative solutions for elements like its schedule, transparency procedures, sources and structure. The Loss and Damage Fund was given \$725 million to begin assisting the nations most impacted by the climate catastrophe. An updated framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation was also considered.

The African continent presents a complex and multivariable conundrum. It is the continent with the fewest greenhouse gas emissions, yet it will inevitably suffer the most from the impact of climate change. Persistent poverty, unemployment and inequality add to the pressure on governments and investors to share the benefits and wealth created by natural resources.

Although these demands and challenges are clearly understood, there is inadequate capacity to deal with them. This is where the new climate funding target that was proposed at COP28 comes into play. A fundamental value proposition of climate finance is its ability to help bridge this gap.

The building up of a climate institutional framework and strategic thinking are still in the development phase in Africa. Individuals’ and communities’ capacity for adaptation is mediated through institutions by identifying needs, building knowledge, ensuring accountability, disseminating information and transferring resources.

All these are needed for adaptation, and institutions guide all. Otherwise, adaptation might not be effective without proper accountability and institutional arrangements.

It is far too large for any single institution to overcome the burden imposed as a result of climate change. It requires coordination among multiple institutions around Africa and beyond. Therefore, external technical support is needed to strengthen institutions responsible for climate change, with the support of international organizations and bilateral donors, to channel resources.

There is also a need to share lessons learned from integrated efforts through cooperation, fostering dialogue and collaboration among diverse institutions. In particular, local institutions are important vehicles for delivering climate finance.

The most effective way to manage adaptation is for institutions, such as governments, the corporate sector, civil society, and international players, to coordinate and work together.

Africa is home to several international, continental and regional institutions and organizations that are active now. These include the African Union (AU), the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the African Climate Policy Center and several Regional Economic Communities. However, these institutions hardly ever engage in active communication or cooperation.

During the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit in 2009 (COP15), the African nations reaffirmed their commitment to the common position. For the African negotiators, Africa’s adaptation to climate change impacts has a limited capacity, and the continent will suffer some of the most significant changes, while the response capacity of African societies is among the lowest in the world.

In addition, the main economic sectors in the area are susceptible to climate change, which is made worse by pre-existing issues such as poverty, natural catastrophes (e.g., drought and flooding) and conflicts over limited resources such as land and water.

These concerns led to the urgent need for climate change negotiations and the formulation of a common position, with a single team empowered to negotiate and

represent all the member states of the AU. The 54 nations that comprise the African continent are members of the AU, a continental organization. It was formed in 2002 as the formal Organization of African Unity successor (1963–1999).

During COP15, the AU also called for an endorsement of the Copenhagen Accord. (All major economies, including China and other significant emerging nations for the first time, were required to make public pledges about emissions under the pact.) The AU continued to emphasize the following aspects: monetary compensation for lost ecological, economic and social resources and industrialized countries’ historical obligation regarding climate change.

It is high time for the United States to back public-private collaborations with African countries that would benefit both parties. The U.S. Institute of Peace convened a senior study group to develop multiple recommendations for the United States to support mutually beneficial public and private partnerships with African nations.

In addition to supporting the rule of law, transparency, and labor and environmental standards around vital minerals in Africa, the report advised promoting peace and stability through more U.S. commercial engagement. Accordingly, these alliances might help diversify supply chains for essential minerals.

### Conclusion

The history of natural resource extraction in Africa has a poor track record, characterized by environmental degradation and increased poverty. As multinational companies become increasingly involved in extracting valuable geological materials and minerals beneath the surface of Africa and heavily engage in logging, these environmental and social problems are emerging with a new face. This certainly demands attention from both the AU and member states.

The entire submission of national policies to the constantly shifting ideologies of foreign powers has been the tragedy of Africa’s policy creation and execution over the past decades.

African policymakers should harmonize their positions on international climate change dialogues. They should also promote and coordinate positions on bilateral and multilateral issues. Africa should support and promote mechanisms that foster interregional cooperation.

The AU should work to strengthen these relationships and commit to relentlessly pursuing the creation of new kinds of partnerships on a continental and global scale.

In addition, the AU’s growing relationship with countries of the South must fill the gaps in Africa’s relationship with the North. It must be a relationship of mutuality and cross-advantage and a tool for economic, political and social development. It must also add significant value to what exists in the member states in the sub-regions of the African continent.

\*\*\*\*\*

Debay Tadesse has a Ph.D. in African studies specializing in public policy and development from Howard University in Washington, D.C., and an M.A. in African history and a B.A. in world history from Georgia State University. He is currently lecturing at Fresno City College and Fresno State.

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# Ukrainian Displacement’s Impact on EU Elections

BY ZARINA ZABRISKY

On Feb. 24, 2022, Olha was planning to take her 13-year-old cat Busynka to a vet for chipping and vaccination as they would have to flee Ukraine. The war could start at any moment.

Living in Sievierodonetsk, Luhansk region, in Donbas, and having witnessed the Russians attacking her native lands since 2014, Olha was prepared. Yet, when explosions woke her up at 4 a.m., she didn’t want to believe the war started.

She stayed in bed, pulling the blanket over her head, trying to fall asleep again. By 7 a.m., she got up and rushed to the gas station where a long line of cars formed. She was lucky to get a full tank—in a few hours, no gas was left.

Olha could flee, but she didn’t want to. Her daughter, 24, moved out and was safe in western Ukraine. Her mother, youthful and energetic at 65, living in nearby Lysychansk, did not need help.

Olha had just renovated her apartment, installing a fancy new balcony, and was finally free to travel, take professional growth classes—she was a passionate hairstylist—and just enjoy life.

For the first few days, she moved to her friend’s parking garage with her Busynka, the cat. Her friend Katya also had a cat, and they fixed an improvised underground home. The cats first fought but soon figured out a way to make peace.

The noise from explosions and the walls shaking were getting worse. The Russian military was getting closer. Olha called her ex; despite a back injury, he enrolled in the Ukrainian army.

“You must leave,” he said. “Immediately.”

He told her which streets to avoid on the way out of town as the territory was heavily mined. Driving on the lawns, with an elderly lady from the neighborhood and cat Busynka in the back sitting quietly, Olha got out of the city and drove for 700 kilometers. The older lady was on the phone with her friends in Poland, giving directions.

All refugees in Ukraine were offered temporary lodging in schools and gyms. One time, they slept in the car at a gas station, in an endless line of cars.

At one block post, Olha didn’t brake on time and had a gun pointed at her as the Ukrainian military were screening for saboteurs.



Katia is a Ukrainian who cooks famous Sicilian street food in Palermo, Italy. She moved 10 years ago with her daughter, but most of her family is still in Ukraine. Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

In a few days, Olha reached Poland, dropped off her ride, and kept going. Her close friends had already made it to Belgium and invited her to join them.

She had to find Belgium on the map before saying yes. She arrived as a complete unknown and had to start her life from scratch. Like most Ukrainians, Olha always looked at the bright side and was not going to despair or give up.

After two years of living in Brussels and Ghent, she learned Dutch and got a license to work. She loves her work and has a small neat apartment. Busynka is enjoying a tiny garden in the yard and sleeps in the sun.

On the weekend, Olha drives to explore medieval towns and gets together with other Ukrainian refugees for borscht lunches.

Her daughter is in Kyiv and goes to shelters during air attacks. Olha is concerned about her mother, though. She is now in Lysychansk under the Russian occupation. Living conditions there are hard: no electricity, almost no water, just gas. No communication.

Occasionally, someone takes a video and drives to places with Internet access; there are few. From there, the messenger sends a video message to families in Ukraine and abroad.

“All is good, honey,” says Olha’s mother. “We have teamed up with neighbors and even use a generator to run a washing machine sometimes!”

Olha is worried. Her mom is a feisty woman and occasionally tells Russians, “Guys, go back to where you came from! We never wanted you here.”

Across Europe, in Sicily, Yaryna is worried about her 83-year-old grandmother, also under Russian occupation, but in the south of Ukraine, in a village in the Kherson region. Yaryna and her husband Giovanni, a Sicilian chef, were visiting her family when the full-scale Russian invasion started.

Unlike Olha in Donbas, Yaryna did not believe Russia would attack and was not prepared to escape. When the Russians invaded her village on Feb. 24, 2022, the couple stayed for a few weeks, fearing for their lives. Eventually, they decided to flee.



Yaryna and Giovanni’s café in Sicily. Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

On the way to the Polish border, Giovanni was forced out of the car at a Russian block post, thrown on the ground, and a Russian soldier put an automatic gun to his head, screaming obscenities Giovanni did not understand.

They made it to a sleepy ancient town in Sicily. Yaryna helps Giovanni run a family café and has a view of a serene turquoise sea out of her window, but as she speaks of Kherson her eyes fill with tears. She misses her home.

Having survived World War II, her grandmother has been living under Russian occupation for more than two years. Taking a long journey through Crimea, all of Russia and Europe to get to Sicily by herself is not realistic.

In Palermo, Sicily, another Ukrainian, Katia, is cooking famous Sicilian street food. She moved 10 years ago with her daughter, but most of her family is still in Ukraine. Katia is mostly worried about her granddaughter, a student in Odesa. Lately, Odesa is being attacked daily with ballistic missiles and drones.

The widespread displacement caused by two years of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine has led to a demographic crisis within the country. Families are separated. Communities are uprooted.

The current escalation of military activity in the east of the country, specifically in the Kharkiv region, has forced more Ukrainians to seek refuge in neighboring countries and beyond.

The refugee crisis has become a pressing issue for the European Union, with implications for both domestic and international politics. The influx of Ukrainian refugees has added pressure on resources and infrastructure in EU member states, leading to growing tensions within host communities. As the Russian aggression deepens, concerns about the new wave of Ukrainian refugees and worries about social cohesion and economic stability have become prominent.

Far-right political parties and populists are eager to exploit public anxiety and resentment toward refugees to advance their own agendas. The refugee issue has become a central theme in the lead-up to the EU parliamentary elections, with far-right parties positioning themselves as defenders of national sovereignty and security.

By capitalizing on fears of economic competition, these parties are gaining political momentum, appealing to voters concerned about their job stability. As Europe responds to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, 400 million voters prepare to elect 720 representatives to serve in Brussels.

“In 2024, the right-wing surge in the polls seems bigger and bolder, with one predicting the nationalist right and far right could pick up nearly a quarter of seats in the European Parliament in June,” according to Politico.

The Kremlin backs far-right movements to change the political landscape. In the past, it interfered by providing a bank loan to Le Pen’s party in France, forming a partnership agreement between Austria’s Freedom Party (FPÖ) and Putin’s United Russia party.

In April 2024, Brussels accused Moscow of meddling in EU Parliament elections, claiming that Russia funded far-right lawmakers across six European nations to propagate pro-Kremlin messages. In light of these developments, it becomes increasingly evident that the Kremlin has weaponized the refugee crisis it has sown, using it as a geopolitical tool.

“Weakened European support for Ukraine serves Russia on the battlefield, and that is the real aim of what has been uncovered in the last weeks,” Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo said.

The rise of far-right extremism poses a significant challenge to the EU principles of democracy and undermines the EU code of values built on the commitment to human rights. There is an urgent need for coordinated action at the international level to address the root cause of this displacement—the Russian war of aggression—through diplomatic and economic means.

Efforts to combat far-right extremism, polarizing rhetoric and divisive policies must be redoubled, with a focus on hybrid war awareness, as well as promoting inclusive societies and countering xenophobic narratives.

“With the rise of populists almost everywhere in Europe of the extreme right, we risk having an ungovernable Europe,” said Stéphane Séjourné, leader of the centrist Renew Europe group.

(Author’s note: The names of all Ukrainians mentioned herein have been changed for safety reasons.)

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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) and the Community Alliance newspaper (Fresno).

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Peace & Social Justice Calendar

June 2024

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WEEKLY

Protest for Palestine Saturdays, 5 p.m.–7 p.m. N. Blackstone and E. Nees avenues. Hosted by the Palestine Liberation Group. Limited number of signs; bring yours, hold ours or help hold one of the large banners. For more info, contact camille.russell@peacefresno.org.

Demonstration/Vigil in Support of Palestine Sundays, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. Cedar and Barstow avenues (across from Fresno State’s football stadium). Whatever time you can be there will be enough.

Stand Up, Speak Up, Spread the Truth Sundays, 3 p.m.–5 p.m. Mooney and Walnut avenues, Visalia. Free Palestine. Let Gaza Live! Cease Fire Now.

SAT 01

34th Annual Fresno Rainbow Pride Parade & Festival Parade begins at 10 a.m., starting at the northeast corner of Olive and Palm avenues. Festival 11 a.m.–6 p.m. at Fresno City College (FCC). Free bus transportation between the parade and FCC. The main entrance to the festival will be near the fountain at FCC. The bus stop at FCC will be right in front of the school near where the walkway to the fountain is. For more info, contact 559-266-5465.

Fresno Climate Action Plan Workshop 11 a.m.–1 p.m. Ruiz Room 105, Resnick Student Union, Fresno State. Identify climate and environmental justice issues in your community. Food and fun activities for all provided. To RSVP or for more info, contact 559-621-8515 or casey.lauderdale@fresno.gov.

TUE 04

National Women’s Political Caucus (NWPC) 5:30 p.m. Yosemite Falls Café, 4020 N. Cedar Ave. Speaker: Thomas Wood, collection development librarian, Fresno County Public Library. Topic: Fresno County Libraries 2024: Not Your 1970s Library! For more info, contact 559-222-6212 or joanne@pbyoga.com.

KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro* 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit kcf.org.

WED 05

KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!* 3 p.m. *Community Alliance* radio show hosted by Daren Miller. For more info, visit kcf.org.

Getting Started with CMAC 6 p.m.–7:30 p.m. 1555 Van Ness Ave., Suite 201. Learn how the Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC) can help you tell the stories that are important to you and your community. Free and open to all. For more info, visit cmac.tv/workshops.

THU 06

33rd Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf Fresno State. Theme: Woolf, Modernity, Technology. 9 a.m.–3 p.m.: panels and workshops; 3:45 p.m.–5:15 p.m.: plenary roundtable with Jean Moorcroft Wilson, Vara Neverow and Drew Shannon; 5:30 p.m.–9 p.m.: buses to ArtHop reception of *Modernist Technologies* and ArtHop scavenger hunt. For more info, contact woolf2024@mail.fresnostate.edu.

Public Hearing: City of Fresno 9:25 a.m. Fresno City Hall, 2600 Fresno St. Consideration of the draft 2024–2025 Annual Action Plan. The City of Fresno will receive approximately \$11.5 million of federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Community Planning and Development to fund programs and projects to implement the City’s housing and community development strategies to benefit low- and moderate-income people. See the proposed plan at fresno.gov/housing. For more info, contact 559-621-7650 or clerk@fresno.gov.

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 on Facebook.

ArtHop at CMAC 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Suite 201, 1555 Van Ness Ave. The Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC) celebrates Pride Month by honoring the contributions and achievements of the many diverse communities that make up the LGBTQ+ population in the Central Valley. For more info, contact 559-266-2622 or info@cmac.tv.

FRI 07

City of Fresno Pride Flag Raising 10 a.m. Fresno City Hall, 2600 Fresno St.

33rd Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf Fresno State. Theme: Woolf, Modernity, Technology. 9 a.m.–10:30 a.m.: keynote with Sonita Sarker; 11 a.m.–5:30 p.m.: panels and workshops; 6 p.m.–9:30 p.m.: performative event *Kew Gardens: The Poetics of Techné* with keynote by Jane Goldman, artist talk by Ane Thon Knutsen and poetry reading by Mai Der Vang and Brynn Saito. For more info, contact woolf2024@mail.fresnostate.edu.

SAT 08

33rd Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf Fresno State. Theme: Woolf, Modernity, Technology. 9 a.m.–5 p.m.: panels and workshops; 5:30 p.m.–7 p.m.: keynote with Paul Saint-Amour; 7:30 p.m.–10 p.m.: banquet. For more info, contact woolf2024@mail.fresnostate.edu.

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

SUN 09

33rd Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf Fresno State. Theme: Woolf, Modernity, Technology. 9 a.m.–10:30 a.m.: panel; 11 a.m.–12:15 p.m.: keynote with Emelia Raczkowska; 1:30 p.m.–6:30 p.m.: half-day trip to Grant’s Grove. For more info, contact woolf2024@mail.fresnostate.edu.

MON 10

CMAC Focus Group 10 a.m.–11:30 a.m. Clovis Transit Center, 785 3rd St., Clovis. The Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC) is undertaking a strategic planning and review process. This focus group is targeting government leaders/staff and business/business organizations. To RSVP or for more info, contact info@cmac.tv.

Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA) 5 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact swgamble@aol.com.

CMAC Focus Group 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m. CMAC, 1555 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 201. The Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC) is undertaking a strategic planning and review process. This focus group is targeting CMAC members/producers. To RSVP or for more info, contact info@cmac.tv.

TUE 11

CMAC Focus Group 10 a.m.–11:30 a.m. Woodward Park Regional Library, 944 E. Perrin Ave. The Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC) is undertaking a strategic planning and review process. This focus group is targeting nonprofit, community, faith-based, arts and cultural organizations. To RSVP or for more info, contact info@cmac.tv.

CMAC Focus Group 4 p.m.–5:30 p.m. Betty Rodriguez Regional Library, 3040 N. Cedar Ave. The Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC) is undertaking a strategic planning and review process. This focus group is targeting K-12 and post-secondary education and libraries. To RSVP or for more info, contact info@cmac.tv.

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

Stonewall Democratic Club 6:30 p.m. Los Amigos Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. For more info, contact 559-285-1641 or info@fresnostonewalldemocrats.org.

KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro* 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit kcf.org.

WED 12

KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!* 3 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence radio show hosted by Josh Shurley. For more info, visit kcf.org.

Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter 7 p.m. Woodward Park Regional Library, 944 E. Perrin Ave. Speaker: Tony Krizan. Topic: Great Sierra Mines and Trails Along Tioga Pass Road. Learn about two forgotten mining towns that are a short hike from Tioga Pass Road near the Gaylor Lakes area. For more info, contact ecuagirl45@yahoo.com or visit sierraclub.org/tehipite.

THU 13

Juneteenth 4 p.m.–8 p.m. African American Museum, 1857 Fulton St. Theme: “Forging a legacy of shared prosperity, justice and cultural harmony.” Local artist exhibit, poetry reading, presentation, music and food. For more info, contact fresnojuneteenth@gmail.com.

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.

FRI 14

Juneteenth 4 p.m.–8 p.m. Fresno City College West Campus, 711-601 E. Church Ave. Theme: “Forging a legacy of shared prosperity, justice and cultural harmony.” History wall, classical Africa and our connection, Juneteenth history and the present day, music and food. For more info, contact fresnojuneteenth@gmail.com.

SAT 15

Juneteenth Noon–6 p.m. Valdez Hall, Convention Center, 702 M St. Theme: “Forging a legacy of shared prosperity, justice and cultural harmony.” Parade (starts at African American Museum and ends at Valdez Hall), Michael Jackson tribute performance, comedian Jay Lamont, Buffalo soldiers, fashion show and music, dance and drum performances. For more info, contact fresnojuneteenth@gmail.com.

SUN 16

Juneteenth Noon–6 p.m. Valdez Hall, Convention Center, 702 M St. Theme: “Forging a legacy of shared prosperity, justice and cultural harmony.” Buffalo soldiers, Jumping the Broom, Purpose II Praise, Promise Nevarez, fashion show and music, dance and drum performances. For more info, contact fresnojuneteenth@gmail.com.

TUE 18

Central Valley Partnership 5:30 p.m. Location TBD. For more info, contact 559-967-1940 or agrariandemocracy@gmail.com or visit centralvalleypartnership.org.

WED 19

KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro* 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit kcf.org.

Juneteenth Celebration 10 a.m. Madera Courthouse Museum Park, 210 W. Yosemite Ave., Madera. Theme: Freedom. Honorees: Brother Donald Holley, former Madera City Council member, and veterans of the city of Madera. Keynote speaker: Pastor Sammie Neely Jr. Presented by Black Saints United and the City of Madera. For more info, contact 903-305-1965 or 559-871-6659.

Juneteenth Noon. Fresno City Hall, 2600 Fresno St. Theme: “Forging a legacy of shared prosperity, justice and cultural harmony.” Raising of the Juneteenth flag and Fresno Historical Oral History Project. For more info, contact fresnojuneteenth@gmail.com.

KFCF 88.1 FM: *Speaking Truth to Empire* 3 p.m. Hosted by Dan Yaseen. For more info, visit kcf.org.

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

THU 20

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 on Facebook.

Clovis Democratic Club 6 p.m. Seven Bar & Grill, 25 Shaw Ave., Clovis. For details, contact 559-322-9740 or jenikren@gmail.com.

SAT 22

Central Valley Leadership Round Table 10 a.m. Valley Spring Memory Care, 555 Miller Lane, Los Banos. For more info, contact 559-250-1253 or gamayer20@gmail.com.

Organic Stone Fruit Jubilee 4 p.m.–7:30 p.m. Kingsburg Historical Park, 2321 Sierra St., Kingsburg. Meet and support local small family farmers. Help promote healthy sustainable living. Tickets: \$8 online (fruitjubilee.com); \$10 at the gate. Children 12 and under are free. Single entry is free with an EBT card. For more info, contact 559-349-3777 or info@fruitjubilee.com.

MON 24

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.

TUE 25

California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) 10 a.m. SEIU Local 521, 4228 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 kcf.org.

WED 26

KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!* 3 p.m. WILPF radio show hosted by Jean Hays. For more info, visit kcf.org.


THU 27

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

SAT 29

Central Valley Progressive PAC Wine & Cheese Summer Fundraiser 6 p.m.–8 p.m. Heather’s House, 622 W. Gettysburg Ave. Meet friends and allies in the struggle for social and economic justice. For more info, contact 559-978-4504 or simone.rhodes@seiu521.org.

Submit upcoming community activities to calendar@fresnoalliance.com by the 15th of the month preceding publication.













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COMMUNITY ALLIANCE JUNE 2024



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

Desde 1996, *Allianza Comunitaria* ha sido una voz progresista indepen-diente para el Valle Central de San Joaquín. *Allianza Comunitaria* aboga por la justicia racial, social, ambiental y económica; igualdad de derechos para todos, incluidos los inmigrantes, las personas sin hogar y la comunidad LGBTQ+; Acceso a una educación pública gratuita y de calidad para todos; Acceso a la atención sanitaria para todos; Un salario digno para todos los trabajadores. Nuestro objetivo es exponer los problemas raciales, sociales, medio-ambientales y económicos e injustic-ias políticas. Ayudaremos a construir un poderoso movimiento progresista que hará que todas nuestras comuni-dades sean más seguras, más sanas, más equitativas y más habitables.

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# Milei, un Político Populista Fuera de Control

*Continúa de página 21*

Milei, se transformó en una figura pública a través de sus apariciones frecuentes en las redes sociales y en los medios de comunicación, donde era invitado a discutir temas relacionados a la economía argentina. Con un comportamiento agresivo, discurso mesiánico, carácter impulsivo y provocador, Milei se proyectó ante la ciudadanía como un político diferente, el cual se distanciaba de lo que denominó “la casta política” tradicional. En el año 2021, Milei es elegido diputado federal por su partido “La Libertad Avanza”. En 2023 lanza su candidatura presidencial, ante el asombro de la ciudadanía, ya que, hasta entonces diputado, carecía de experiencia en administración pública.

Durante la campaña presidencial, Javier Milei, defendió una serie de propuestas ultra- conservadoras, entre ellas se pueden mencionar: el cierre del Banco Central de Argentina, dolarización de la economía, la reducción drástica del gasto público, despido masivo de empleados públicos, privatización de las empresas estatales, entre otras. En cuanto a política exterior, Milei propuso el alineamiento “incondicional” a las políticas de los Estados Unidos hacia América Latina. También expresó su interés de distanciarse de China y Rusia, por considerarlos países comunistas. De igual manera, prometió hacer lo mismo con varios gobiernos de la región, entre ellos Cuba, Colombia y Venezuela. De la misma forma, prometió detener el proceso para la obtención de la membresía de Argentina en los BRICS (acrónimo de los países miembros: Brasil, Rusia, India, China y Sudáfrica). Esta organización defiende la construcción de un mundo multipolar, y más justo.

Para sorpresa de muchos, el 19 de noviembre del mismo año, en segunda vuelta, Javier Milei fue electo presidente con un 55.65% de los votos escrutados, engrasando así el grupo de presidentes ultraderechistas de Latinoamérica.

Son varias las razones que explican el triunfo electoral del político ultraderechista. La primera, es la situación económica que ha venido atravesando Argentina durante las últimas décadas; inflación galopante; incremento en los niveles de pobreza; corrupción y un deterioro generalizado de la calidad de vida de los argentinos. Esta situación fue creando un gran descontento en el pueblo argentino, que ante el discurso mesiánico de Javier Milei, que les prometía resolver todos los problemas con prontitud, decidieron darle una oportunidad. La segunda razón fue que los sectores de centro-derecha, tradicionalmente más moderados, decidieron apoyar a Milei como venganza hacia los últimos gobiernos peronistas, es decir, los de Cristina Fernández de Kirchner y Alberto Fernández. Y la última de las razones, fue la postura que asumieron los jóvenes, quienes votaron por Milei como una forma de protesta contra el sistema político argentino, el cual, según ellos, era un sistema que ya no funcionaba.

El actual gobierno argentino ha intentado pasar dos proyectos de ley para poder implementar las promesas de campaña. Estas son la ley “Omnibus”, que fue sometida a la Cámara de Diputados y que fue enviada de regreso a las comisiones, pero debido a cuestiones técnicas, fue automáticamente rechazada; y el DNU (Decreto de Necesidad y Urgencia), también fue rechazado por el Senado. Actualmente, se está preparando una versión reducida de la “Ley de Bases y Puntos de Partida para la Libertad de los Argentinos”, un proyecto legislativo similar a los anteriores, solamente que incluye la aprobación de casi un tercio de las leyes que incluía el paquete original. Todos estos proyectos de leyes proponen una reforma profunda del Estado, que incluye, además, el incentivo a los grandes inversionistas, la modificación de las leyes de hidrocarburos y de gas natural para el desarrollo de “Proyectos Estratégicos”.

# El fallecimiento de la Activista Vickie Fouts

#### POR PERSONAL DE LA ALIANZA COMUNITARIA

Vickie Fouts, una activista local muy respetada y muy comprometida, falleció el 23 de mayo de 2014, “muy pacíficamente, con su osito de peluche, mi hermano Preston y yo a su lado”, escribió su hija, Natasha

“Un amigo publicó recientemente que una buena manera de juzgar a una persona es mirar a sus hijos. Nuestra mamá crió a dos hijos maravillosos. Ella nos enseñó a trabajar duro y a ser amables. Era una madre de CAL FIRE muy orgullosa”, añadió Natasha.

“Amaba a su familia, a sus amigos, a su jardín, a Facebook y a luchar por la justicia social. Era terca y podía ser irritable y la amábamos tal como era. No tuvo miedo de defender lo que creía. La extrañaremos mucho. Agradecemos todo el amor y apoyo”, escribió la hija de Vickie. Fue miembro de la junta directiva de la estación de radio KFCF 88.1FM y del periódico *Community Alliance*. También estuvo muy involucrada en organizaciones locales como Pan Valley Institute. Vickie fue una voz apasionada por la justicia, participó en manifestaciones en apoyo de nuestra libertad y democracia, y contra las guerras y los abusos de poder.

Descansa en paz estimada Vickie.

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*Luis Valenzuela Ríos nació en Chile. En 1975, producto del Golpe Militar de Pinochet, sale al exilio junto a su familia y vivió en varios países de América Latina antes de llegar a los EEUU. Luis posee un doctorado en literatura del Caribe en el Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe.*



Imagen sin fecha de Vickie con sus nietos en su casa cerca de Oakhurst. Foto tomada del FB de Vickie.

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eduardostanley@comcast.net



En este paquete legislativo se insiste en la privatización de algunas empresas estatales como Aerolíneas Argentinas, Correos Argentinos, Radio y Televisión Pública y el Banco de la Nación, entre otras. Por otro lado, en materia fiscal, propone una reducción de los impuestos a los más ricos, la cual se encuentra actualmente en 2.25% al 0.25%, rebaja que sería implementada de forma gradual, hasta ser alcanzada en el año 2027.

Argentina, en el segundo semestre del 2023, tenía un índice de pobreza del 41.7%. Esta semana, el presidente, en cadena nacional de televisión, se mostró sorprendido con la rapidez con que los ajustes económicos han dado resultados positivos, destacando un superávit del PIB de un 0.2%. Lo que Milei no mencionó, es que más de 7 millones de argentinos han sido agregados a los índices de pobreza durante sus primeros meses de mandato.

Por otro lado, desde el comienzo del gobierno de Milei, han comenzado las manifestaciones de distintas organizaciones gremiales y comunitarias, las cuales se oponen al proyecto económico y político del gobierno, existiendo, incluso, un llamado a realizar una huelga general. En días pasados, se realizó una manifestación multitudinaria por la defensa de la gratuidad de la educación, la cual demuestra que se está dando un incremento importante del descontento popular. Es importante dar seguimiento a las acciones que van a ir tomando las organizaciones gremiales y cívicas para detener el paquete de leyes que está proponiendo el gobierno.

Otro aspecto que es importante a destacar, es el nuevo papel, a nivel geopolítico, que está jugando el gobierno argentino en la región. Durante los últimos años, se ha ido incrementando, nuevamente, la presencia, a diferentes niveles, de Estados Unidos en América Latina. Prueba de ello, fue la visita que realizó al país sudamericano la jefa del Comando Sur, Laura Richardson. Esto no es casual, ya que el gobierno norteamericano necesita detener los avances estratégicos que ha realizado China en la región. Como es de conocimiento público, China ha estrechado lazos comerciales con la gran mayoría de los países latinoamericanos, y Argentina no es la excepción. Entre el 2012 y 2014, China y Argentina, bajo el gobierno de Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, firmaron un acuerdo para que China construyera una base de monitoreo satelital de apoyo al Programa Chino de Exploración de la Luna en la provincia de Neuquén.

El gobierno de Estados Unidos está presionando al gobierno de Milei para que haga una inspección a las instalaciones, ya que los servicios de inteligencia estadounidenses sospechan que la base china pueda estar siendo utilizada para fines militares. Es evidente que Estados Unidos va a utilizar cualquier gobierno con el perfil ultraderechista para generar un proceso de desestabilización en América Latina desde hace muchas décadas. Como resultado de esta presión, el gobierno argentino está cediendo terreno en la región de Ushuaia, al extremo sur del país, para que Estados Unidos pueda construir una base de “investigación científica”. Finalmente, el presidente argentino acaba de solicitar su ingreso a la OTAN, como “Miembro Global”. Hasta el momento no se tiene claridad sobre lo que significa este tipo de membresía, pero sí se sabe que en el universo ideológico de Milei cualquier cosa es posible. Por otra parte, Milei ha dado todo el apoyo a Israel y ha justificado, sin ningún tipo de escrúpulos, el genocidio perpetrado por el gobierno sionista israelí al pueblo palestino. El gobierno argentino, ha calificado el operativo militar genocida como “medidas adecuadas para defender la seguridad de Israel”.

Como se ha podido observar, los hechos hablan por sí solos. Ahora cabe esperar las acciones que tomará el pueblo argentino, a través de sus organizaciones, para poner un alto a estas políticas tóxicas, y poder despertar y encontrar un camino hacia la solución de los grandes problemas que esa nación enfrenta desde hace muchas décadas.

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# Proporcionando Atención Médica a Inmigrantes en “La Última Frontera” de California

Continúa de página 23

Pero ir directamente a las granjas ha sido un reto, asegura Moreno. “Obviamente, no podemos entorpecer el trabajo y a los propietarios de las granjas no les entusiasma tener gente ajena en ellas. Así que nos apostamos en las salas de descanso, llevamos un tentempié saludable para que todo el mundo entre y charle. Pero las pausas para comer y descansar son cortas—media hora—y luego vuelven al trabajo”.

Open Door también estudió los historiales de los pacientes de 2022 y 2023 para ver quién había accedido a la atención anteriormente pero no tenía seguro. Estas personas estaban inscritas en el Medi-Cal de Emergencia y ahora son elegibles para el Medi-Cal de otro obstáculo importante es la falta de transporte público. La clínica más cercana a Smith River está en Crescent City. Para necesidades médicas graves, los pacientes deben viajar hasta Redding, a cuatro horas en coche hacia el sur, o San Francisco, a seis horas.

También faltan proveedores. “Es muy difícil encontrar proveedores que quieran vivir y trabajar en Crescent City. A veces encontramos un muy buen proveedor y se queda. Lo más frecuente es que se marchen”, dice Moreno, quien señala que sólo hay un oftalmólogo en Crescent City que trabaja con pacientes de Medi-Cal, y que su lista de pacientes está al límite.

La política se suma a la desconfianza, ya que los residentes indocumentados tienen que sopesar sus necesidades de atención médica con el temor a despertar sentimientos



Señal ubicada a la entrada de Smith River, poblado que tiene una población de 849 personas, según el Buró del Censo del año 2022. Foto de Peter Schumann/Ethnic Media Services

## Milei, un Político Populista Fuera de Control

POR LUIS VALENZUELA RÍOS

(Nota del editor: esta nota se reproduce con la autorización de Tribuno del Pueblo, <https://tribunodelpueblo.org>)

Desde hace algún tiempo, se está dando un fenómeno bastante particular en América Latina. Están resurgiendo gobiernos inspirados en el fenómeno “Donald Trump”, los cuales son encabezados por líderes populistas de extrema derecha, defensores acérrimos del modelo de libre mercado, es decir, gobiernos que adoptan medidas políticas y económicas que están dirigidas a perjudicar a los sectores sociales más desfavorecidos. Este es el caso de Ecuador, Perú y Argentina. Este artículo se concentrará en analizar lo que está aconteciendo en el país trasandino, después de haber sido electo como presidente de la república Javier Milei. Mucho se ha dicho de esta persona, pero poco se conoce sobre sus planteamientos filosóficos, y mucho menos sobre su personalidad.

¿Quién es Javier Gerardo Milei? Nace en Buenos Aires un 22 de octubre de 1970 en el seno de una familia modesta. Su padre fue chofer de autobuses y su madre ama de casa. La vida de Milei fue marcada por la violencia intrafamiliar, tanto es así que hasta el día de hoy a sus padres no les dirige la palabra, todo esto debido a los maltratos sufridos por parte de ellos, desde su infancia. Esta información es relevante, ya que ayuda a entender su temperamento, el cual permea todos los ámbitos de su vida, especialmente en la política. Javier Milei posee una licenciatura y dos maestrías obtenidas en universidades privadas de su país. Además, se ha desempeñado por más de 20 años como profesor de economía en diversas universidades privadas argentinas y en el exterior.

Continúa en página 20



Javier Milei (der.) junto a su vicepresidenta, Victoria Eugenia Villarreal, durante la ceremonia de juramento y traspaso de la banda presidencial en el Congreso argentino el 10 de diciembre de 2023. Foto cortesía [www.senado.gov.ar/prensa](http://www.senado.gov.ar/prensa).

Peter Schumann es el editor en línea de Ethnic Media Services. Anteriormente trabajó como Coordinador de Comunicaciones para la organización sin fines de lucro Earth Innovation Institute, donde ayudó a coordinar un equipo internacional para desarrollar y promover contenido relacionado con cuestiones del clima y la protección de los bosques tropicales. Los artículos de Peter han cubierto una amplia variedad de temas, desde asuntos internacionales hasta educación, salud y medio ambiente. Su trabajo ha sido publicado en San Francisco Chronicle, The Nation, National Catholic Reporter.

“Cuando te estás muriendo, tienes que cuidarte. Eso es lo malo de aquí.” \*\*\*\*\*

tiene clara a la hora de afrontar los retos.

Y aunque su afecto por la comunidad y la región es evidente—está deseando mostrar a los visitantes las playas locales, adonde dice que va en ocasiones para despejarse—, y la igual que él, no tiene seguro médico.

recientemente tras sufrir un derrame cerebral. Perdió la visión del ojo izquierdo, dice. Al Por su parte, Urrea cuenta que su madre, quien también vive en Del Norte, fue hospitalizada asiente afirmativamente. “Iré a ver si existe esa oportunidad”.

no fui al hospital”. Al preguntarle si se inscribiría en Medi-Cal si tuviera la oportunidad, el dolores. Pero seguí trabajando, aunque estaba enfermo”, dice. “No tengo seguro, así que Anancio Hernández trabaja como cocinero local. “Hace uno o dos meses tuve algunos se encoge de hombros. “No sé... aquí es muy caro. Quizá volver a México”.

residente aquí desde hace 11 meses. Cuando se le pregunta qué hace cuando se enferma, “Yo nunca he oído hablar de Medi-Cal”, dice Alberto Hernández, originario de Chiapas y información y no estaban seguros de la actual ampliación de Medi-Cal.

De vuelta a Smith River, los residentes del parque de remolques desconocían la información saliera a la luz y me deportan, al menos tendré acceso a la atención médica...”, “.

“Esto es algo real, que preocupa a la gente”, dice Moreno. “Una persona nos dijo: ‘Si mi deportación.

acceder a prestaciones públicas, lo que bajo la anterior administración podía ser causa de antiinmigrantes y poner en peligro una vía hacia la ciudadanía o la residencia legal al

Olivares dice que le gusta caminar en la playa “para despejarse”. Manuel Ortiz/Peninsula 360 Press









# Nu'u Yavi: Festival de Comida Oaxaqueña

Continúa de página 24

manteniendo el ambiente de nuestras cocinas. Y presentar estos platos con orgullo,

Nu'u Yavi se llevó a cabo el 3 de mayo en Court Park en el centro de Madera. Se cree que

alrededor de un tercio de los 61.000 habitantes de la ciudad son de origen oaxaqueño. Madera también tiene la primera comital de origen mixteco elegida en Estados Unidos.

Siete mujeres oaxaqueñas (seis mixtecas y una triqui) cocinaron sus platos favoritos y los

ofrecieron a la venta: tortillas, mole rojo y amarillo, pozole, aguas, yiqui (un guiso hecho de maíz, hojas de aguacate y carne asada), tamales y huachimole (plato elaborado con tomatillos, guaje—las vainas verdes de un árbol—chile y carne de cerdo).

El evento fue patrocinado por el Instituto Pan Valley del Comité de Servicio de Amigos Americanos. Los puestos de comida se distribuyeron en semicírculo alrededor del kiosko del parque, que se convirtió en el centro del evento. Asistió mucha gente, no sólo para

comer sino también para disfrutar de la conversación mientras los niños jugaban. De fondo se oía una música oaxaqueña.

“Para mí, esta fue una experiencia orientada a educar al público sobre nuestra comida

y nuestras técnicas de cocina”, dijo Daisy Mejía, quien preparó huachimole. “Es como el chile verde pero se cocina con semillas de guaje y chile costeño. Mi mamá me enseñó a cocinarlo, así que significa mucho para mí. Espero que nuestras nuevas generaciones no

pierdan estas recetas”.

“Qué tan difícil es conseguir los ingredientes originales?” Ahora puedes conseguir guaje

en algunas tiendas; ese no era el caso hace unos años”, explicó Mejía. “Incluso se han

plantado árboles de guaje en la zona”.

No es difícil de entender. Los inmigrantes no sólo aportan sus habilidades laborales y

energía, sino que también reproducen sus culturas, incluida, por supuesto, su comida.

Así crean un mercado para nuevos productos. En el caso de plantas, estas terminan

siendo plantadas localmente. Sin embargo hay algunas excepciones. “Lo ideal es que el

huachimole se cocine con chile costeño (chile de la costa de Oaxaca). Mi mamá los trajo de

Oaxaca porque aquí no se produce”, dijo Mejía.

“Lo que me gustó de este evento es que varias mujeres se juntaron para cocinar y

compartir nuestra comida tradicional. Es comida que conocemos, sin embargo, cada uno

tiene un toque especial que aprendieron de sus madres”, dijo Mejía.

Y, por supuesto, hubo tamales. Los tradicionales, y los oaxaqueños, que se elaboran con

hojas de plátano.

“Cuando cocino, el olor, los colores, los sabores, me transportan a mi tierra”, dijo Mireya

Agustín, con tono nostálgico. Ofreció tamales y pozole amarillo (pozole hecho con chiles

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Daisy Mejía, quien preparó un delicioso huachimole. Foto de Eduardo Stanley



amarillos). “El pozole amarillo es muy popular durante las festividades que se celebran en la plaza de mi tierra”.

Estas mujeres tienen algo en común cuando cocinan para eventos como Nu'u Yavi: cuentan con la ayuda de sus familias.

Agustín mencionó que, aunque aquí actualmente se producen más ingredientes oaxaqueños, “no saben igual”. Ella vende comida desde casa y en eventos especiales. “Me gusta compartir mi comida; la gente disfruta de la comida oaxaqueña y eso me hace feliz”, dijo.

Hay algo más además de buena comida. “Este esfuerzo—de organizar el evento—es parte de una lucha, una lucha por ser reconocidos como una comunidad que es parte de la comunidad en general. Esto también es parte de nuestro aporte, no somos sólo manos de trabajo”, concluyó Hernández. Y sugirió que las participantes están interesados en repetir la experiencia en julio. Se convertirá Nu'u Yavi en un evento permanente?

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Eduardo Stanley es el editor de Community Alliance, puede contactarlo en editor@fresnoalliance.com



Alvaro Olivares en su “casa”, un carro abandonado. Manuel Ortiz/Peninsula 360 Press

una importante presencia de nativos americanos—, aunque constituyen la inmensa mayoría de la mano de obra agrícola de la región.

Y como en muchas otras comunidades de la zona, existe—al menos entre los trabajadores agrícolas entrevistados para este reportaje—una desconfianza instintiva hacia el gobierno. “es mejor no enfermarse aquí”.

Kathleen Moreno dirige las actividades de enlace comunitario e inscripción del Centro Comunitario de Salud Open Door, que gestiona 12 clínicas en los condados de Del Norte y el condado limítrofe de Humboldt.

“Hay personas que no han tenido acceso a atención médica alguna durante el tiempo que han estado aquí”, dice, “y por eso algunos de sus problemas de salud les generan temor y no están controlados de ninguna manera...”.

Open Door, como Centro de Salud Federalmente Calificado (FQHC por sus siglas en inglés), es una de las casi tres docenas de organizaciones en 48 de los 58 condados de California que forman parte del Proyecto de navegadores para inscripción a servicios salud (Navigators Health Enrollment Project), una iniciativa lanzada por el Departamento de Servicios de Salud de California (DHCS) para ayudar a correr la voz sobre la elegibilidad para Medi-Cal en las comunidades locales. La iniciativa estará vigente hasta mediados de 2026.

Hacerlo en lugares como Del Norte, donde las distancias son significativas y los recursos son escasos, no está exento de retos.

“Aquí no hay un canal de comunicación fácil”, dice Moreno, quien vive en Crescent City. No hay emisoras de radio locales en español, ni periódicos y acceso limitado a Internet en algunas zonas, enfatizó. “Esta ha sido la situación desde que vivo aquí hace 18 años”.

Open Door se sirve de publicaciones informativas en plataformas como Facebook y participa con mesas con información en ferias locales de salud y eventos comunitarios. También se apoya en los Coordinadores de salud latinos (Latino Health Coordinators), de los cuales hay dos que cubren Del Norte y tres para toda el área de Humboldt.

Moreno supervisa su trabajo. “Su éxito se ha basado en gran medida en la confianza y las recomendaciones de boca en boca... una vez que una familia se da cuenta de que puede confiar en nuestros coordinadores, entonces lo comparten con su familia”.

Continúa en página 21



LA VOZ DEL MOVIMIENTO PROGRESISTA DESDE 1996

LIANZA

COMUNITARIA

¿Quién se  
Solidarizará  
con Estas Mujeres?



POR MIKE RHODES

El 23 de mayo, los miembros del Concejo Municipal de Fresno escucharon a tres mujeres traumatizadas que fueron atacadas por un hombre islamo**f**bico en el barrio Tower de Fresno, durante “Porchfest”, el festival de música en los porches de las casas de ese barrio.

Los oradores que apoyaban a las mujeres estaban indignados porque la Fiscalía no presentó cargos por delitos de odio contra Francisco Samaniego, quien fue arrestado poco después del incidente.

Zahra Al, una de las mujeres traumatizadas, habló en la reunión del Concejo Municipal diciendo que mientras distribuía información en una mesa “tuvo que lidiar con este individuo, Francisco Samaniego, durante 20 minutos antes de que tornara físicamente agresivo y comenzara a agredirme a mí y a mi hijo de seis años, a mi amiga Lana y a mi otra amiga Mel”.

Al dijo que durante el ataque verbal de 20 minutos, Samaniego utilizó “retórica racista de supremacía blanca e insultos raciales contra árabes, latinos, negros y musulmanes”. Estaba indignada porque el fiscal del distrito no presentó cargos por delitos de odio.

Layli Shirani, abogada principal de derechos civiles del Consejo de Relaciones Islámicas-Estadounidenses (CAIR), habló en la audiencia pública a través de Zoom. Dijo que representa a las tres mujeres que fueron atacadas y que “desafía el sentido común entender por qué el fiscal del distrito tomó esta decisión apresurada [no acusar a Samaniego de un crimen de odio].

“En nuestra opinión, antes de revisar todas las pruebas y antes de reunirnos con todas las personas directamente

afectadas y ofrecer un razonamiento intrínsecamente en asociación con el Departamento de Servicios Sociales de California y la Comisión de California sobre Asuntos Americanos de Asia y las Islas del Pacífico como parte de Stop the Programa de odio. Para denunciar un incidente de odio o un crimen de odio y obtener apoyo, visite cavshate.org.

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*Mike Rhodes es el director ejecutivo del periódico Community Alliance y autor del libro Dispatches from the War Zone, sobre las personas sin hogar en Fresno. Su sitio web es mikerhodes.us. Contáctelo en mikerhodes@comcast.net.*

Zahra Al, víctima de un delito de odio, habla ante el Ayuntamiento de Fresno acompañada de su marido Moe y sus dos hijos.

Foto de Peter Maiden



En Nu'u Yavi también participó un granjero de productos orgánicos. Foto de Eduardo Stanley

“Invitamos a mujeres que cocinan manteniendo los sabores tradicionales, a quienes les gusta conservar las recetas de sus madres y abuelas”, dijo Hernández, una mixteca de Santiago Juxtlahuaca, Oaxaca.

En los últimos 20 años aproximadamente, la presencia cultural de Oaxaca en el Valle de San Joaquín se ha vuelto cada vez más evidente, particularmente en Madera y Arvin (condado de Kern). Miles de trabajadores agrícolas han llegado a trabajar en los campos del Valle desde Oaxaca, un estado del sur de México con una gran población indígena. En Oaxaca existen al menos 16 comunidades indígenas diferentes con sus propias lenguas y tradiciones.

Una de esas tradiciones es la comida. La cocina oaxaqueña no sólo es deliciosa sino también colorida, con un sabor distintivo en parte debido a las hierbas que se utilizan en ella. En los últimos años, hemos visto un auge de la cocina oaxaqueña en restaurantes de alto nivel en ambos lados de la frontera y muchos libros y artículos dedicados a eso.

Pero como todos sabemos, una cosa es la comida que puedes encontrar en un restaurante y otra la comida que hace tu mamá. Y es por eso que un grupo de mujeres oaxaqueñas en Madera, lideradas por la organizadora cultural Rosa Hernández, decidieron crear un mercado tradicional en el parque, con comida, refrescos, tortillas recién hechas, pan y postres y, por supuesto, productos agrícolas frescos. Lo llamaron Nu'u Yavi, que es mercado en mixteco, una de las lenguas indígenas que se hablan en Oaxaca.

Nu'u Yavi: Festival  
de Comida  
Oaxaqueña

POR EDUARDO STANLEY