

STRIKING WORKS! DIRECT ACTION WORKS!!!!

It is commonly held that UCSC was designed in order to discourage protest and demobilize potential crowds. From its circuitous and arboreal infrastructure and lack of central locations conducive to large mobilization (such as Sproul Plaza at UC Berkeley, or Royce Quad at UCLA), to its idiosyncratic system of individual 'colleges', UCSC is said to provide a kind of decentralized bulwark against campus unrest. Though this is a mixture of truth and fiction--there have always been protests here--it misconstrues the nature of mass resistance, which, despite certain physical limitations, often exists beneath the surface and will always find a proper outlet sooner or later.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, UCSC students protested the war in Vietnam and Cambodia. Along with burning draft cards in Quarry Plaza--where we gather today--a majority of students on campus (there were only around 3,000 at the time, and classes with small groups of students were quite common) stood up against the war, and by extension to a UC administration invested in the design and production of weapons. In today's wildfire conditions of endless drought and climate catastrophe, one might envision setting ablaze student loan promissory notes in this same plaza, not simply in protest against an institution wedded to a global landscape dominated by U.S. military belligerence, but as an action in defiance of an entire system of resource extraction, one that stakes out education as a "privilege" worthy of a lifetime of debt. This extractive resource is the public-private partnership of your future. Undergraduate students at this campus ought to know that after graduating from our public university they will receive a phone call from a private debt collector, formally introducing a decades-long process of paying back their interest-bearing student loans. These loans can pass up or down generations, where even bankruptcy is not a get-out option. The only get-out option is effective protest now.

Student loan debt, now a key driver of U.S. military enlistment, is directly tied to the university's contemporary form of extractive administration. Students, prior to graduation and entry into the (largely mythical) job market of one's field of study, often do not yet perceive the university's vast holdings as an alien power wielded against them. What is more visible are the major construction projects and land grabs the university administration initiates (and uses increased enrollments to justify), engaging in a self-serving cycle where all students lose. The administration seems largely content to let this vicious cycle continue (they would, of course, describe it as

a "virtuous" cycle), not merely because it deepens the pockets of Cynthia "I'm OK with my salary" Larive, but because it is, in essence, emblematic of what the university has become.

Keep this in mind when the UC regents vote to increase undergraduate tuition again next week: The biggest threat to campus safety is not striking workers and the students who stand in solidarity with them, but the unspectacular

brutality of administrative neglect. Neglect is most detectable in its effects, in decrepit campus housing underpinned by crumbling campus infrastructure. But neglect is just one tool in the administration's repertoire. The aggressive effort to bypass or thwart the presence of organized labor on campus is another, though directly related to such neglect. K7 Skilled Trade workers, who are also currently on strike, are too overworked, understaffed, and underpaid to perform the vital labor of preventative maintenance and repair on campus. Meanwhile, "safe" Wall Street investments command administrative attention. We denounce the safety of financial speculation, while affirming the safety that only comes through solidarity and mutual aid, the very practices that are taking shape in our collective struggles against injustice.

