

Integrities

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FROM PARALYSIS TO ACTION

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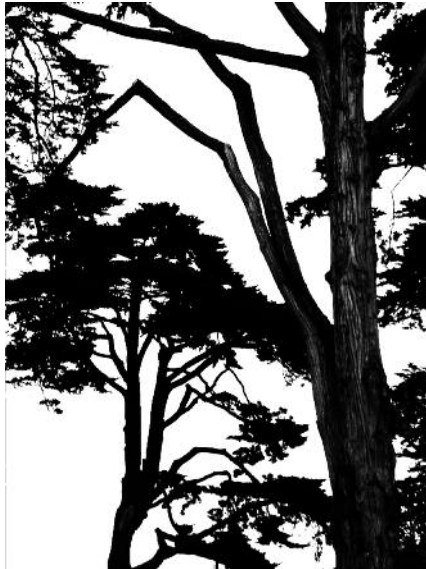


Photo by Karen Cane

FROM PARALYSIS TO ACTION

It seems that the United States has entered a new phase of existence.

There are so many things going on: The presidential tweets, the cabinet appointments, phone calls and meetings with representatives of other countries, ICE immigration raids that go after Mexican-Americans, the building of the Mexico wall, the travel ban against predominantly Muslim countries, the attacks on healthcare, the cutting of funds for environmental protection, for women's services, and on and on.

We keep hearing about millions of people losing their health insurance... about billions of dollars in tax breaks going to the rich, while money is being taken away from the poor. The majority of the Republican Party keeps denying Global Warming even though Global Warming is capable of wiping out human life on earth.

It can all make us feel like throwing up our hands and giving up but we cannot let ourselves be paralyzed by present trends and projections.

Instead of letting paralysis set in, you can begin to move your body and find that you *are* able to move, and that the exercise does good things for you! Groups of people can get together and begin to figure out what they can do. And simply being together with others who have not given up can give us new energy!

Wake Up!

Rosenstock-Huessy had an extraordinary grasp of the ups and downs of history. “Disintegration,” he wrote, “is a blessing in disguise because it compels us to wake up!”

He encourages us to believe in people who “go against present trends and begin to live out a new story.”

The future will not be created by the trends we see all around us now, but by exceptional people’s dreams and passions—the people who go against present trends and begin to live out a new story long before that story can become history.

So it is a time to break away from the story that keeps coming at us, and to gather with others to create a new story. We don’t have to create a big story all at once. Little stories matter!

HELPING FARMWORKER FAMILIES

– *A Report from Linda Wallace*

We recently attended one of the quarterly distributions of food and supplies by the *Center for Farmworker Families* founded by Anna Lopez (*see cover for photo of Anna*). The distribution had already started when Bill, Karen and I arrived at the Park Pavilion, but the line was still very long. About 50 to 60 farmworker women from Oaxaca waited patiently for the shampoo, bath soap, dish soap, laundry detergent, toilet paper and rice and beans distributed each month by the *Center for Farmworker Families*, which IF is helping fund.



*Farmworker families waiting patiently in line for essentials and food each month.
Photo by Karen Cane*

The incomes of farmworkers are very low even with both parents, and often children, working. According to the Center for Farmworker Families, farmworkers are not covered by many of the protections under the Fair Labor Standards Act, including minimum wage and overtime guarantees, or even restriction on child labor. Farmworker Justice reports that the large majority of farmworkers do not work year

round. On average, only 60% work more than 180 days a year. The average total individual income of farmworkers is \$15,000-\$17,499. However, this figure includes income that some farmworkers earn from jobs outside agriculture. The federal poverty level for a family of 3 is \$19,790. Twenty-five percent of all farmworkers had a family income below the federal poverty line. Even though incomes are low and the need is great, farmworker use of public assistance has historically been low and many families that are eligible may not be participating in federal programs such as food stamps (Farmworker Justice, 2014).

Many children attended the distribution; most were sitting at picnic tables engrossed in the hands-on science experiments led by volunteers. One of the experiments involved squashing strawberries (which the kids were enjoying immensely) as a first step in extracting DNA from the berries that would enable the children to see clumps of DNA strands.



Health workers were also on hand to provide women with information about mammograms and screening for cervical cancer. In the future the Center hopes to provide workshops about food choices. Diabetes is a huge

problem among Mexican immigrants.

As we were leaving, Glenn and Joyce Pearce, who provide clothing for newborn babies at Watsonville hospital, arrived to distribute layettes to expectant mothers. Many low-income women cannot even afford a blanket to wrap up their newborn on the way home from the hospital; they often use the father's jacket to keep the baby warm. We saw one woman, who looked like her baby was due any minute, beaming with joy after receiving a baby blanket, infant clothing, and a tiny stuffed toy.



Layettes gathered and donated by Watsonville Hospital doctors and nurses.

In another area adjacent to the Pavilion a volunteer had arrived with a station wagon full of free clothes and we noticed women searching for articles of clothing they needed for their families. Later at the end of the day there would be a piñata for the children. As we said our goodbyes we couldn't help but notice smiling faces everywhere we looked.

MURALS AND MENTORING

Jaime Sanchez, a young man who leads young artists in painting murals on walls and garages in poor neighborhoods of Watsonville, was present at IF's recent Latin American dinner. Most of the group's paint comes from the dumps, and they paint the murals for free— just to lift the spirits of the people and give new life to the neighborhoods.

So on local levels, where it really matters, a number of people are taking action instead of sitting back and feeling hopeless!



Examples of murals painted in Watsonville by Jaime Sanchez and his crew of young artists. Photos by Karen Cane

YOUNG PEOPLE NURTURING THE ENVIRONMENT

IF is also sponsoring some young people at Watsonville Wetlands who are teaching grammar school children how to care for the environment. The mentoring includes on-site care of parts of the Watsonville wetlands.



CREATING SANCTUARY IN SANTA CRUZ

Maureen Davidson wrote the following article on how Sanctuary started and keeps developing in the city of Santa Cruz:

Shortly after the November 2016 elections and in response to the new administration's threats to virtually every aspect of the social justice movement, supporters of Santa Cruz 4 Bernie, Peoples Democratic Club and others convened a meeting at Loudon Nelson Center to "organize the resistance."

At that meeting, the voice of local community activist and organizer, Ernestina Saldana, resounded strongly as she committed to work on immigration issues and called on others to join her. Many did, immediately.

Ernestina—everyone knew her by her first name—was already a familiar figure in the Santa Cruz community. Over her 24 years in Santa Cruz she had been an activist and organizer: first as a parent in Soquel Elementary school, then as a vocal leader addressing broad community issues ranging from transportation to women’s and indigenous rights. Wheelchair-bound herself, she served on the Commission on Disabilities, fought to maintain public

transportation and affordable housing and campaigned for

progressive candidates.

Faced with the Trump agenda, she committed herself to a new level of

organizing. *“I didn’t know*

I would be able to do

anything, I just knew it needed to be done.”



*Ernestina at MIGRA watch training.
Photo courtesy of Maureen Davidson*

She found an ally in Paul Johnston, former Sociology professor at UCSC and lifetime organizer, most lately with the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILFP) and the People’s Democratic Club (PDC), fighting targeted deportation program in jails and later mobilizing aid for the wave of Central

American families held at the Texas border. (IF contributed to that effort!) Through these efforts he had formed a relationship with immigrant community groups like the Day Worker Center, Senderos, the Watsonville Dream Network, the Brown Berets, and with regional nonprofits like COPA.

Following the election, he had helped form a Sanctuary Committee of the People's Democratic Club and worked with city council members in Santa Cruz and Watsonville to write sanctuary resolutions. For the "resistance" meeting he convened an immigrant rights working group.

"We had about 50 people on our list before the meeting," said Johnston. "After it, new people were involved, including Ernestina and her followers. Our list doubled."

At this point, Johnston had conceived of a sanctuary network of groups and projects that would meet monthly to report on their work, to support each other and to involve newcomers. He proposed to call it Sanctuary Santa Cruz—a loose network, not centralized; facilitated, not directed—to bridge gaps and to work in coalition with existing immigrant community groups.

The fledgling Sanctuary Santa Cruz had its first public assembly in December at the Democratic headquarters in Santa Cruz. Paul and Ernestina co-convened the meeting with presentations by Nane Alejandro of Barrios Unidos who described the ongoing efforts of his organization as it served the immigrant community over many decades, and by Pastor James Weller of

Peace United Church of Christ, who described a nationwide faith-based network which locally involved several Santa Cruz churches and temples and others in what he called the New Sanctuary Movement. He read the Sanctuary resolution that was under discussion by his own congregation and exhorted those present who were part of a faith community to engage with their leadership to join that movement. Karen Mallory, an immigration attorney, offered to work with the group led by Oaxacan cultural organization, Senderos, who had begun to organize within the immigrant community to clarify the constitutional rights that all share, and to develop and distribute the “red card” that outlined these rights and what to do in case ICE immigration police came to the door. Representatives of ACLU and the Watsonville Brown Berets were present.

Many in the room had worked together for many decades on behalf of social justice causes: some in the first local sanctuary movement in the 1980’s in support of those fleeing the violence of the US-induced wars in Central America. Peace United was involved in that effort.

In an interview for this essay, Jim Weller noted that “Peace United Church of Christ is a congregational church, whose hallmark throughout the country is our emphasis on social justice. Shortly after the election I was contacted by a UCC minister from Berkeley, asking if we would consider providing sanctuary for a person who needed shelter.” That led to fact-finding with other churches and consultations with local PUCC leaders. “Though that

person seeking sanctuary decided to pursue another avenue, the sanctuary discussion evoked a strong response among ministers and lay leaders. We decided as a congregation that we were called to be part of what is known as the New Sanctuary Movement.”

In November, Weller and Johnston began working together.

Weller’s organizing led to an OpEd published in the Santa Cruz Sentinel, signed by 19 local religious leaders, presenting a moral response to the policies of the new administration. In January, that Progressive Christian Forum group joined with local Muslim clergy in an interfaith expression of shared values and solidarity. Weller and Johnston collaborated in crafting a Sanctuary Resolution adopted by the County and then the City of Santa Cruz.

“I think what we have to do in general is to resist oppression at every level,” said Weller. “Not every person is going to engage in every form of resistance. There is a whole range of resistance actions—from civil disobedience to consciousness-raising to public speaking and writing and especially to organizing...in like-minded communities. For me, that means the ecumenical community...the role of the church in society is largely ethical and moral.”

Chris Wilson was present at these early meetings. An activist and peace organizer since the Iraq War, Chris heard his call to action during his daily meditation. “I saw an image of people responding when there was an ICE raid, it was very clear.”

“I went to the Santa Cruz 4 Bernie November meeting and people were talking about starting a rapid response group to

intervene in the case of ICE raids. I thought: I'm hooking in with them! I'm Irish-American. My family passes down those immigrant stories. It's clear to me that there's a finite amount of time until the trouble comes right to my door. It's history, it's survival, and it's a moral call to not hide when times are scary. We need to have each other's back."

Chris and a small network met to discuss how a rapid response group could be formed and how it could work within the decentralized structure Paul and Ernestina had by that time created. An alliance was formed, the name YARR (Your Allied Rapid Response) was chosen, and a mission statement crafted: "To use our bodies, tactics and resources to document, resist and prevent actions by ICE or other repressive forces that would harm our fellow human beings."

Since that time, more than 300 people have agreed to attend trainings, to join a phone network, and to respond immediately when called. Over 120 people attended the first Open House and training in February, learning how to support victims of ICE immigration raids by being Legal Observers: documenting, recording and reporting the actions of ICE and local law enforcement for use in legal defense and to record terrorization of community members, property destruction and excessive use of brutal force, as was used in the ICE raid on Santa Cruz's Beach Flats in February.

In addition to Legal Observation, some YARR members and allies have committed to intervene more directly in the case of an

ICE raid or in support of community members whose religion, country of origin, gender choices or skin color have made them targets for hate crimes. Scores of people have been trained in non-violent intervention and in de-escalation of potentially violent situations. Trainings are offered on an ongoing basis.

Over the last months, YARR working groups have begun fundraising (Fundraising group) to sustain training and alert systems--and in the future to provide legal support (Legal group) for immigrant detainees and also YARR members, if necessary. To ensure that YARR response is appropriate and constructive a (Relationships) group is building a network within the immigrant community. A (Training) group is responsible for training new members and honing the skills of experienced members and allies. The Tech & Logistics Crew (TLC) has developed a phone alert system and a secure method of communication. A new group (Accompaniment) is developing a system to transport and support vulnerable community members as they attend hearings and fulfill responsibilities that may put them in harm's way. Other groups are responsible for communication (Story) and (Coordination).

“It’s vital to make sure that people can do what they’re called to do, people working in their passion. YARR organization draws on the tradition of the Anarchist and Quaker organizations and 70’s feminism, the anti-nuclear movement in the 80’s and the Occupy Wall Street movement of the last decade. Our mission, values and principles come first. We make decisions by consensus. We form work groups by voluntary association. We are committed to each

other and directly accountable to the people who are most vulnerable,” said Wilson.

YARR continues to evolve.

With all this striving and turmoil, some of the most established immigrant organizations have played a quiet role. “Not visible...that’s the best way to be,” says Daniel “Nane” Alejandrez. “We’ve been protecting the rights of the undocumented community since my grandfather’s time, providing sanctuary to people from the fields and barrios. From the indigenous perspective, we just don’t see the border.”

“As a child working the fields I remember the first time that Immigration came and many people ran and I ran with them. ‘What are you running for?’ my grandfather asked. ‘You were born here.’ But how was I to understand that some were allowed, and others deported? We often worked fields where we were on one side and the ‘*guest workers*’ from the Bracero program worked the other. They had worse conditions and lower pay. It was hard to understand.”

“Then there was Caesar Chavez. We had no rights, no water, no bathrooms and he showed us we needed to organize.”

“Today these issues are still very open. In the 2000’s ICE hit the Beach Flats and other areas, lots of people were deported through immigration raids. We got caught off guard and families were separated. We own this place now. We decided to make it a place of

refuge. After the February raids we declared ourselves a sanctuary, knowing what it means.”

“Sanctuary Santa Cruz won’t work if it’s not coming from indigenous folks. But this isn’t the time for infighting. Numbers are great for some things, and a few people for others. Right now we are a sanctuary. People know to come to this place for help, for lawyers, for food. They look to us. If it comes to it we can lock our gates and doors and call our lawyers. I’m glad other people are fighting in other ways, but this is where we fight from. We all have to keep moving and organizing in the best way we can. “

Sanctuary Santa Cruz is indeed a loose affiliation, and a work in progress. While studiously leaderless, the community looks to Ernestina Saldana as the representative of the movement while Paul Johnston has moved his focus to organizing in the Salinas area. “I have one gift and that is that I know a lot of people,” says Ernestina. She seems to be everywhere in Santa Cruz, working with Indivisible, speaking at City Hall, connecting SSC with groups in Watsonville, Salinas, Davenport and bringing groups together. But the groups within SSC are autonomous, as a survival mechanism. “We don’t know what future we are preparing for, but we do know it’s going to be hard on everyone,” she said. “In this way we can expand or contract when that’s needed.

Meanwhile other groups have grown from that first commitment to fight bullying. The Know Your Rights trainings continue in schools and medical facilities and other places where

people meet. Communicators work on a Website and Facebook, teams address issues as they arise. And YARR continues to train, organize, prepare. There is a job for anyone who has a commitment. Indeed in the years to come, there is a job for everyone.

Learn more about Sanctuary Santa Cruz at sanctuary-sc.net.
Join us!

Sanctuary Santa Cruz and YARR are gathering support for families separated by ICE arrests. We hope to offer legal aid, spanish-language therapy and financial donations. Please contact rapidresponseSC@riseup.net with any offer of resources.

Any person knowing of ICE activities or arrests please share any information you have with rapidresponseSC@riseup.net or by calling the Sanctuary Hotline number at 831-239-4289

Interested in being part of the solution?

* Join Sanctuary Santa Cruz

- English: sanctuary-sc.net/contact/?lang=en

- Spanish: sanctuary-sc.net/participa

** Join Your Allied Rapid Response by emailing your phone number to rapidresponseSC@riseup.net*

NEXT GENERATION OF PEACEBUILDERS IN MEXICO

Phil McManus describes how Pietro Ameglio, who has fought the killings and the violence in Mexico, has influenced a number of college students to follow in his footsteps:

For the last several years, IF has funded the organizing and nonviolence education work of Pietro Ameglio in Mexico. That work has borne much fruit. One good example is the Peace and Nonviolence Collective, current and former students of Pietro's at the UNAM (National Autonomous University) who are now doing their own nonviolence education and organizing work.

The primary building blocks of their work, both for the groups they work with and for their own ongoing formation, are the nonviolence workshops they offer.

As they describe the process, "...we have developed a workshop program with the intention of generating small breaks in the way of relating and ...[promoting] a culture of peace...[Avoiding



A 3-day retreat in February, living and working together, helped to forge the shared identity and commitment of the Collective and to draw lessons from the work of the previous year.

paternalism,] we seek ... a collective construction of knowledge, to develop listening and understanding among several parties, teamwork with tasks, and rotating roles as we foster horizontal and dignified relationships.”

The Collective is doing many workshops on themes related to nonviolence and peacebuilding for a wide variety of audiences in Mexico City, Morelos, Queretaro, Oaxaca and elsewhere. Currently they are developing a workshop manual that they hope to publish this year.

The Collective has fostered a women’s group called MAKALIPT, in Tepito, a poor Mexico City neighborhood with a high level of violence. It has been a very empowering experience for the women. Their reflection process led to production of a book



MAKALIPT, a women’s empowerment group in Tepito (Mexico City), celebrates the opening of the meeting space they found and fixed up.

that for the first time gives voice to the women's experience of their history in the *barrio*.

Another project in which the Collective has played a key role is *Nos Hacen Falta* (We Miss Them), an initiative focused on seeking truth and justice for students, former students, workers, and academics of the UNAM who have been victims of murder and disappearance. They note that they hope to see their efforts

replicated in other universities so that “the



The Collective's “We Miss Them” (Nos Hacen Falta) campaign seeks truth and justice for the disappeared and murdered, including Jesús Israel Moreno Pérez, a 20 year old university student who disappeared in 2011.

university communities, with all their moral and political force, can contribute to deep social transformation.”

The UNAM Peace and Nonviolence Collective is currently involved in another ambitious project: exploring the possibility of a national “Peace and Nonviolence Youth Network”.



Members of the UNAM Peace and Nonviolence Collective, pictured here with Pietro Ameglio (far right).

All photos in this article courtesy of UNAM Peace and Nonviolence Collective

Discussions began at an international peace education conference held in Mexico in January and led to plans for a *National Youth Peacebuilders Camp* in June 2017.

Note: For IF’s Latin America fundraising dinner this year, the Collective made a short and engaging video that describes their work and the extremely violent and challenging Mexico context. It can be viewed on the IF website: www.integrities.org

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