

The demands of UNC Students for Justice in Palestine are:

1. UNC divestment from products supporting Israeli genocide, apartheid, and settler colonialism.
2. The establishment of a commission to plan for and maintain UNC divestment from Israel.
3. Transparency from the UNC school system on all its investments. We don't want money going to the genocide in Palestine or the housing crisis here in Chapel Hill.

FROM CHAPEL HILL TO PALESTINE



As the Israeli occupation of Palestine enters its 76th year, it is important to remember that the same forced displacement and colonial violence being inflicted upon the Palestinian people is also being inflicted upon the residents of Chapel Hill and surrounding areas.

Colonization



Members of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation.

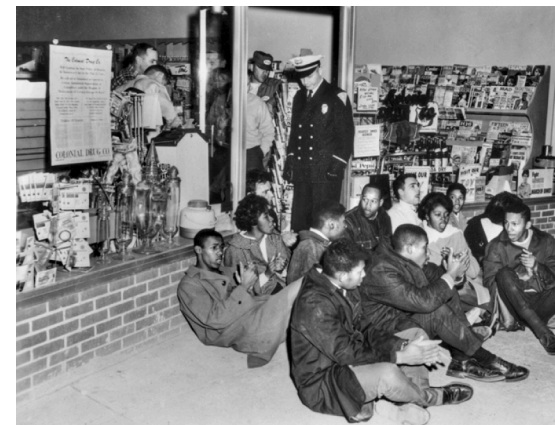
Before the arrival of Europeans, the area now known as Orange County was home to Siouan-speaking peoples like the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, Shakori, Eno, and Sissipahaw. European colonization came with land theft, destructive diseases, and incredible violence.

In 2023, the convenience store company Buc-ee's announced plans to build a massive gas station in Mebane, North Carolina. This drew major opposition from the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation and residents concerned

council in 2024. During the listening session, proponents of the ordinance spoke about parents being unable to put their children to sleep, houses shaking from the bass, and party goers throwing up, passing out, urinating, or fist-fighting on lawns.

One speaker made the additional connection between their support for the ordinance to their support for a ceasefire resolution that was also on the meeting's agenda, noting the similarities between the potential loss of home experienced by residents of Chapel Hill and that experienced by the Palestinians. Like Israeli settlers, the predatory real estate executives and landlords who seek to "develop" the town see its longtime residents as obstacles.

By connecting our struggles we can overcome oppression everywhere. Black activists in Chapel Hill who fought, and continue to fight, for civil rights were demanding the same thing pro-Palestine activists demand today: for people to live freely without the constraints of occupation or apartheid. Our struggles are one! And together we can form communities of care, love, and understanding.



*Anti-Segregation
Protest on Franklin
St, 1964.*

checkpoints whose expediency is at the mercy of the Israeli soldiers manning them. Thus, the simple 17-mile trip from Ramallah to Bethlehem often takes well over an hour by car.

After the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the subsequent municipal ban on housing discrimination four years later, the first of its kind in the South, conditions for Black residents in Chapel Hill gradually improved. Northside became a relatively well-off middle-class neighborhood thanks in large part to funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grants. Starting in the 1980s, however, the population found itself increasingly squeezed out of the neighborhood by the growing demand for off-campus housing for UNC students. In three decades, Northside saw its Black population plummet forty per cent as the price of a house skyrocketed a hundredfold.

In addition to an enormous increase in the cost of living, legacy residents of Chapel Hill have had to deal with the poor behavior of their new neighbors, particularly those involved in Greek life. Residents are kept awake all night by raucous dance music and the antics of intoxicated teenagers and twenty-somethings who often damage or leave trash (or worse) on their neighbors' property. These constant disruptions of daily life by privileged white students, often from upper-middle-class upbringings, prompted the Campus & Community Coalition to propose a Social Host Ordinance charging fines for repeated instances of unruly party conduct within a one-year period. Although introduced in 2022, the proposal was shelved for over a year due to backlash from privileged UNC students before being brought before city

about the potential environmental and health impacts of the project. The proposal threatens both the Occaneechi Trading Path that once ran from Virginia to Georgia and the Haw River Watershed. In January 2024, community members and representatives of the Occaneechi-Saponi spoke against Buc-ee's at a meeting of the Mebane city council, during which the company's representatives denied the historical presence of Indigenous peoples in the area and astroturfed public support for the station. Despite hearing from numerous citizens concerned about the effects the project would have on air and water quality and historical sites for almost eight hours, the council unanimously voted to approve construction.

This example of environmental injustice and racism is reminiscent of one over 6,000 miles away in Palestine. In 1982, an Israeli court found an agrochemical plant in Kfar Saba to be in violation of environmental regulations. Instead of ordering the plant's closure, it was allowed to simply relocate to an area just outside the Palestinian city of Tulkarm. According to a 2013 study published in the *Lancet*, residents of Tulkarm have a far higher rate of cancer and ocular and respiratory diseases than those of other cities in the West Bank. Additionally, farmlands in the immediate vicinity of the plant have been rendered infertile.

Agrochemical plant in Tulkarm.



Gentrification

Until 1950, the historically Black neighborhood of Pottersfield, now part of Northside, fell outside of the city limits of Chapel Hill and did not receive access to the town's infrastructure, sanitation, or emergency services. Black residents interviewed as part of the Marian Cheek Jackson Center's *History of Homes* series recall a house being allowed to burn because the structure fell on the wrong side of Church Street, which separated Pottersfield from the white Pritchard's Field neighborhood.



Civil Rights march on Franklin, 1963.

In 1960, nine Black high school students sat at a segregated lunch counter at Colonial Drugstore on Franklin Street, resulting in their arrests on charges of trespassing. The decision of the store's manager to call the police led to almost a year of protests by the newly-formed Chapel Hill Council on Racial Equality, during which it saw a steep decline in revenue.

From the inception of the Civil Rights Movement, the shared experiences of segregation and second-class citizenship united the Black community with other oppressed groups around the world, such as Black South Africans, Kurds, Irish Catholics, and Palestinians. The First Intifada saw the use of similar tactics to those seen in the so-called United States, such as boycotts, industrial action, and civil disobedience.

In the present-day West Bank, designated by the 1993 Oslo Accords as the site of a future Palestinian state, Israeli settlements dot the land between Palestinian villages and towns, effectively cutting them off from each other. What started as small, rugged outposts inhabited by a fringe group of religious extremists have in five decades grown into sprawling suburbs housing approximately one-tenth of Israel's Jewish



Israeli checkpoints being enforced.

population, who have access to affordable homes and high-quality services. All roads lead to Tel Aviv, as the settlements are connected by a network of highways designed to deliver drivers to most major cities in Israel within an hour. Palestinians who dare to set foot on these roads, however, are subject to arrest by the Israeli Occupation Force. Instead, they must traverse a series of