

The Case for Divestment
presented by
Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine

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Letter to the 16th ASSU Undergraduate Senate

Dear Senators,

We are writing to you, our elected representatives, to explain our intent in bringing forth “A Resolution to Divest from Companies Violating Human Rights in Occupied Palestine.” It is our fundamental belief that our University should not invest in violence against our own communities. We cannot afford to be silent while our university is actively investing in companies that enable the collective oppression of a people. To be silent is to allow injustice to happen. Silence is, therefore, complicity in violence.

The modern occupation of Palestinian territories operates by means of illegal settlement expansion, construction of an illegal separation barrier, a system of discriminatory checkpoints, and ongoing collective punishment. The occupation is also sustained by the brutalization of civilian demonstrators, administrative detention and mass incarceration, and an unequal set of laws for Palestinians, similar to the dynamic employed against Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities in the United States. These systems and structures are not just illegal under international law; they are morally wrong. It is our obligation as members of the global community not to turn away from them.

We view divestment as an effective and legitimate measure of non-violent resistance. We do not endorse a one-state or a two-state solution to the conflict as it is not our position to infringe upon Palestinian self-determination. We operate under the assumption that the people living under injustice know what is best for them. The call for divestment was issued directly from Palestinian civil society and as such, it is our duty to support the Palestinian people in their quest for liberation through the means that they themselves have asked us to adopt.

Objections to divestment made in the name of “peace” echo arguments that have been made time and time again against communities demanding a more just outcome than the status quo. Responding to similar critiques, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote in his Letter From a Birmingham Jail:

“I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council-er or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says ‘I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can't agree with your methods of direct action;’ who paternalistically feels he can set the timetable for another man's freedom.”

We acknowledge that tension is a natural part of society, and agree with Dr. King that instead of seeking a negative peace through the absence of tension, we must create a positive peace through the presence of justice. We believe that ending the occupation is a necessary pre-condition to a positive and lasting peace.

We reject the notion that divesting from human rights violations targets Jewish students. Our coalition is unified around a rejection of all forms of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, ableism, and identity-based repression. We reject the notion that criticism of a national government is tantamount to hatred towards an entire

ethno-religious identity. We recognize the history of oppression of Jewish communities, as well as the significance of Israel to members of the Stanford community. We also assert that neither of these things is relevant to the illegality or immorality of the occupation. Divestment from the occupation is a commitment to the project of universal human rights and ensuring all people are safe.

We wish to acknowledge that our university endowment is currently invested in companies that inflict substantial social injury upon students of Palestinian origin. We also acknowledge that many of these companies are simultaneously involved in the oppression carried out against communities of color in the United States.

We realize that we are asking you to vote on a difficult issue. However, challenging an unjust status quo is always difficult. Some may say that divestment is an issue that divides campus or is harmful to dialogue. The truth is that our campaign has rallied enormous support from all corners of campus, including many members of the Jewish community. Our campaign has already been successful in uniting our campus and generating productive conversations such that nearly every student on campus has heard about Israel and Palestine in the past few months. These conversations would not have taken place without our campaign.

We understand that you may have concerns about how this vote may impact your future careers. However, the mere fact that your futures are a concern only serves to highlight the massive imbalance of power in this situation. We know you are hearing from a lobby that is powerful on campus and on a global scale, yet we ask you to remain firm against any fear tactics used against you. We have the luxury to worry about future careers, while Palestinians worry about having a future at all. Throughout this process, we ask you to return to the seriousness of this reality.

The divestment movement is growing. It is at an inflection point in public opinion, as more and more people are realizing that the substantial power imbalance between divestment proponents and opponents on campus mirrors the substantial power imbalance in occupied Palestine. With each passing year, more and more campuses are making the conscious decision to support removing investments from companies that facilitate human rights violations in occupied Palestine.

We are now choosing to uplift the voices of those that are traditionally silenced. We call upon you, our elected representatives, to listen. We ask you to take a moral stance against violence being perpetrated against a marginalized student population within our Stanford community. We ask you to vote yes on divestment to ensure our financial neutrality in the Occupation of the Palestinian territories. We ask you to leverage your elevated voices to advocate for justice, which, Dr. King reminds us, brings a positive peace.

Sincerely,

Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine

A Resolution to Divest from Companies Violating Human Rights in Occupied Palestine

Authors: Ramah Awad, Clayton Evans, Emma Hartung, Laura Groenendaal Perez

Sponsors: Senator Kenneth Tea, Advocacy and Student Life Committees, Senator Malcolm Lizzappi, Advocacy and Appropriations Committees

Action requested: *2/3 Majority Approval by the Undergraduate Senate*

WHEREAS the Stanford University Code of Conduct states the university's commitment "to ensure we fulfill our legal and ethical obligations... to persons outside of Stanford,"

WHEREAS in managing university investments, Stanford University Trustees have a fiduciary responsibility to consider both financial risk and "substantial social injury," defined as "proximate corporate direct or indirect actions that cause injury to... individuals, or groups... [and] violat[e], subver[t], or frustrat[e] enforcement of rules of domestic or international law intended to protect individuals and/or groups against deprivation of health, safety, basic freedoms or human rights,"

WHEREAS Stanford University has a rich history of calling for ethical oversight of its endowment as a non-violent strategy towards social change, which has included divestment from companies violating human rights in South Africa and Sudan, the adoption of criteria pertaining to conflict minerals in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and divestment from coal mining companies following last year's fossil free divestment student campaign,

WHEREAS multinational corporations disproportionately conduct business in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as compared to other conflict areas (e.g. Syria or Iran), where binding law often prevents engagement with human rights violators,

WHEREAS many of the same companies that profit from the illegal infrastructure of occupation, collective punishment, and political repression in the Occupied Palestinian Territories also profit from state violence against communities of color within the United States,

WHEREAS a review of Stanford's recent SEC filings indicates past investments in corporations like Raytheon that are implicated in such violations of human rights,

WHEREAS investment in these companies shows implicit support for such violations, and the only way to achieve financial neutrality is to end our investment in such companies,

WHEREAS selective divestment, as in the context of South Africa and Sudan, does not seek to determine a political solution nor target a particular ethnic or religious community, but rather the actions of a set of multinational corporations that facilitate human rights abuses and violations of international law,

WHEREAS our peers at many university student associations, including Wesleyan University, Oberlin College, DePaul University, Evergreen State College, UC Irvine, UC Berkeley, UC Riverside, UC San Diego, and UCLA have passed resolutions calling for divestment from companies that violate international law and human rights in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories,

WHEREAS the petition asking Stanford's Board of Trustees to selectively divest from companies that violate international law and human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories has been signed by over 900 students and 16 Stanford student groups, including Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), Students for Alternatives to Militarism (SAM), the Asian American Student Association (AASA), MEChA de Stanford, Stanford Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (Stanford NAACP), Black Student Union (BSU), Student And Labor Alliance (SALA), Stanford Asian American Activism Committee (SAAAC), Muslim Students Awareness Network (MSAN), Pilipino American Student Union (PASU), Arab Students' Association at Stanford (ASAS), First Generation Low Income Partnership (FLIP), International Socialist Organization at Stanford (ISO), Stanford Students for Queer Liberation (SSQL), Stanford American Indian Organization (SAIO), and Islamic Society of Stanford University (ISSU),

WHEREAS these companies' actions affect the Stanford community directly, including students whose families live under occupation, and thus attend an institution complicit in violence against their own communities,

WHEREAS the Associated Students of Stanford University has been authorized "to exercise major privileges and responsibilities" with the express purpose of "[encouraging] responsible citizenship and the exercise of individual and corporate responsibility on the part of students,"

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Associated Students of Stanford University Undergraduate Senate:

THAT the Associated Students of Stanford University calls upon the Stanford University Trustees to divest from companies that violate international humanitarian law by:

1. Maintaining the illegal infrastructure of the Israeli occupation, in particular settlements and separation barrier, which includes companies like Veolia Transdev and Caterpillar
2. Facilitating Israel and Egypt's collective punishment of Palestinian civilians, which includes companies like Raytheon and Lockheed Martin
3. Facilitating state repression against Palestinians in the Occupied West Bank, which includes companies like Combined Tactical Systems and G4S

THAT the Associated Students of Stanford University calls upon the Stanford University Trustees to withdraw investments in securities, endowments, mutual funds, and other

monetary instruments with holdings in Veolia Transdev, Caterpillar, Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, Combined Tactical Systems, G4S, and all corporations that are similarly complicit in violating these criteria, until these companies are no longer engaged in the violation of human rights and other behavior deemed unethical by the Stanford community,

THAT if Stanford University endowment funds are found to be invested in any of the aforementioned companies, the Associated Students of Stanford University calls upon Stanford University to divest all stocks and securities of such companies, at such time and in such manner as to be determined by the Board of Trustees with the goal of maintaining the divestment until they cease these specific practices,

LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the ASSU calls upon our university to dissociate itself from systematic oppression by divesting from companies that participate in human rights violations against communities of color in the United States and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENT: BACKGROUND ON OUR CRITERIA

(I) Infrastructure of Military Occupation

Settlements

Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories house over 325,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank and over 200,000 settlers in East Jerusalem.^{1,2} This is in clear violation of Article 49 of the Geneva Convention, which states that “The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory that it occupies.”

Ongoing Israeli settlement has resulted in the demolition of over 27,000 homes³ and the displacement of at least 129,000 Palestinians⁴ since 1967. These illegal Israeli settlements fragment the territorial continuity of the West Bank, severely restrict Palestinian freedom of movement and development,⁵ and divert natural resources from Palestinian citizens of the West Bank to Israeli settlers.⁶ This effectively prevents Palestinians’ realization of their right to self-determination as recognized by United Nations Resolution 3236.⁷

Separation Barrier

An extensive network of checkpoints restricts Palestinian freedom of movement and hinders or blocks access to workplaces, education and health facilities, and other services.⁸ Palestinian rights are further violated by the construction of the separation wall in the West Bank: a project deemed illegal by the International Court of Justice⁹ and condemned as a violation of international and humanitarian law by Amnesty International,¹⁰ the International Committee of the Red Cross,¹¹ and Human Rights Watch.¹² The wall *de facto* annexes over 9.5% of the West Bank,¹³ traps over 60,000 Palestinians between the wall and the Green Line, destroys Palestinian homes and villages, and separates families and communities.¹⁴

Implicated Companies

Certain companies profit from Israel’s illegal settlement policy, such as Motorola Systems, which provides security systems for illegal Israeli settlements; Veolia Transdev, which constructs and operates the Jerusalem Light Rail, a tram system that connects illegal Israeli settlements to Jerusalem, cementing Israel’s claim on Occupied East Jerusalem; and Caterpillar, which provides bulldozers used to expand illegal Israeli settlements.

Certain companies profit from the construction and maintenance of the separation wall and checkpoints that restrict Palestinian freedom of movement and access to fundamental services, including Cement Roadstone Holdings, which provides building material for the wall and checkpoints, and Elbit Systems, which provides electronic fences and armed, unmanned vehicles to patrol the wall.

(II) Collective Punishment

Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention has declared collective punishment to be illegal under international law by stating, “No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed.”

Economic Blockade

Israel and Egypt's economic blockade of the Gaza Strip, which has created a humanitarian crisis of such a scale, that in 2012 the United Nations Relief and Works Agency said would require the acceleration of "herculean efforts" to be livable by 2020,¹⁵ has been declared an act of collective punishment by the International Committee of the Red Cross and by the United Nations.

Operation Protective Edge

During the summer of 2014, Israel's Operation Protective Edge resulted in the deaths of 2,104 Palestinians (including 1,462 civilians, 495 children, and 89 entire families), reporting civilian casualty rates from 50 to 70%.¹⁶ The Operation also resulted in the deaths of 66 Israeli soldiers and 7 Israeli civilians,¹⁷ and in \$7.8 billion of damage to the Gaza Strip, including the destruction of 22 schools and 73 mosques and the damaging of 24 medical facilities.^{18, 19}

Operation Protective Edge followed a series of assaults on the Gaza Strip, including Operation Pillar of Defense in 2012, which resulted in the deaths of 167 Palestinians, 52% of whom were civilians, and 6 Israelis, 4 of whom were civilians, and Operation Cast Lead, in 2008/2009, which resulted in the deaths of 1,391 Palestinians, 759 of whom were civilians, and 13 Israelis, 3 of whom were civilians.²⁰

Implicated Companies

Certain companies facilitate these acts of collective punishment in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Lockheed Martin, the single largest overseas arms supplier to the Israeli military, earns billions of dollars by providing it with military equipment, including AGM-114 Hellfire missiles routinely used in heavily-concentrated civilian areas. Raytheon, the world's largest producer of guided missiles, supplies Israel's air force with the cluster bombs and air-to-surface missiles that are regularly employed in attacks on Gaza's civilian population.

(III) State-sponsored Repression

The repression of Palestinians by the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and police intersects with unjust incarceration, police brutality, and militarization of security forces in the United States. Entities in both locations regularly employ excessive violence in their dealings with civilians, although international standards^{21, 22, 23} provide that security forces can only use violence as a last resort in self-defense or to protect others from "imminent threat of death or serious injury."²⁴

Palestinians are tried by Israeli military courts under a separate Law of Occupation, with nearly 800,000 Palestinians subjected to political imprisonment since 1967,²⁵ and over 470 Palestinians currently held in administrative detention without access to due process.²⁶ All but one of the prisons that detain Palestinians are within Israel,²⁷ in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which states "Protected persons accused of offences shall be detained in the occupied country, and if convicted they shall serve their sentences therein."

There are parallels between the use of incarceration as a means of social control against Palestinians and the mass and disproportionate incarceration and criminalization of

communities of color in the United States, the detention of people without charge at Guantanamo Bay, criminalization of immigrants mandated by Operation Streamline, and to the increasing militarization of the US/Mexico border. We acknowledge that politically motivated incarceration has also been used to stifle social movements of African Americans, Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and other marginalized communities since the 1960s.

State-sponsored repression is also carried out through brutality against peaceful demonstrators in Palestine, where the IDF regularly uses tear gas, rubber-coated bullets, bean-bag shotguns, and live ammunition against peaceful demonstrators in the West Bank and Gaza,²⁸ as well as in US communities of color such as Ferguson/St. Louis in the aftermath of the police shooting of Michael Brown and Oakland during the repression of Occupy Oakland.

The state-sponsored repression of Palestinians and US communities of color is connected through the collaboration of security forces, as demonstrated by the training of 9,500 United States law enforcement officials, including St. Louis Police Department police chief Joseph Mokwa, in the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs' Law Enforcement Exchange Program, as well as the training of the the Oakland Police Department and the Alameda County Sheriff's Department alongside an Israeli Border Police unit and Bahraini military unit during Urban Shield 2011, a gathering that northern California police departments credited for their "effective teamwork" in repressing Occupy Oakland.^{2x}

It is also connected through the employment of security corporations like Combined Tactical Systems and Defense Technology to supply teargas canisters and tear gas projectiles to both the IDF for use against civilians in Occupied Palestine, and to US police departments for use against demonstrators in Oakland, Ferguson/St. Louis, and Egypt. Furthermore, privatized security corporation G4S profits from inhumane systems of political imprisonment in Israel-Palestine and from over incarceration in the United States. It operates prisons, detention and interrogation centers in Israel-Palestine that hold over 5,000 political prisoners and 173 children, including 180 people in indefinite detainment, operates privatized juvenile detention facilities in the United States, and operates over 100 vehicles that bring captured undocumented immigrants to detention centers on the US/Mexico border, in addition to operating similar facilities in the UK, Australia, and South Africa that have all come under fire for human rights concerns.

Endnotes

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2. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "[The Humanitarian Impact of Israeli Settlement Policies](#)," December 2012 update.
3. The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, "[The Facts](#)," accessed January 2015.
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5. B'tselem, "[Land Grab: Israel's Policy of Settlement in the West Bank](#)," May 2002.
6. Amnesty International, "[Troubled Waters Palestinians denied fair access to water](#)," October 2009.
7. United Nations General Assembly, "[Question of Palestine](#)," November 1974.
8. Amnesty International, "[Restrictions in the West Bank](#)," 2011 Annual Report.
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13. International Court of Justice, "[Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory](#)," July 2004.
14. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "[Five Years after the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion: A Summary of the Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier](#)," July 2009.
15. United Nations Relief and Works Agency, "[Gaza in 2020: A Liveable Place?](#)" July 2012.
16. Washington Post, "[The U.N. says 7 in 10 Palestinians killed in Gaza were civilians. Israel disagrees.](#)" August 29, 2014.
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19. Middle East Monitor, "[One-third of Gaza's mosques destroyed by Israeli strikes](#)," August 29, 2014.
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21. United Nations General Assembly, "[International covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), Article 26," March 1976.
22. United Nations, General Assembly, "[Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#)," December 1984.
23. United Nations General Assembly, "[Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials](#)," December 1979.
24. United Nations, "[Basic Principles on the use of force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials](#)" September 1990.
25. Addameer "[Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israeli Prisons](#)," January 2014.
26. B'tselem, "[Israel holding more than 470 Palestinians in administrative detention – highest number in 5 years](#)," October 2014.
27. Addameer "[Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israeli Prisons](#)," January 2014.
28. Over the past 3 years the IDF has killed at least 45 civilians in the West Bank, demonstrating what a 2014 [Amnesty International report](#) describes as a "callous disregard for human life."
29. Al-Akhbar, "[From Occupation to 'Occupy': The Israelification of American Domestic Security](#)," December 2, 2011
30. WhoProfits.org (Provides comprehensive information on the activities of all corporations implicated)

List of Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine Coalition Members

1. Black Student Union (BSU)
2. First Generation, Low Income Partnership (FLIP)
3. Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA) de Stanford
4. Muslim Student Awareness Network (MSAN)
5. National Association for the Advancement for the Advancement of Colored People
(Stanford NAACP)
6. Stanford Asian American Activism Committee (SAAAC)
7. Stanford Asian American Students' Association (AASA)
8. Stanford Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP)
9. Stanford Students for Queer Liberation (SSQL)
10. Students for Alternatives to Militarism (SAM)
11. Student and Labor Alliance (SALA)
12. The Arab Student Association at Stanford (ASAS)
13. International Socialist Organization at Stanford (ISO)
14. Pilipino American Student Union (PASU)
15. Stanford American Indian Organization (SAIO)
16. Islamic Society of Stanford University (ISSU)

Letter of Endorsement: MEChA de Stanford

January 25, 2015

Dear ASSU Senators

MEChA de Stanford serves as a student group to forward the cause of justice and equal opportunities for the Chicano/Latino community on our campus as well as throughout the world. Our group has its roots in the social justice movements of the civil rights era and the Chicano movement, in which our people fought to be treated as equals with the white majority of the populace and to have the basic human rights to live freely and to pursue personal excellence without barriers.

While gains have been made over the course of decades of hard work, Chicanos and Latinos throughout the United States still face rampant discrimination and limited opportunities in this land that promises freedom, justice, and opportunity for all. Thus, our struggle to fight for the freedoms of our people continues to this day. However, there is no way that we can legitimately seek liberation for our community without paying heed to the dominant systems of oppression that silence and restrict communities across the globe.

While our people face discrimination based on the stigma of the “illegal alien” other that the American government has created, the Palestinian people are stigmatized as “terrorists” in the Western-created image of the Arab other. While our communities are intersected by the US/Mexico border wall and the hyper-militant forces that accompany the wall, Palestinian communities are isolated by the illegal separation wall in the West Bank, having the land that the United Nations regards as rightfully theirs taken from them and being stripped of critical resources such as water and food. While our families in Mexico are subject to the rule of corrupt governing bodies and deprived of their rights to speak out against this government, Palestinians throughout the West Bank are subject to Israeli martial law that denies them basic freedoms and that silences their voices as protesters attempting to reclaim the freedoms that rightfully belong to every human being. While our indigenous relatives in Latin America are facing the reality of starvation and poverty in a world in which the passage of NAFTA has meant that their livelihoods and staple crops have been stripped from them, the Palestinian people, under the Israeli occupation violating international law, experience the same feelings of near starvation and poverty as they are allocated the bare minimum amount of rations in accordance with dietary restrictions imposed by the Israeli government.

As Chicanos and Latinos with deep roots in Latin America and thousands of years of indigenous ancestry in this land, we cannot turn our heads when we see the egregious and violent act of colonization happening yet again. The object of imperialist forces may not be our people anymore, but it remains our fight to act in solidarity with all who are being subjected to the same vicious torture that is symptomatic of colonialism.

MEChA de Stanford refuses to ignore the blatant human rights violations that are being committed by the state of Israel. The deplorable struggle of the Palestinian people may be happening nearly 7,500 miles away, but the oppression that the Palestinian people face is an oppression that is all too close to home for us. We cannot allow this University to continue to invest in companies that support the human rights abuses of the Palestinian people any longer. We call upon and urge Stanford to divest its holdings in these corporations in the pursuit of justice and freedom from oppression for the Palestinian people, and for marginalized groups across the globe.

Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA) de Stanford

Letter of Endorsement: Black Student Union (BSU)

In October 2014, the Black Student Union (BSU) joined the Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine (SOOP) coalition. SOOP comprises 16 Stanford student organization and calls for Stanford University to stop investing in companies that facilitate human rights injustices in Palestine.

Since its founding in 1968, the BSU has worked to ensure that Black students can thrive at Stanford. Though our primary commitment is to inspire change within the Black community, we have historically united with other ethnic and cultural communities on a number of efforts. As Stanford students, we feel we must recognize the ways in which we are complicit in oppressing others. In Spring 1985, for instance, the BSU along with the Stanford African Students Association (SASA) and other student groups formed Students Out of South Africa (SOSA). SOSA organized a mass movement against Apartheid, and reignited a powerful culture of activism on campus. Today, we continue to embrace collaboration as we partake in SOOP's campaign.

Although the struggles that Black and Palestinian communities face are not the same, there are notable points of intersection. After Michael Brown, a black and unarmed 18 year old, was murdered by white police officer Darren Wilson, the Ferguson community mobilized and protested in a cry for justice. They were met with a militarized police response of tear gas and officers clad in riot gear, operating tanks. Several companies aided this unwarranted and violent state response, among them Combined Tactical Systems (CTS), Inc. Based in Pennsylvania, CTS produces tear gas that has been used against peaceful protestors in both Ferguson and Palestine. As we identify these unfortunate overlaps in our respective struggle for human rights, we would be remiss to acknowledge the injustices on our homefront and not in Palestine. We strive to interrogate our privilege and refuse to be complicit in transnational state-sponsored violence against black and brown people.

Our solidarity with Palestinians living in occupied territories thus emerges out of tangible connection rather than blind comparison. The power of solidarity between Palestinians and Blacks has manifested in the simplest of ways. After Ferguson protesters were tear gassed, Palestinians used Twitter to show support and reflect on lessons learned from their struggles. Palestinians used only 140 characters to engage with protesters in Ferguson and share best methods for dealing with tear gas. These Palestinians acknowledged that Black lives matter in a way that many Americans fail to realize. The systematic violence against and criminalization of our bodies is an experience that they empathize with, given their daily routines under occupation.

As the BSU engages in this campaign, we are moved by a spirit of peace rather than divisiveness. Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine's efforts are not anti-Israel or anti-Semitic. Rather, we are an alliance of student groups with the central understanding that everyone deserves human rights and the ability to live securely and with dignity. We believe that all communities should hold each other accountable to ensuring freedom for everyone. The following quote affirms our motivation: "Life is not a matter of place, things or comfort; rather, it concerns the basic human rights of family, country, justice and human dignity."^[1]

Signed,

**Stanford Black Student Union
2014-2015**

⁽¹⁾ Imelda Marcos - widow of former Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos

Letter of Endorsement: Arab Student Association at Stanford (ASAS)

To Whom It May Concern,

The Arab Students Association at Stanford (ASAS) is a proud member of the Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine (SOOP) coalition and is honored to support its call for divestment from companies complicit in human rights violations in Israel and Palestine. We are astonished that we – as Arab students – are being asked to willingly accept that our tuition dollars be invested in the collective punishment, displacement, torture, and open-air-imprisonment of our Palestinian brothers and sisters.

The call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) issued by Palestinian civil society is a non-violent means of resistance aimed at ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories and the Gaza Strip, achieving equal rights of citizenship for Arab Israelis, and providing the right of return for Palestinian refugees. These demands have all been verified in their legitimacy and legality by numerous international organizations and must be abided by to ensure that justice is reached in this conflict.

We would like to draw the reader's attention to the recent atrocities that took place in the summer of 2014, during which 2130 Palestinians were killed in Gaza alone, 500 of whom were children. Though it may seem easy to interpret these figures as mere statistics, some of our fellow students on campus read the names and see the faces of those murdered for no fault of their own, and they wonder about the safety of their loved ones back in Palestine. Yet, to this day, a Palestinian Stanford student pays tuition dollars that are invested in companies like Lockheed Martin, who end up showering fire and death upon the innocent families of Gaza and the West Bank. That same student who, when visiting home, has to go through checkpoints, knows fully well that their tuition money went into the building and maintenance of the obstruction of movement they're facing.

We call on the Stanford University Board of Trustees to fully divest its funds from all companies complicit in human rights violations in Israel and Palestine, as outlined by the campaign run by Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine. We expect our University to stand on the right side of history and to be a pioneer in the movement for justice in Palestine.

The Arab Students Association at Stanford

January 26, 2015

Letter of Endorsement: Islamic Society of Stanford University (ISSU)

To Whom it May Concern,

The Islamic Society of Stanford University (ISSU), as part of the Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine coalition, firmly supports divestment from companies that enable human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including collective punishment, unjust incarceration and the militarization of state forces. Although we reject the notion that this is a religious issue, our religion does call for a holistic commitment to justice and action against injustice, as stated in the following verse from the Quran, *“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for God, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, God is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed God is ever, with what you do, Acquainted.”*

We sincerely believe that every facet of Islam is interwoven with a deep, profound belief in justice for all societies and peoples throughout the globe. As such, we endorse divestment as an effective non-violent means of economically pressuring the state of Israel to end the occupation. We hereby call upon the Undergraduate Senate to vote yes on divestment and to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people, as well as marginalized communities of color within the United States.

Signed,

Islamic Society of Stanford University (ISSU)

January 26, 2015

Letter of Endorsement: Stanford for Alternatives to Militarism

As a member and representative of Students for Alternatives to Militarism (SAM), I (we) are proud to co-sponsor the resolution to divest Stanford's endowment from companies that support and enable the continued war crimes and human rights violations against the Palestinian people. Our organization is dedicated to nonviolent and peaceful means of conflict resolution, two criteria we believe the divestment campaign satisfies in its goal of reducing human suffering through pressuring companies complicit in these atrocities. Violence and militarism against civilian and innocent populations include the use of collective punishment and the use of disproportionate force, both of which are against the Geneva conventions and international law as established by the UN security council and both have been committed repeatedly by the Israeli military with assistance from the companies Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine (SOOP) has identified.

The use of disproportionate force in the recent war in Gaza is not new, nor is it simply an unfortunate side effect of the conflict; rather, it is deliberate and premeditated, as detailed by Col. Gabi Siboni, the head of the Military and Strategic Affairs program at the Institute for National Security Studies in Israel: "...the IDF will need to act immediately, decisively, and with force that is DISPROPORTIONATE (emphasis my own) to the enemy's actions and the threat it poses," with a goal "to inflict enough damage and punishment to require lengthy and immense reconstruction efforts." Current estimates suggest that the damage caused by Israel's violence in Gaza this summer will take somewhere between 20 and 40 years to undo, due to the economic blockade and complete control of imports to Gaza by Israel's military. The UN has repeatedly found many targets of the Israeli military to be of minimal military significance but of substantial civilian importance from fact finding missions for Operation Cast Lead including: government and police infrastructure, a flour mill, chicken farms, water and sewage installations, and the destruction of civilian homes. This is the very definition of disproportionate force and collective punishment.

Of course, this is nothing compared to the loss of life this summer, with over 2,100 Palestinians killed, 70% of whom were civilian, and nearly 500 of whom were children. In contrast, 72 Israelis were killed, of whom 66 were military personnel. This unbalance is the truth of conflict in this region, echoed in Operation Pillar of Defense (167 Palestinian deaths with 87 civilians vs. 6 Israelis with 4 civilians), and Operation Cast Lead (1,391 Palestinians with 759 civilians vs. 13 Israelis with 3 civilians). Anyone arguing that the nature of the conflict is more "complicated" needs only to look at the numbers to see this is not a war, but a massacre of an imprisoned population.

SAM believes Stanford's investment in corporations that profit from these war crimes is not only unethical, but is actively militaristic and oppressive to students who are Palestinian and to anyone who recognizes human life as precious. Our inaction actively enables the status quo in Palestine, a status quo of failed peace, the persistence of violence, and militarism as the only means of resolving conflict. We believe in answering the call for non-violent resistance as a means of creating a future in which a peaceful resolution to this conflict can be found.

Letters of Endorsement from 2013 Campaign

The three prior divestment campaigns have all been brought by the predecessors of Students for Justice in Palestine (2007, 2010, 2013). This year, SJP is just one of 16 student groups part of the Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine coalition participating in this campaign. This scale of growth represents our collective sentiment following the summer's events in Gaza that our generation must address the issue of the occupation today. We present letters of endorsement from the 2013 resolution, which, unless updated, speak for the current resolution before you.

Endorsement Letter: Desmond Tutu

Why I support the call on Stanford University to Divest from the Israeli Occupation

Letter to the Associated Students of Stanford University (ASSU)

Desmond Tutu*

3 March 2013

Nelson Mandela once said: “We can easily be enticed to read reconciliation and fairness as meaning parity between justice and injustice. Having achieved our own freedom, we can fall into the trap of washing our hands of difficulties that others face. Yet we would be less than human if we did so. It behooves all South Africans, themselves erstwhile beneficiaries of generous international support, to stand up and be counted among those contributing actively to the cause of freedom and justice.” This is exactly why I see it as my moral obligation to stand up for Palestinian rights and to support Palestinian civil society’s nonviolent efforts to gain freedom, justice and equality.

Struggles for freedom and justice are fraught with huge moral dilemmas. How can we commit ourselves to virtue – before its political triumph – when such commitment may lead to ostracism from our political allies and even our closest partners and friends? Are we willing to speak out for justice when the moral choice that we make for an oppressed community may invite phone calls from the powerful or when possible research funding will be withdrawn from us? When we say “Never again!” do we mean “Never again!”, or do we mean “Never again to us!”?

It is always inspiring when young people inspire the rest of us and lead the way in promoting international law and human rights for *all* humans. I have supported several U.S. campus campaigns to divest university money from companies that enable and profit from the injustice of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and violation of Palestinian human rights. Principled stands like this, supported by a fast growing number of U.S. civil society organizations and people of conscience, including prominent Jewish groups, are essential for a better world in the making. Based on the same principles, I support the call on Stanford University to divest from companies implicated in Israel’s brutal occupation and human rights violations.

No matter what detractors may allege, students pushing for divestment are doing the right thing. They are doing the moral thing. They are doing that which is incumbent on them as humans who believe that all people have dignity and rights, and that all those being denied their dignity and rights deserve the solidarity of their fellow human beings.

I have visited the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and I have witnessed the racially segregated roads and housing that reminded me so much of the conditions we experienced in South Africa under the racist system of Apartheid. I have witnessed the humiliation of Palestinian men, women, and children made to wait hours at Israeli military checkpoints routinely when trying to make the most basic of trips to visit relatives or attend school or college, and this humiliation is familiar to me and the many black South Africans who were corralled and regularly insulted by the security forces of the Apartheid government.

In South Africa, we could not have achieved our freedom and just peace without the help of people around the world, who through the use of non-violent means, such as boycotts and divestment, encouraged their governments and other corporate actors to reverse decades-long support for the Apartheid regime. Students played a leading role in that struggle, and I write these words of encouragement for student divestment efforts cognizant that it was students, including Stanford students, who played a pioneering role in advocating equality in South Africa and promoting corporate ethical and social responsibility to end complicity in Apartheid.

The same issue of equality is what motivates the divestment movement of today, which tries to end Israel's 45 year long occupation and the unequal treatment of the Palestinian people by the Israeli government ruling over them. The abuses they face are real, and no person should be offended by principled, morally consistent, non-violent acts to oppose them. It is no more wrong to call out Israel in particular for its abuses than it was to call out the Apartheid regime in South Africa in particular for its abuses.

To those who wrongly allege unfairness or harm done to them by this call for divestment, I suggest, with humility, that the harm suffered from being confronted with opinions that challenge one's own pales in comparison to the harm done by living a life under occupation and daily denial of basic rights and dignity.

It is not with rancor that we criticize the Israeli government and call for divesting from its human rights violations, but with hope, a hope that a better peaceful future can be made for both Israelis and Palestinians. True peace must be anchored in justice and an unwavering commitment to universal rights for all humans, regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, national origin or any other identity attribute. These students advocating divestment from Israel's occupation today are helping to pave that path to a just peace and I heartily endorse their divestment move, encourage them to stand firm on the side of what is right, and urge others to follow their lead.

Endorsement Letter: Alice Walker

Dear Students of Stanford University,

Last week someone I met for the first time in 2011, at the Russell Tribunal on Palestine, in Cape Town, South Africa, died. His name was Stéphane Hessel and he was 95 years old. He was born during the Russian Revolution, escaped from Germany into France at the age of seven, was captured by the Nazis a number of times and placed in concentration camps, from which he miraculously (through much difficulty and subterfuge) escaped. He did many astonishing things in his life: for instance, he was a creator and signer of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A Founder of The Russell Tribunal on Palestine. He also wrote a book called: Time For Outrage, in which he reminded the world that there are abuses against human dignity and liberty that must be resisted at all costs and under all circumstances. Like William Faulkner, he believed humanity must not only refuse to accept the pain and suffering inflicted on itself as it's earthly due, but that we must not bear humiliation, degradation, brutality, torture and genocide anywhere we discover them- if we are to remain human beings.

I am always encouraged when I see the arc of a human life that remains true to itself, as Stéphane Hessel's long life illustrated so powerfully. Imagine: at 94 years of age, just last October, 2012, he was again at the Russell Tribunal on Palestine in NYC, calling the world to witness what disasters against the Palestinian people are minute by minute being perpetuated by the Israeli government. He would applaud what you are doing, just as I do.

It is reassuring to know that our belief in, and work for, Justice for the Palestinian people stems from our innate sense of our own integrity and worth; that we are paying forward, in a way, and honoring, our own inheritance of freedom from destructiveness and devastation.

I have traveled in Gaza and the West Bank. It is worse than most Americans can even imagine, without going there to see for themselves. Their fear of knowing what is happening, and fear of learning about it, is deeply saddening. For how can they, in our schools especially, expect

students to believe anything that's taught, if the biggest elephant in the classroom, the issue of Palestine, is off-limits for deep inspection?

As you know so well, activists of the world have tried everything we can think of to stop the slaughter of Palestinian people, the hideous murder of the children, the stealing of the land, the water, and the joy that should be every human's birth right. We are non-violent because that is the world we believe in; the one we wish to see rise from contested ground. Palestine, and the Israeli aggression against it, presents the hardest test of our resolve to move forward the human agenda of peace and prosperity for all on our planet. BDS – boycotts, divestment, sanctions – is what we have in our arsenal. Or, I might say, in our medicine bundle. Because to oppose tyranny in this non-violent way is to lead humanity forward into a more peaceful world.

Be strong. Stéphane Hessel, Desmond Tutu, Cynthia McKinney, Angela Davis, Dennis Banks, and so many other amazing people are walking beside you. Universities are sometimes challenging places to affect change, but all this means is: never give up.

In Peace,

Alice Walker

4 March 2013

Endorsement Letter: Mairead Maguire

Stanford should divest from Israeli Occupation as it did from Apartheid South Africa

Members of a South African ecumenical delegation that recently visited the occupied Palestinian territory said they were “traumatized” by what they saw. They “did not expect the extent to which Israel violates international law to oppress the Palestinian people,” they said, adding that “it felt like walking into another apartheid ambush ... the multiple Israeli house demolitions, the discriminatory Israeli legal system, the daily intimidation of Palestinians by the Israeli Defense Forces, the Israeli Apartheid Wall and its associated regime of restrictions on movement and access for Palestinians, the imprisonment of a large percentage of Palestinians (including children), the ongoing confiscation of Palestinian water and land, the closure of previously bustling Palestinian streets and businesses.”

Testimonies like this by human rights organizations and people of conscience are increasingly being heard across the world, changing hearts and minds and convincing lovers of peace and justice to support pressure campaigns against Israel’s occupation and other violations of human rights, and against all corporations that maintain that oppressive system to attain a real, sustainable peace for all the people in this troubled region, without discrimination.

The Palestinians are asking the world to disengage from Israel’s occupation, a strategy that helped us to end apartheid in South Africa. I, and many people like me, believe that maximum pressure must be put on Israel to abide by international law. This should be done on the basis of “equality and sharing, not on superiority, negation of the other or aggression, using the pretext of fear and security” as stated in the Palestinian Kairos document, A Moment of Truth.

I salute Stanford University students who are striving to end their own university's complicity in Israel's human rights violations through divesting from companies that are deeply involved in those violations. I stand with you and believe we shall overcome all injustice and all inequality, as we have done before.

2nd March, 2013

Endorsement Letter: Roger Waters

To the Associated Students of Stanford University (ASSU),

1 March 2013

Dear Members of the ASSU,

I have read with great interest, and some quickening of the heart, the eloquent and very thorough document that deals with divestment from companies that profit from The Occupation of Palestinian lands, submitted to the ASSU for consideration next Tuesday.

'We The People', if I may adopt that conceit, thank the authors for their forthright and considered plea to you, to vote to encourage the Board of Trustees of Stanford University, to stand by the promises enshrined in The Constitution of The United States of America, and repeated at the founding of this University, that 'all men have inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'. These are the rights being denied, at this moment, to the Palestinian people.

I will not presume to add comment to the document, it stands well enough alone. However, I will say this. People often ask me, "Where are the young today"?

Back in '68 they were trampled by police horses in Grosvenor Square, clubbed outside the Democratic Convention in Chicago, shot down at Kent State, in Paris they tore up the cobbles from the streets. Where are they now?

Today, they are here, in Stanford University. They are the thin end of a wedge of freedom that grows day by day, and we are very proud of them. The class of '68 salutes you.

With great respect,

Roger Waters

P.S. Anyone not conversant with the facts of the matter could visit: [Roger Waters speech at UN 29th of November 2012.](#)



Endorsement Letter: Ilan Pappé*

University of Stanford should make the Moral Decision to Divest from Israel's Occupation

3 March 2013

While occupation, dispossession and oppression continue in Palestine, decent and conscientious persons around the world are doing their best to bring an end to the suffering of the people who live there.

The international indifference, the disarray in the Arab world, and the huge imbalance of power between the oppressed and the oppressor leave people in the outside with very few ways for showing their solidarity and support. The most moral and effective way for helping the victims of the inhuman policies on the ground is through campaigns of morally-consistent pressure on Israel, as in the divestment initiative being debated at Stanford.

More and more communities around the world have realised it and have joined in these nonviolent and successful campaigns to advance peace and reconciliation on the ground. Today the students, staff and trustees of the University of Stanford are asked to make this moral decision: do you want to be counted with those who could look back in time and be proud and relieved in the stance they have taken, or be sorry for being passive, apathetic or hesitant?

I salute the brave and committed students of Stanford for making the right choice that will help us all, Palestinians and Israelis, to move towards a better and peaceful future based on justice and international law.

Letter of Endorsement: Joel Beinin

March 1, 2013

Dear ASSU Undergraduate Senators,

The bill proposed by Joshua Schott, Samar Alqatari, Itai Farhi, and Michelle Dallalah proposes carefully targeted and judicious action to eliminate Stanford's support, through its investment portfolio, of manifest violations of human rights by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories. These human rights violations are well-documented and have been denounced by the UN Security Council, the International Court of Justice, and many international, Palestinian, and Israeli human rights organizations. This bill does not attack on the state of Israel. It is aimed at its specific policies in carrying out the occupation of the Palestinian territories since 1967. Nothing in it suggests that the existence of the State of Israel is illegitimate. It does say that the Israeli state is violating international law. This is not a radical or new claim for those who have followed this issue over the years. It is certainly not an attack on all Jews. Many individual American Jews and Jewish organizations like Jewish Voice for Peace support this kind of selective divestment from firms complicit in Israel's violations of human rights. I support the bill and urge others to lend their support as well.

Joel Beinin

Donald J. McLachlan Professor of History

Professor of Middle East History

Department of History

Stanford University

Letter of Endorsement: Clayborne Carson

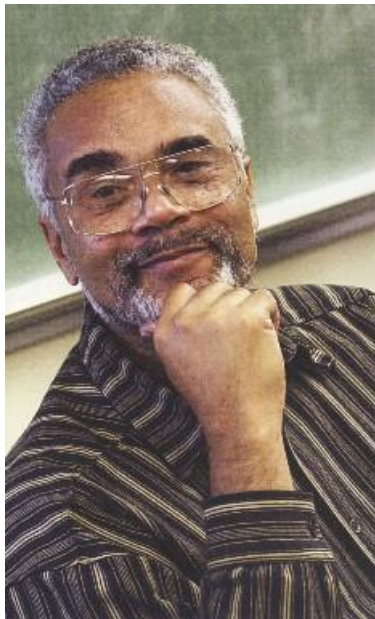
Dear SPER,

I support your effort to encourage Stanford University to divest from all companies that lend support to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and to continued expansion of settlements in that area. Moreover, I urge Stanford students to make clear their strong support for the ongoing nonviolent movement to secure equal human rights for Palestinians living in the West Bank.

You should feel free to use my name on behalf of this important cause.

Best regards,

Clay



*Selected in 1985 by the late Mrs. Coretta Scott King to edit and publish the papers of her late husband, Stanford University historian **Clayborne Carson** has devoted most his professional life to studying Martin Luther King, Jr., and the movements King inspired. Under his direction, the King Papers Project has produced six volumes of a definitive, comprehensive edition of King's speeches, sermons, correspondence, publications, and unpublished writings. This project is now a component of the **Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute** that Carson founded at Stanford University in 2005.*

Letter of Endorsement: Sydney Levy, Jewish Voice for Peace

March 4, 2013

To the attention of the Stanford University ASSU Undergraduate Senate,

We are writing to you from Jewish Voice to Peace to urge you to pass the Undergraduate Senate Resolution calling on the Stanford University Board of Trustees to divest from companies profiting from the Israeli occupation and related human rights violations against Palestinians.

We believe that the resolution in front of you follows our core Jewish ethical values, shared with all cultures that make part of the human family. The Torah instructs us “Love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb, one of the first ten women rabbis in this country and a member of JVP’s Rabbinical Council, explains further,

Home demolition to steal land is unethical. What would you do to stop your house from being demolished? If you’re among tens of thousands of Palestinians, you can put your body in front of the Caterpillar bulldozer. You and your children will be beaten, arrested and then Israel will force you to pay for destruction of your own home. The Talmud teaches, “You shall not derive profit nor benefit from products used to promote violence. You shall not buy them, nor sell them.”

Liza Behrendt, a member of Young, Jewish, and Proud—the youth wing of JVP—adds,

I recently joined Christians, Muslims, and fellow Jews in Jerusalem to rebuild a Palestinian family’s home destroyed by Caterpillar bulldozers. As we labored side by side, learning the Arabic words for “brick” and “mortar”, we knew the military could demolish our hard work at any moment. As an act of population control, Israel systematically targets Palestinian schools, hospitals, churches, businesses, and playgrounds, including billions worth of infrastructure built through European investments. Palestinians are asking us for divestment. Join Jews like me in our movement for freedom and justice. Thank you.

These are just two of the many Jewish voices asking you to follow your conscience and vote for divestment. While both quotes address one company—Caterpillar—the same logic applies to other companies profiting from human rights violations committed against Palestinians.

We call on you to support divestment as a nonviolent response to the daily violence of the Israeli occupation.

You may be hearing from others suggesting that divestment may be divisive or may hurt the feelings of some students on campus.

We believe that many matters of social justice start by being divisive, but eventually end up unifying people around common principles of freedom, justice, and equality. Slavery in this country was divisive; it nearly tore our country apart. The right of women to vote was divisive too; it took decades of controversy to pass the XIX amendment to the US Constitution. In fact the last vote before the amendment was ratified was in Tennessee passed with a single vote margin. These and other issues that seemed controversial in their time seem morally and ethically clear to us today.

Your task is by far less daunting, but no less important. We call on you to join us and be on the right side of history.

Thanks.

Sydney Levy

Advocacy Director

Jewish Voice for Peace

Jewish Voice for Peace is a national grassroots peace organization, inspired by Jewish tradition to promoting a U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East based on equality, human rights and respect for international law. JVP has offices in NY and CA, over 125,000 supporters, 35 chapters, a Rabbi's Council, a youth wing, and an Advisory Board that includes Judith Butler, Tony Kushner, Ed Asner, Naomi Klein, Noam Chomsky, Eve Ensler and others.

Letter of Endorsement: US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation

March 5, 2013

Dear ASSU Undergraduate Senators,

As a coalition of more than 400 organizations around the United States advocating for an end to U.S. political and institutional support for the Israeli occupation, we wholeheartedly endorse the proposed Stanford University Undergraduate Senate Resolution: “Ensuring Investment Responsibility and Protecting Human Rights in Israel/Palestine.” Passage of this resolution would honor and continue Stanford’s proud history of divestment from companies that profit from violent, oppressive, and discriminatory practices.

Every day, Palestinians suffer ongoing displacement, discrimination, and exile as a consequence of Israel’s abusive policies, which are abetted by companies including those listed in this resolution. Struggling for their most basic rights to freedom, justice and equality, Palestinians are asking people of conscience to stop profiting from Palestinian suffering. We join them in this principled call. After all, we cannot talk about peace while simultaneously investing in violence.

Groups around the country are cheering you on, Senators. Campuses have been at the forefront of social justice struggles throughout recent history, even when doing so was unpopular. We cannot celebrate this legacy and simultaneously shy away from taking a stand on issues of today. It’s time to stand on the right side of history again by voting for this important resolution today, urging the Board of Trustees to review Stanford’s endowment and divest from companies unwilling to end their involvement in the brutal and ongoing violation of Palestinians’ basic rights.

With great anticipation,

US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation

www.endtheoccupation.org

A national coalition of more than 400 groups—including 64 in California—the **US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation** works to end U.S. support for Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. They support a U.S. policy that upholds freedom, justice and equality.

Letter of Endorsement: Boycott! Supporting the Palestinian BDS Call from Within

As a group of Israeli citizens, we call on Stanford University to stand with human rights, and divest from companies making direct profit from the Israeli occupation, and ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people.

At Stanford, you face a major choice today. You can choose to take a clear stand against apartheid buses and apartheid roads, different laws for different people, separation and segregation, or you can stand for it. You can choose to support a country in which the abduction of children from their bed at the late hours of the night is a routine, or you can choose to oppose it. You can choose whether to stand with the oppressor, or to side with the oppressed. Whose side are you on Stanford? Tonight you choose.

We hope with all our hearts that you would choose to say no to apartheid, no to 64 years of land grab and oppression, no to military occupation. We hope that you would support freedom, justice and equality for all. We hope you will say yes to divestment.

Sincerely

Boycott! Supporting the Palestinian BDS Call from Within (Boycott from Within)

From the [Boycott from Within website](#): “We, Palestinians, Jews, citizens of Israel, join the Palestinian call for a BDS campaign against Israel, inspired by the struggle of South Africans against apartheid. We also call on others to do the same.

We are devoted to the promotion of just peace and true democracy in this region. We are particularly opposed to Western governments’ decision to boycott the Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, most especially in besieged Gaza. This is particularly outrageous given the same Western governments’ prolonged support of Israel’s apartheid and other daily violations of international law.”

Letter of Endorsement: The International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network

To the ASSU Undergraduate Senate:

The Stanford bill in support of selective divestment is a powerful example of the critical role that students play in efforts to build a more humane world.

The International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network strongly supports the efforts of Stanford's student body to hold companies accountable for their complicity in violence committed against the Palestinian people. Israel's ongoing occupation not only violates international law, but is immoral. We join the call for the Stanford Student Senate to pass the divestment resolution.

As Jews, we have learned from a history of oppression that safety and liberation only comes from working together for the collective liberation of all people. Standing against the violation of the rights and freedom of the Palestinian people is not an act against Jews; on the contrary, it is an act that supports the freedom and well-being of all of us. To imagine that all Jews are united with Israel, even as Israel blatantly and flagrantly continues to violate decency and human rights, flies in the face of Jewish histories of resisting oppression and disregards the growing movement of Jewish people who stand for justice for Palestine

We cannot fail to act because some people will be upset. The injustice of the status quo forces each of us to make a decision about where we stand and about which side of history we will be on. Efforts to end segregation in the U.S. South and efforts to put an end to the Vietnam War were seen as divisive, but there is no question about their necessity. Remaining complicit in the face of injustice does not create unity, it fails humanity.

Some portray the histories of Israel and Palestine as so complicated, that moral clarity is impossible to discern.

This is simply an attempt to obscure the bottom line: collective punishment, discrimination, illegally annexing and settling land, and building the separation wall violate international law, and are clearly immoral. There is no justification possible for such injustice and violence.

Stanford has an opportunity to lead with moral courage, and we hope that the Student Senate will take this opportunity.

Signed,

The International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network

March 5, 2013

IJAN is an international network of Jews who are uncompromisingly committed to struggles for human emancipation, of which the liberation of the Palestinian people and land is an indispensable part.

Endorsement Letter: Coalition for a Free Palestine

5 March 2013

The CfP South Africa supports the divestment bill at Stanford University

The Coalition for a Free Palestine (CfP) supports the Students for Palestinian Equal Rights bill for selective divestment by Stanford University. The bill which will be voted on by the undergraduate senate represents an important step in the global campaign for justice and equality for the Palestinian people.

Stanford University has an illustrious history of mobilising against apartheid. In 1977, after sit-ins and actions by students, the university adopted a South Africa- related ethical investment policy. In 1985, Stanford adopted a selected divestment policy towards apartheid South Africa. International solidarity was one of the pillars of the South African struggle and it is through the principled decision by this university and hundreds like it, that South Africa is free today.

The recent decision to create separate bus lines for Palestinians is a microcosm of the larger injustices Palestinians face on a daily basis. Unequal access to land, water, education and a discriminatory legal system are horrifyingly reminiscent of the apartheid regime in South Africa.

The African National Congress (ANC) which called for a global boycott of apartheid South Africa has called for the South African people to support campaigns which “seek to put pressure on Israel to engage with the Palestinian people to reach a just solution”. We have confidence that Stanford University will remain principled in its stance to oppose apartheid and injustice, one again, by adopting this bill.

****The Coalition for a Free Palestine** is the largest South African Palestine solidarity umbrella body, which includes youth groups, trade unions, human rights organizations, faith based groups, artists collectives, student organizations and political parties. Some member organizations include the South African Council of Churches, Congress of South African Trade Unions, African National Congress, South African Communist Party, Muslim Judicial Council, Muslim Students Association, Palestine Solidarity Alliance, Palestine Solidarity Committee, Palestine Solidarity Group, Media Review Network, Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions in SA , StopTheJNF South Africa, Open Shuhadah Street and the student society.*

END

For further details contact Tahir Sema on 082 9403 403 or tsema@cfpsa.co.za or Tehillah Niselow on 072 252 6054 or tniselow@cfpsa.co.za



Endorsement Letter: Palestine Solidarity Campaign – South Africa

05 March 2013

TO THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Stanford University

Stanford, California

Dear ASSU Senators,

The call by some members of Stanford's community is both encouraging and in keeping with a proud history of ethical intervention by the university against institutions and states where human rights are violated. As South Africans, we will not forget Stanford's divestment from companies doing business with Apartheid South Africa. We hope Stanford will once again be on the right side of history.

In recent times our university, the University of Johannesburg (UJ), was called upon to make a similar decision. Briefly, it related to re-instating an apartheid-era agreement on water research established between the predecessor of UJ, the Rand Afrikaans University and institutions in Israel implicated in discriminating against Palestinians. This attempt in August 2009 took place shortly after Amnesty International and others produced damning indictments of the acquisition of water and its discriminatory distribution to Palestinians in the Occupied Territories (see reports 'Thirsting for Social Justice' and 'Troubled Waters: Palestinians Denied Fair Access to Water'). The democratic, respectful and spirited debate which spanned over a year and involved almost all leading South African academic, cultural and faith-based leaders marked for all a turning point in the democratic evolution of our institution (see www.ujpetition.com).

It is unconscionable that Stanford has investments in companies that violate international human rights and humanitarian law as well as the opinion of the International Court of Justice on the 'Separation Barrier' referred to here in South Africa as the 'Apartheid Wall'. We have no doubt at all that the companies named (by those sponsoring the motion to divest) are implicated in facilitating acts of collective punishment, building and maintaining the 'Apartheid Wall', engaging in practices that institutionally discriminate against particular groups, and operating within segregated, Israeli-only settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We can add to this list numerous other violations of human rights. By any social justice measure,

these practices amount to “substantial social injury” and thus an infringement of the ‘SIRCES’ document on investment responsibility.

As citizens of a country with a history of brute racism on the one hand and both academic acquiescence and resistance to it on the other, we believe that it should not be ‘business as usual’ with those who cause social injury. A prominent feature in the UJ/water research imbroglio centred on the issue of academic freedom. Academic freedom in the case of violent occupation, apartheid, genocide and gross human rights abuse must surely bear some reference to these very conditions for the criteria of its determination. Failure to recognise this will mean that the very concept of freedom more generally, and academic freedom in particular, becomes both meaningless and bereft of any practical possibilities. We also echo both the brilliant American intellectual Howard Zinn and our own living icon, Archbishop Tutu, when they insist, “You cannot be neutral on a moving train”.

We urge Stanford University’s ASSU Undergraduate Senate to ponder over the words of Edward Said below and support the Bill sponsored by the SPER. If you do so on Tuesday the 5th of March, 2013 you will become part of a growing tide of humanity that is doing what a previous generation of students did against racist rule in South Africa.

Yours in solidarity.

Palestine Solidarity Campaign-South Africa.

Salim Vally (Phd)

Director, Centre for Education Rights and Transformation, University of Johannesburg, Adjunct Professor, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

“Nothing in my mind is more reprehensible than those habits of mind in the intellectual that induce avoidance, that characteristic turning away from a difficult and principled position which you know to be the right one, but which you decide not to take. You do not want to appear too political; you are afraid of seeming controversial; you need the approval of a boss or an authority figure; you want to keep a reputation for being balanced, objective, moderate; your hope is to be asked back, to consult, to be on a board or prestigious committee, and so to remain within the responsible mainstream; someday you hope to get an honorary degree, a big prize, perhaps even an ambassadorship. For an intellectual these habits of mind are corrupting par excellence. If anything can denature, neutralize, and finally kill a passionate

intellectual life it is the internalization of such habits. Personally I have encountered them in one of the toughest of all contemporary issues, Palestine, where fear of speaking out about one of the greatest injustices in modern history has hobbled, blinkered, muzzled many who know the truth and are in a position to serve it. For despite the abuse and vilification that any outspoken supporter of Palestinian rights and self-determination earns for him or herself, the truth deserves to be spoken, represented by an unafraid and compassionate intellectual”

Edward Said-Representations of the Intellectual, The 1993 Reith Lectures.



Endorsement Letter: University of Cape Town Palestine Solidarity Forum

Dear Senators,

I'm writing to you on behalf of the University of Cape Town's Palestine Solidarity Forum about the Divestment Bill that lies before you, a Bill which targets companies complicit with and benefiting from Israel's illegal and inhumane Occupation of the West Bank.

As the rights abuses of the Occupation and construction of illegal Jewish-only Settlements continue to be built, the viability of a Palestinian State for the millions that live there looks increasingly doubtful. With no right to protest, no right to a fair trial and subjection to constant oppression from armed military forces, it is up to the rest of the World, to as you all did for us in South Africa, stand together in solidarity with the Palestinian people and denounce this Occupation of Apartheid principles and policies.

Only through non-violent actions such as selective disinvestment of human-rights abusers, can we effect real change in the region and help the Palestinians gain full human and political rights.

Such companies as this bill targets must not be allowed to profit off the abuses of others and thus I implore you to pass it.

Such a Statement from Stanford University would be huge in the fight to end the Occupation and bring real peace to the region.

Sincerely yours,

Bruce Baigrie

UCT Palestine Solidarity Forum Chairperson

3 March 2013

Endorsement Letter: Sherry Wolf

Stanford University administrators and faculty should be proud that among your student body is a group of social justice-minded students who are committed to taking a stand against apartheid by calling for divestment in Israel, despite our government's continued funding of Israel's violations of international law and human rights.

Just this week, Israel announced that inside the illegally occupied West Bank they will begin to run segregated bus lines for Palestinians. Such depraved indifference to equality is even more extreme than anything the American South practiced under Jim Crow, as Pulitzer Prize-winning author Alice Walker has said about the myriad segregation laws Israel imposes on the 20 percent of its population who are Arabs and millions more living under military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

As a Jew who stands full-square with the Palestinians in their quest for human rights, I truly hope Stanford does not cave to the chorus that claims to speak for me and millions of other Jews around the world when they defend Israel's indefensible violations of international law. After all, there is nothing inherently Jewish about racism and colonial occupation. Quite the contrary, I hope.

Any cursory look at even the mainstream US media shows that the global movement for Palestinian human rights is on the rise. As a university that stands in the vanguard of research, Stanford should be proud to be in the forefront of institutions adhering to international law and human rights. Don't look back years from now and think that your institution missed the boat on standing up for human rights when the opportunity presented itself. Hold on to your dignity and claims to the social good and divest from apartheid Israel now.

Yours truly,

Sherry Wolf, author, *Sexuality and Socialism*; associate editor, *International Socialist Review*

March 4, 2013

Endorsement Letter: Miko Peled

Statement of Support for Divestment:

I want to begin by commending students at Stanford as well as other Universities and colleges around the country for raising the level of discussion on the issue of Palestine and bringing this resolution to a vote.

It is time to recognize that since the establishment of the state of Israel Palestinians have been denationalized, marginalized and prevented from exercising their rights as a people to live peacefully on their land and to have a state of their own. This even though for decades Palestinians have demonstrated their willingness to recognize Israel and to live beside it in peace.

Israel has systematically and intentionally caused the displacement of Palestinians and to this day prevents them from returning to their homes. Israel holds thousands of Palestinians as political prisoners in its jails in violation of international law.

Israel uses its army and other arms of its security apparatus to terrorize Palestinian civilians within Israel, those who reside in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as well as Palestinians living in refugee camps around the Middle East.

Israeli bureaucracy imposes restrictions and demands upon Palestinians that are far beyond unreasonable and are designed to make life unbearable for Palestinians.

Finally Israel has committed unspeakable crimes by killing scores of innocent people during its assaults on refugee camps in Lebanon, the Gaza Strip and countless cities and communities in the West Bank.

Israeli security forces regularly terrorize Palestinian protests and peaceful marches and harasses their leaders and their families.

There must be consequences for regimes and states that choose policies of violence and discrimination. The divestment resolution is the right thing to do and those who vote for it will always remember that they stood for justice and for what is right.

I encourage you to pass this resolution and to align yourself with the great men like Desmond Tutu, and women like Mairead Maguire who support it.

Most sincerely yours,

Miko Peled

March 4, 2013

Endorsement Letter: Jacqueline Rose

To the Students for Palestinian Human Rights and other student groups of Stanford University calling for divestment by the University Board of Trustees from companies involved in the violation of human rights and international law in Israel and the Occupied Territories.

I wish to express my unqualified support for this initiative which is based on a fundamental respect for human rights according to international law, and is the expression of an impulse towards universal norms of justice, human dignity and non-violence which it must surely be the aim of every University to support and promote. Unlike the campaign for cultural and academic boycott of Israel, which is the subject of on-going discussion and debate, the call for divestment is far more straightforward. The motion aims to end a set of investments in companies which are demonstrably engaged in profiting from policies that involve human rights violations, unlawful discrimination, and which contribute to the perpetuation of injustice against the Palestinian people (house demolitions, the separation barrier/wall ruled illegal by the International Criminal Court, the building of settlements, the creation of roads and infrastructure designed exclusively for one section of the population). Such investments are profoundly at odds with the principles of ethical oversight which the University declares to be paramount in relation to its endowment, and can only damage the University's national and international status.

Last month the Annual Members Meeting of the Students Union of Queen Mary University of London overwhelmingly passed a motion calling for the University to divest from G4S, a British/Danish private security company and Veolia (the latter named in the Stanford resolution) due to their contribution to, and profit-making from, blatant violations of human rights, as documented in relation to Israeli prisons and the construction of transport links to the settlements. This follows the successful campaign by QM students in 2009/2010, following Israel's offensive in Gaza ('Operation Cast Lead'), to persuade the Finance and Investment Committee of the College to exclude direct investment in tobacco and armaments companies 'where these exceeded 25% of group activity.' That students were able successfully to mount such a campaign is surely a model for productive relations between student bodies and University governance.

It seems to me that in putting forward this motion to the Board of Trustees, the students are calling on the University not just to rectify an anomalous policy, but are also demonstrating a commitment to the fullest participation in civic and public life which should be one of the mainstays, central principles and aims of higher education. Above all, it needs to be recognised that such a call – far from involving hostility to Israel

as a nation or a de-legitimisation of Israel (as their motion makes explicit) – is part of a wide, and rapidly growing movement, that sees such non-violent initiatives, and the discussions they engender, as having a key role to play in demonstrating to Israel the damage that its government's current policies, and the continuation of the Occupation, is doing not only to the Palestinian people but to Israel itself.

I myself am a founder member of the UK network, **Independent Jewish Voices**, which aims to foster a space for constructive dissent in relation to Israeli policies, based on principles of justice, freedom and rights which we see as central to Jewish history. Above all we feel that for Jews to remain silent in the face of injustices perpetrated by Israel towards another people is to be blind to the lessons of our own past. I therefore believe that the discussions generated by, and further called for, by this motion, the demand on the University to adhere to ethical principles at the core of Jewish life and values, can contribute in the longer term to a fostering of dialogue between Jews and non-Jews, and to the creation of a fully educational atmosphere, in Universities and beyond, dedicated to an understanding of ethics and justice in the modern world.

Jacqueline Rose

Professor of English, Queen Mary University of London

Fellow of British Academy

March 2013

Dear Associated Students of Stanford University,

We, Palestinian University Student Councils, youth organizations and youth movements, are counting on your support for our struggle for liberty, justice, and human dignity. From launching the divestment campaign against apartheid South Africa 36 years ago that helped spark a global movement for freedom, to developing low-cost baby warmers that save lives, Stanford students have always been at the forefront of innovative and value-based actions that have pushed the human race forward. This comes as no surprise from the students of a University that was founded to “promote public welfare by exercising an influence on behalf of humanity and civilization.”

Members of the ASSU, we urge you to rise to that responsibility by taking a courageous stand in support of the Palestinian people’s human rights, whether under occupation, in exile, or under a cruel siege in Gaza, and all suffering from Israel’s special system of segregation that the famous African-American author Alice Walker likened to the segregation in the southern states of the U.S. 50 years ago.

As university students and democratically elected student councils in Palestine, we share values and aspirations that are similar to yours. Some of us want to conduct scientific research that will help cure diseases that are a blight on mankind; others want to pursue political positions to help improve social institutions; and even others want to become teachers and professors in order to help the minds of the future bloom and reach their potential.

Unlike you, however, we live under an oppressive system of colonial control that has for decades denied us our human rights, including academic freedom, limited our potential, and sought to extinguish our dreams.

We are separated into Bantustans in the West Bank and Gaza, denied our legal rights of freedom of movement merely for being born Palestinian, the undesired ‘ethnic group’ for Israel’s expansionist plans for the region. We have endured a daily life of occupation, the construction of racist walls and colonies, tank shellings, checkpoints, curfews, land theft, home demolitions, fatalities, and injuries. Israel continues to arrest university students and professors, and cuts students off from their universities. One of our universities, Al-Quds University in Abu Dis, is partially surrounded by the Apartheid Wall that separates it from many of its students from occupied Jerusalem. It is like having a 20-foot annexation wall that separates the Stanford campus from El Camino Real.

These are crucial times as we the youth in Palestine are seeing glimpses of the kinds of mass international solidarity movement that we are certain will one day bring us to the freedom, justice and equality taken for granted by others but denied to us for so long. Many of us are risking our lives at popular marches throughout Palestine to achieve these goals, but we know that our sacrifices will go in vain if not joined by students from around the world who declare, “we shall no longer be complicit” in Israel’s military occupation and human rights abuses that have lead to so much tragedy and broken dreams for youth and students.

Supporting the divestment bill before you on Tuesday is no radical act, it is simply heeding a moral compass put forward by David Henry Thoreau, an American Icon and philosopher, who said “What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong, which I condemn.” As an age old creed adopted by Stanford Alumni Larry Page and Sergey Brin for Google says: “Do no evil.” Associated Students: Do not allow yourselves and your university to lend itself and its money to the pillage of land, the deprivation of dignity, and the destruction of life in Palestine. Stanford is better than that.

This year it is in your hands at Stanford to see that the tide finally turns across campuses in the United States to ensure that companies are held accountable for continuing to support the violation of Palestinian human rights. President Hennessy of Stanford highlighted during the 2012 commencement that:

“A Stanford education brings a responsibility to make good use of your knowledge, to work to make the world better and to help ensure that succeeding generations have the same kinds of opportunities you have here at Stanford.”

Members of the ASSU, we hope you put the words above into action to make the world better by voting ‘Yes’ on the Bill to divest from companies that profit from human rights abuses. Any other vote will be tantamount to shrinking from the responsibility bestowed upon you, not only as Stanford students, but also as citizens of an increasingly globalized world. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said: “He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.”

Our hope has been rekindled by divestment efforts at universities around the world. Such campaigns are what is required, the cutting edge of the international struggle for liberty, equality and human rights. And while the walls around us stop us from meeting in person, we and the students we represent will be there at heart. We give you all our solidarity and send you our dearest wishes to do us proud this year.

Signatures:

An-Najah National University Student Council
Birzeit University Student Council
Al-Quds University Student Council
Arab American University Student Council
Hebron University Student Council
Palestine Polytechnic University Student Council
Bethlehem University Student Council
Al-Rawda College Student Council
Al-Aroub College Student Council
Modern University College Student Council
Al-Umma College Student Council
Palestine Technical College Al-Aroub Student Council
Al-Quds Open University Student Councils in the following branches:

Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Jericho, Ramallah, Nablus, Salfeet, Toubas, Qalqilia, Jenin, Toulkarem, Bedia, Doura, Yata, Beit Sahour, Al-Ezariyyah (Bethany)

Palestinian Student Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israel in Gaza (PSCABI)
Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network- Youth Sector-Gaza- (21 Organizations)
Youth Against the Settlements
Palestinians For Dignity
Palestinian Freedom Riders
Palestinian Students Liberation Front
Students Struggle Block
Palestinian Youth Struggle Union
Palestinian Democratic Youth Union
Right to Education Campaign
Fateh Youth Movement – Palestine

- An-Najah National University
- Birzeit University
- Al-Quds University
- Arab American University
- Hebron University
- Palestine Polytechnic University
- Bethlehem University
- Al-Rawda College
- Al-Aroub College
- Modern University College
- Alumma College
- Palestine Technical College Al-Aroub

Student Youth Movement in Al-Quds Open University in the following branches:

- Jerusalem
- Bethlehem
- Hebron
- Jericho
- Ramallah
- Nablus
- Salfet
- Toubas
- Qalqilia
- Jenin
- Toulkarem
- Bedia
- Doura
- Yata
- Beit Sahour
- Al-Ezariyyah (Bethany)

Endorsement Letter: Alan Wieder

March 4, 2013

To the Board of Trustees – Stanford University

My name is Alan Wieder and I am a Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina. I have also served on the faculties of the University of the Western Cape and Stellenbosch University in South Africa. The South African positions, as well as my continuing research on people that led and fought in the war against apartheid, is relevant because I am writing to support the call for divestment by the Students for Palestinian Equal Rights and their allies at Stanford University.

While many Americans and Israelis who seek to silence those who are critical of Israel's occupation of Palestine and oppression of Palestinian people hate the comparison with South African apartheid, the parallels are relevant – especially when the discussion is about divestment. There were various reasons that apartheid ended in South Africa – divestment was one of the elements. One of most outspoken proponents of divestment in the case of Israel is South African Archbishop, Desmond Tutu:

I have been to Palestine where I've witnessed the racially segregated housing and the humiliation of Palestinians at military roadblocks. I can't help but remember the conditions we experienced in South Africa under apartheid. We could not have achieved our freedom without the help of people around the world using the nonviolent means of boycotts and divestment to compel governments and institutions to withdraw their support for the apartheid regime.

One of the reasons that Bishop Tutu emphasized divestment is his clarity on the importance of non-violence. While the Palestinian struggle has often been portrayed as violent, non-violence is more the spirit of BDS. **Judith Butler** spoke to the issue in a speech at Brooklyn College.

The Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement is, in fact, a non-violent movement; it seeks to use established legal means to achieve its goals; and it is, interestingly enough, the largest Palestinian civic movement at this time. That means that the largest Palestinian civic movement is a non-violent one that justifies its actions through recourse to international law. Further, I want to underscore that this is also a movement whose stated core principles include the opposition to every form of racism, including both state-sponsored racism and anti-Semitism.

In the 1980s nations throughout the World opted for divestment in the case of South Africa. For those South Africans who opposed and struggled against the apartheid regime the support was not only welcome but also

essential. The same is true today for Israelis who abhor both the governmental and societal oppression of Palestine. I conclude citing the words of two Israeli historians – they make the case of why Stanford University should take divestment seriously and act. First, **Ilan Pappé**:

Today, Israel is a formidable settler-colonialist state, unwilling to transform or compromise, and eager to crush by whatever means necessary any resistance to its control and rule in historical Palestine. Beginning with the ethnic cleansing of 80 percent of Palestine in 1948, and Israel's occupation of the remaining 20 percent of the land in 1967, Palestinians in Israel are now enclaved in mega-prisons, bantustans, and besieged cantons, and singled out through discriminatory policies... The Israeli settler state continues to further colonize and uproot the indigenous people of Palestine.

Finally, **Neve Gordon**:

The only way to counter the apartheid trend in Israel is through massive international pressure. The words and condemnations from the Obama administration and the European Union have yielded few results... I have decided to support the BDS movement... The objective is to ensure that Israel respects its obligations under international law, and that Palestinians are granted the right to self-determination... Nothing else has worked. Putting massive international pressure on Israel is the only way to guarantee that the next generation of Israelis and Palestinians – my two boys included – does not grow up in an apartheid regime.

Sincerely,

Alan Wieder

Endorsement Letter: David Palumbo-Liu

Dear Josh,

Thank you for sharing your ASSU bill with me. I have been studying the issue of divestment from several angles and have come to the conclusion that there is no reason to continue to invest in corporations or other entities that directly or indirectly support unjust and illegal activities, and that, when presented with a choice, decide to help perpetuate unjust living conditions. Should the issue come before the Faculty Senate, I would speak in favor of divestment.

Best regards,

David Palumbo-Liu

Louise Hewlett Nixon Professor

Professor of Comparative Literature

Endorsement Letter: Michael Cruz

Dear all,

Tonight, you are faced with a very difficult decision—your vote on UGS-W2013-6.

As a representative of the ASSU, it can be crippling when you are faced with this type of resolution. You do as much research and outreach as you can, but at the end of the day, it is you and your vote on the line. I urge you to not think of the repercussions on yourself, but the legacy of which you are a part.

As young adults, this platform—the Stanford Student Senate—is one of the most powerful to which you have access. Buried in the minutia of Appropriations policy and elections drama, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that you are awarded consistent and meaningful press coverage—both Stanford-specific and national.

In 1976 and 1987, the ASSU took a stand against South African apartheid (http://csre.stanford.edu/theses/11_DERvin.pdf). Their actions helped lead the South African University Divestment movement; our alumni helped to bring apartheid to its knees.

Last year, I was faced with a very similar decision as the one before you tonight—whether to sign my support to the [SPER petition on selective divestment](#). I conducted my research and I did what needed to be done—stand up and say that, for once, the ASSU would stand for something. I supported and support Israeli, Palestinian, and all human rights.

(www.stanforddaily.com/2012/05/04/op-ed-why-i-support-israel-palestine-and-divestment/).

I urge you to use your voice to support rights Israeli, Palestinian, and human rights. I urge you to join the long legacy of strong ASSU advocacy. I urge you to make the brave choice and vote in favor of the bill.

Sincerely,

Michael Cruz

ASSU President || 2011 – 2012

B.A. History | Class of 2012 | Stanford University

ASSU Vice President || 2011

ASSU Chair of the Undergraduate Senate || 2010 – 2011

ASSU Undergraduate Senator || 2009 – 2011

Endorsement Letter: Karl Kumodzi

“We suffered not only from the cruelty of killers, but also from the indifference of bystanders. I believe that a person who is indifferent to the suffering of others is complicit in the crime. And that I cannot allow, at least not for myself.” – Elie Weisel

I am in favor of UGS-W2013-6, the bill before the undergraduate senate that would allow them to call upon the Stanford Board of Trustees on behalf of the student body and urge the Board to reevaluate its investment in “Caterpillar, Lockheed Martin, Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories, Motorola, Riwal, Cement Roadstone Holdings, Mekorot Water Company, and Veolia Transport and, to the extent it is invested in these companies, to notify them of the university’s concern regarding their role in facilitating human rights abuses and, should the aforementioned companies continue to engage in these practices and all other options be exhausted, to divest from and/or commit not to invest in them until they cease these activities”

I understand that this is an extremely divisive issue, but that does not give the UG Senate a reason to avoid it. If anything, the divisiveness of the issue points to its importance and gives the senate more of an impetus and a responsibility to do something about it. The passage of this bill and the consequent campaign to urge the Board of Trustees will be one of the most tangible things the undergraduate senate can do this year to have a lasting impact on Stanford students, the legacy of Stanford University, and the lives of human beings half a world away. Being pro- divestment in absolutely no way equates with being anti-Israel. It is a question of being either for human dignity or indifferent to human suffering.

Speak to any alum who was involved in the divestment campaign for South Africa at Stanford three decades ago, and they will tell you how divisive this issue was on campus, how stupid and pointless countless students, faculty, and administration made the campaign seem, and how impossible it seemed that they would ever influence the Board of Trustees. Ask that same alum and they will also tell you that after months of pressing the administration and being told that divestment would be ineffective, un-strategic, and pointless, the campaign ended successfully and the same Stanford administration chose to divest from companies directly involved in and profiting from the oppressive apartheid regime of South Africa. During my time in Cape Town, South Africa, I repeatedly heard from young and old South Africans about how pivotal international support in the form of divestment campaigns were to dismantling the oppressive apartheid regime, and how grateful they were for all the work done by millions of unnamed individuals who may have thought their actions would have no real impact.

The Stanford student body did not elect their senators to be perfect mouthpieces – no governmental body in the history of the world has ever perfectly represented each and every person that they were elected to represent. Instead, the members of the senate were elected because the student body trusted in them to make decisions that the senators themselves believe would be best for the Stanford student body. On an issue as important as human suffering, and with an opportunity to make a tangible difference in that human suffering, it would be irresponsible and extremely harmful to remain indifferent.

-Karl Kumodzi '14, Former Undergraduate Senator (2011–2012)

Stanford must divest from the occupation of Palestine

October 26, 2014

This summer on TV and computer screens across America, Operation Protective Edge brought the realities of the Israeli occupation of Palestine to the mainstream consciousness once again. The facts of this summer's assault on Gaza stubbornly refute Israel's claim that it was acting in self-defense. The Israeli military killed over 2,100 Palestinians, at least 70 percent of whom were civilians. At least 500 Palestinian children died, whereas 72 Israelis were killed, 90 percent of whom were soldiers.

Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine (SOOP) is a growing coalition of student groups and individuals who do not want their university investing in and profiting from companies that enable and benefit from collective punishment, mass incarceration and the militarization of the police in Palestine and elsewhere. During winter quarter, we will bring a resolution to the ASSU calling on Stanford to divest from companies that facilitate and profit from the injustices of the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

While military campaigns against Palestinians garner the most media attention, the occupation entails a multitude of ongoing human rights violations. Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, particularly in the West Bank, live under separate and unequal law – namely, Israeli martial law. The Israeli military regularly uses tear gas, rubber-coated bullets, bean-bag shotguns and live ammunition against Palestinian demonstrators opposing the separation wall, protesting Israeli land seizures and blocking the demolition of Palestinian homes.

We witnessed a similar dynamic in Ferguson, Missouri, this summer, when the police responded with unwarranted violence to residents protesting racist policing and the killing of unarmed teenager Michael Brown. Both Palestinians and African Americans face racism and militarized policing when they resist. It is no surprise that the former head of the St. Louis County Police Department trained with the Israeli military, as have hundreds of senior police officials nationwide, or that a Palestine solidarity contingent took part in the Ferguson October convergence. The oppressors found common cause with each other – now, so too have the oppressed. Our divestment resolution seeks to draw out these connections and build upon that solidarity.

The Israeli state also uses incarceration as a tool of social and political repression. There are over 6,000 Palestinian political prisoners being held in Israeli prisons or detention centers, including 200 children. Since 1967, Israel has detained several hundred thousand

Palestinians, meaning that about one fifth of the Palestinian population of the Occupied Palestinian Territories has at one time been imprisoned. The connections between Palestine and the U.S. extend to mass incarceration and prison profiteering as well as the militarization of the police. In America, mass incarceration is a tool of social oppression directed disproportionately at people of color. Shockingly, over 2 percent of the black population in the U.S. was incarcerated as of the 2010 Census, a rate higher than that of South Africa at the height of apartheid.

We are at a crossroads. Israel has become only more recalcitrant with the diplomatic and military backing of the United States and other world powers. In the opening days of Operation Protective Edge, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared his opposition to Palestinian sovereignty in the West Bank. In the aftermath of the ensuing massacre in Gaza, Israel announced that it was seizing another 1,000 acres of Palestinian land in the West Bank for a future settlement and issued eviction notices to Palestinians residing there. Early this month, Israel announced the construction of 2,600 new settlements in Occupied East Jerusalem. Only international public pressure will compel Israel to accept the just demands of the Palestinian people. Divestment at Stanford can increase the pressure.

SOOP is committed to ending our university's complicity in the occupation of Palestine as well as in the human rights violations that our investments help facilitate at home. As long as the occupation continues, we will stand in solidarity with the oppressed.

Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine

Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine is a coalition of on campus organizations and individuals and can be contacted at OutofOccupiedPalestine@gmail.com.

Organizations: Stanford Students for Justice in Palestine, MEChA de Stanford, Muslim Student Awareness Network, Students for Alternatives to Militarism, Student and Labor Alliance, The Arab Student Association at Stanford, Stanford NAACP.

Individuals: Afia Khan '16, Ameena Tawakol '17, Ashley Harris '16, Celina Jackson '17, Charles Foster '18, Cole Manley '15, Di'Venneci Lucas '17, Ekua Awotwi '17, Emma Hartung '17, Fatima Ladha '17, Hisham Al-Falih '16, John Carlo Buenaflor '17, Kelly Hernandez '16, Kenneth Tea '17, Kristian Davis Bailey '14, Kleo Greenwood '17, Kyle Neil '17, Lindsey Redd '17, Musila Munuve '17, Osama El-Gabalawy '15, Ramah Awad '17, Rocio Hernandez '18, Ruqayya Toorawa '17, Sarah Houamed '17, Shelby Sinclair '15, Siddharth Patel, Sierra Kaplan-Nelson '16, Skylar Lovett '18, Stephanie Navarro '15, Tianay Pulphus '15, Tesay Yusuf '18, Trevor Caldwell '17.

In support of Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine and the oppressed

November 14, 2014

The divisive Israel-Palestine conflict has seen significant print in The Stanford Daily these past weeks. Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine issued a sobering call for Stanford's divestment from companies operating in the occupied territories, firms benefiting from the occupation and its attendant violence (viz Caterpillar, Northrop Grumman, Lockheed, Cemex of Stanford GSB affiliation, et al). The purpose and criteria were made clear enough: Stanford ought not to associate, directly or indirectly, with the illegal and barbarous acts of a foreign government lest we further enable such acts. And the piece was timely, as on the following day Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a public push for further expansion of settlements into Palestinian territories, a move by now practically routine, but no less illegal or ruthless.

So far two responses have been issued, and both are revealing in their mistreatment of Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine. The first, titled "Searching for a partner for peace on campus," by Mr. Yisroel Quint, rebutted the call for divestment, but in a rather odd way. His critique fell quickly into a series of claims which, upon inspection, dissolve into triviality as they exhibited no fidelity to relevance and were driven by what smacks of oversensitivity and an ad hominem attack on divestment leaders and advocates.

Because of Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine, Mr. Quint claims, we are "moving away from dialogue" and toward "finger pointing and delegitimization and demonization." That last phrase is curious since nowhere did the Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine letter stray from facts surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict, the summer siege of Gaza, long-standing ethnic discrimination against Arabs, or the matter of responsible divestment. Exactly how Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine took "statistics and events out of context" we are not told.

One week later, Mr. Ben Limonchik's impassioned response fumbled the same overall line: that Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine is "regressive", harmful, that it "hides the true goals of the divestment movement" (which he doesn't explain). He labels divestment "a tool designed to win a propaganda war" – an extravagant ascription of motive. But if by fighting for basic human rights and promoting awareness of ethnic aggression, mass incarceration, blockades on food and supplies, meanwhile advocating a

two-state solution and regional security all somehow qualifies as propaganda, then such efforts confer dignity on the term.

Surprisingly (rather, unbelievably), Limonchik and Quint chose the BDS co-founder Omar Barghoutti as the target of their smear campaigns, claiming in near perfect unison that Mr. Barghoutti “rejects Israel’s right to exist” (tacitly implying anti-Semitism). However no evidence to support such a claim is provided precisely because no evidence exists, betraying an effort to delegitimize divestment through calumny, spuriousness and diversionary tactics.

Where Quint and Limonchik actually succeed is through their conflation of lucid criticism of *Israeli aggression* with criticism of Israel as a whole, clumsily blurring the nuances of argument. Yet beyond the false claims and overheated rhetoric, the perfectly ineffectual wishes and “dreams” and empty calls for “dialogue,” such tactics fly wide of the original point, one which Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine and the divestment movement strongly encourage: non-violence and securing the safety of victims.

It’s worth observing the serious support both here and abroad for the divestment movement, how it’s pushing Israeli colonialism into the spotlight and emphasizing Palestine’s right to self-determination and *equal* right to defend itself against oppression. Consider Sweden’s recent recognition of Palestinian statehood, a move bitterly derided by the Israeli government, and coldly received by the US government, whose efforts in blocking such recognition are noteworthy.

Mr. Quint and Limonchik can host all the dialogues and peace seminars they want, and they can “dream of the day Israel and Palestine co-exist as neighbors,” but no amount of dialogue and dreaming is going to influence well entrenched systems of oppression thousands of miles away. And therein lies the reason why Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine is a force for good on campus. They’ll actually *do something* about the occupation and illegal settlement expansions by getting students and faculty to actively organize, by getting this enormous machine we call Stanford up and operating such that really positive, world-level change may some day soon be possible and may even occur. Opponents of peaceful, non-violent activism have much to answer for.

Steven Magness

Steven Magness is a staff member in the Computer Science Department. He can be contacted at magness ‘at’ cs.stanford.edu.

An awkward echo: 1977/2015

January 12, 2015

At 1 p.m. on the 9th of May, 1977, 294 members of Stanford's community occupied Old Union to protest our university's decision to maintain its investments in apartheid South Africa. Five hours later, police stormed the building with bullhorns, arresting every last demonstrator.

This historic stand-off between Stanford activists and law enforcement reflects how polarizing divestment from South African apartheid was at that time. Commentators across the board slammed divestment as “a fad, a moral hula hoop, fun for a while.” Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush argued that divestment from apartheid South Africa would be “morally wrong and unacceptable” and “counter-productive.” Many opposed divestment on the grounds that it would deepen racial divides, decrease the international community's political and economic leverage in South Africa and perpetuate apartheid by leading to South African self-sufficiency. Some argued that divestment would “only lead to more hardship, particularly for the blacks,” by increasing their rates of unemployment and poverty without ending legalized apartheid.

History has shown those claims to be false. The damage that divestment caused to South Africa's economy was limited, but the impact of those sanctions on white South African perceptions of the apartheid state was tremendous. South Africans were made to understand that the system of apartheid — an inherently racist series of policies designed to maintain the state's exploitative and colonial relationship with its black population — had no place in the modern world. Far from creating internal strife, divestment created the conditions necessary for South Africans themselves to dismantle legalized apartheid. Divestment brought a state which considered itself free and democratic to question its narrow definitions of those terms.

The language of opponents of South African divestment has reemerged in its parallel today — the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and its exploitative settler-colonial dynamics. Campus organizations, outside institutions and even states have attacked the current movement to stop investing in multinational corporations profiting from the military occupation, an occupation that has been condemned

by several international organizations. Divestment efforts are dismissed as “unfair” and as seeking to “delegitimize” the state of Israel, and are criticized for being short-sighted in that they might disproportionately affect Palestinian workers.

Those who use this language seem very aware of the echo of their awkward historical parallel in their own words. They seek to distance themselves from the South African case by maintaining that Israel is a country with a “robust democracy,” far from the blatant racism of South African apartheid. They claim that Israel’s realities are more “complex” and that proponents of divestment do not do justice to “murky” rights and wrongs in Palestine.

There is nothing “complex” or “murky” about this conflict. It is one with an oppressor — the Israeli state — that exerts immense military, economic and social pressure on the oppressed: the Palestinian people. It is one where the oppressor manipulates physical space and human demography to an extreme degree. It is one where an oppressor confines the oppressed to lives of limitation and humiliation, yet still punishes their resistance.

This is the reality of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. It is a reality where 89 families in Gaza were wiped out in their entirety this summer. It is a reality where Palestinian families are rendered homeless by an immoral legal process while the (Palestinian) Authority meant to represent them is stripped of funding for trying to protect the rights guaranteed to them by international law. This is a reality where a massively oppressive economic and military system exerts tremendous pressure on an entire population.

Our silence is our complicity, and our investments are our support.

To achieve financial neutrality in this conflict, and encourage the genuine introspection that Israel needs to end its immoral military occupation, our institution *must* divest from the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. Divestment weakens the multinational corporations which provide the infrastructure for and profit off of this occupation, making a genuine peace — *a just peace* — more possible. Make no mistake: As was the case in South Africa, history is marching forward. Now is the time to decide whether or not this institution will be on its right side.

Muzz Shittu ‘17

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How can an Israeli support the BDS movement?

January 14, 2015

Why would an Israeli who loves Israel support the divestment movement at Stanford? It is either hypocrisy or stupidity to think that the current movement will be satisfied without a full-fledged boycott on Israel. Why then, would an Israeli support a boycott of his own people? I have been asking myself this question for the past few months. How can I, an Israeli whose soul is deeply rooted in Israel, support an act that may lead to harm for myself and my own people? As an Israeli scientist, I may find myself in the obscure situation in which my own funding will be cut off, I will not be able to present at conferences, my parents and friends may greatly suffer from the situation. Supporting the BDS movement should therefore be pursued only with the assumption that this is a *necessary* stage in ending the destructive situation in Israel.

For once, we should ignore the moral discussion related to the occupation. Moral arguments rarely influence people with different ideologies and often even polarize the discussion. Instead, we should have a practical discussion about the future of Israel. One fact which is almost irrefutable is that the current status quo is not a static situation but a dynamic process. Israel is constantly increasing its hold in the West Bank, building more houses and settlements, moving more people. This reality leads to an almost inevitable situation in which the land from the Jordan River to the sea will at some point officially become part of Israel.

This is not a radical prediction, it is the common belief among those who know the reality on the ground, both on the right and the left sides of the political map. Indeed, all facts support this prediction: There are almost 400,000 Jews living beyond the Green Line and the possibility of a territory exchange has become more and more impossible. The current political climate in Israel and Palestine does not allow true negotiations between the two sides. Thus the possibility of one state has become the most probable solution.

Let's think for a minute about how this big country will look. Its majority will be Arab, some already citizens; others will strive for citizenship in any way they can. For a few years, Israel may be able to maintain the Palestinians' second-grade, non-citizen status, but at great cost. Israel's ability to stop this process will become extremely limited as soon as it officially incorporates the territories into its declared boundaries. The world, which is already pushing for a solution, will not accept a situation in which the new

country has declared its borders, yet is treating some of its inhabitants as second-grade citizens. The question will then become: How democratic can the new, united country be? Ideally, the answer to this question is an equal, democratic state. Realistically, a combined state would probably lead to even more suffering for both Palestinians and Israelis. Therefore, in order to create a better future for both nations, the current reality in Israel must be changed.

For many years I spent my energy writing and demonstrating against the constant increase of Israel's control in what could have been Palestine. I believed that external forces should not interfere in the internal processes within Israel. As the situation became more severe, I came to realize that this is not working. I was exposed again and again to the unbearable life of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and the increase of Jewish settlement at the expense of a possible Palestinian state. Without external pressure on the Israeli government to stop the occupation, our choice is already made. We are effectively choosing a one-state solution. The path to this solution is beset by the death and suffering of many Israelis and Palestinians. If a BDS process leads to a short-term inconvenience to me, my family and my people, so be it, if it also leads to a better future for the people and country that I love.

Amit Goldenberg

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A false security

January 21, 2015

Security figures prominently in the arguments of those who support maintaining Stanford's investments in Israel's occupation of Palestine. Two op-eds in The Stanford Daily last quarter, as well as a recent letter to the editor, invoked "thousands of rockets" and even the well-worn "terror tunnels" to justify Israel's killing of over 2,100 Palestinians during Operation Protective Edge. Security is the rebuttal to efforts to hold Israel accountable for atrocities and violations of international law, like the collective punishment of Gazans or the construction of the apartheid wall in the West Bank. Security is the precondition that Israel puts on any negotiations.

This security narrative, however, operates from the standpoint of the oppressor. It obscures the fact that the violence is largely a one-way street. Since September of 2000, over seven and a half times as many Palestinians have been killed as Israelis, and over *fifteen* times as many Palestinian children have been killed as Israeli children. Even though the United States and Israeli governments repeatedly cite Israeli security concerns as paramount, it is *Palestinians* who overwhelmingly lack security. And when defenders of Israeli policy decry terrorism, they never acknowledge that in this conflict the greatest purveyor of terrorism — political violence against civilians — is the Israel Defense Forces.

The western media is all too willing to cooperate by highlighting Israeli loss and effacing Palestinian suffering. In the early days of Operation Protective Edge, ABC News showed a photo of missile strike damage in Gaza but claimed that it was rocket damage in Israel. Peter Hart of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting described this error "as a reflection of a worldview" that doesn't consider Palestinian deaths "more newsworthy than Israeli fear."

This is not to say that Israelis don't face suffering and pain due to violence. Rather, it's to ask why Israeli fears and loss are so often emphasized when Palestinians suffer so much more. One reason is that anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia make Palestinian lives matter a lot less to the political and media apparatus. Another reason is that all Palestinian armed resistance is delegitimized as terrorism by Israel and its western backers who rely on Israel as an extension of their military power in the region. Therefore, any violence against Israel, even against Israeli soldiers, is an unthinkable, inhuman act that threatens the peaceful status quo. This notion fails to grasp the basic dynamic of the conflict.

Israel, a state founded on the dispossession and expulsion of the indigenous population, has no grounds to assert its desires for security over the Palestinians' rights to basic justice and equality. Until Israel comes to a just resolution with the Palestinian national liberation movement, its attempts to impose a one-sided security on the region amount to the creation of a Pax Israeliana — security, prosperity, annexation for Israel; violence, poverty, dispossession for Palestinians. It is the peace that French colonists wished to impose on occupied Algeria, or the security that white settlers hoped to achieve over Native Americans.

Resistance — both nonviolent and armed — is the language of the oppressed who refuse to live on their knees. The Palestinian liberation struggle has included many acts of courage as well as acts that are indefensible, but to condemn all resistance without condemning and combating the conditions which breed it is to stand for injustice and suffering.

Until Palestinians have no reason to resist, Israeli appeals for one-sided security, for a sham peace process and for an “end to violence” serve as little more than cloaks for Israel's ongoing oppression and domination of the Palestinians. And make no mistake — Israel is the oppressor in this conflict, holding and exercising a massive military, economic and diplomatic advantage over Palestinians, who possess no air force, no navy, no tanks and a wrecked economy. The facts of Operation Protective Edge, particularly the civilian death toll, tell the story.

Ending the occupation would be one step towards justice, which is the precondition for peace and security for Palestinians and Israelis. Stanford University can play a role in advancing justice and reducing violence by withdrawing its investments from companies that enable the occupation, the source of the vast majority of deaths and injuries in the conflict.

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Responses to Common Divestment Concerns and Misconceptions

First, we want to stress that our argument is that Stanford should not invest in companies that enable and profit from actions that violate international law or the rights of Palestinians delineated in the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights. These companies' involvement in the occupation is necessary for it to continue to function. The question to the broader student body, and to the student government, is "Why should we continue investing in companies that engage in violence against Palestinians?"

1. What is divestment and what is the Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions (BDS) Movement?

The purpose of BDS is to make effective change in Israeli policies towards Palestinians (see #2 for more info). And, while BDS may accurately be described as a "movement" in the sense that thousands of people all over the world are mobilizing in support of Palestine using BDS as a tool, "BDS" does not have any headquarters nor official leaders. Rather, it is a set of three tools -- boycotts, divestment, and sanctions -- that organizers may use in a variety of contexts to demand justice. Think of the Montgomery Bus Boycotts, or divestment from South African apartheid; each of these were single tools that fall under the umbrella of "BDS," but that stand independent of one another.

While some members of our coalition have officially endorsed the BDS movement, Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine, as a coalition, is focused on selectively divesting from corporations that profit from violations of international law and human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and United States. We seek to use divestment as a tool to ensure that our tuition and other school funds do not enable violence against Palestinians. Utilizing divestment does not necessitate boycotts, nor sanctions (the latter of which are only applicable at the governmental level).

2. Divestment, and BDS, seek to bring about the destruction of Israel / delegitimize the Jewish state.

In 2005, hundreds of members of Palestinian civil society called upon the international community to utilize boycotts, divestment, and sanctions to pressure the Israeli government into granting Palestinians three basic things: 1) an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, 2) the right for Palestinian refugees to return to their homes (from which they were expelled in 1948 and thereafter by Israeli forces), and 3) equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel (who currently live under more than 50 laws that discriminate against them). Nowhere did Palestinian civil society claim they sought to destroy Israel. BDS is intended to bring justice for Palestinians peacefully and nonviolently. Boycotts, divestment, and sanctions are time-proven, effective tools that helped to dismantle South African apartheid and Jim Crow in the United States.

3. Doesn't divestment hamper progress because it is so divisive? Doesn't divestment polarize both campus and international communities rather than encouraging dialogue and diplomacy?

Divestment threatens the status quo more than any diplomatic effort has in a long time by taking the profit out of Occupation. The role of boycott and divestment in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and Anti-Apartheid South Africa Movement showed that rather than hindering change, pressure from boycotts and divestment brought political leaders to the negotiating table, not to haggle over whether or not to end oppression, but to figure out how best to do so on the basis of universal human rights and international law. Divestment would help level the playing field to make constructive dialogue and negotiation possible.

Stanford out of Occupied Palestine is proud of the incredible unity divestment has actually brought to our campus. As a growing coalition of 16 student groups, students of diverse backgrounds and creeds have actually come together in support of divestment. SOOP is not trying to be divisive. In fact, if you ask most people on this campus, including those who oppose divestment, they will say that they support human rights. There are probably very few students who would want Stanford to actively invest in companies that profit from violence. All SOOP is trying to do is to get people to realize that we are already investing in companies that profit from violence and which violate human rights, and to take steps to change that. That shouldn't be controversial.

This claim is trying to make it “unsafe” or “irresponsible” to support divestment even though it is the right thing to do. This is designed to short-circuit the logical debate and stop divestment because of its emotional effects on people (but of course, not SOOP members or Palestinians). Actually, supporting human rights is the right thing to do, it is a responsible act for a student government member. You won't be alone, this won't end your future or stop your career; you're simply part of a growing list of universities and groups who refuse to participate in the occupation.

4. “Divestment hurts my feelings” OR Voting in favor of divestment marginalizes students on campus and ASSU members should be neutral and representative of all Stanford students.

Many students will inevitably have strong feelings about divestment. However, in response to this, we would like to point to the many students whose loved ones in Palestine are actually being physically and psychologically hurt by the practices of companies our university invests in.

These companies bulldoze Palestinian homes and olive trees to build illegal Jewish-only settlements on Palestinian land and provide the engines that were used in the fighter jets that bombed thousands of innocent Palestinians. They provide the cement that constructs the separation wall, which divides Palestinians from their own land (and which is illegal according to the International Court of Justice) and steal Palestinian resources and brings them back to Israel. They maintain the checkpoints and the electronic system that allows the Israeli Defense Forces to have the biometric data of all Palestinians above the age of 16 on record.

Neutrality can only be achieved by removing our investments from these particular companies that are complicit in the violations of Palestinian rights. Doing so does not cause any harm to

pro-Israel students, but ensures that our university is not invested in harm against Palestinian students and their loved ones.

5. International politics do not belong at the ASSU Senate table OR Senate doesn't know enough about Israel/Palestine to make a decision such as this one.

First, students absolutely have every right to demand that their university not invest in violence against other people. Second, Stanford has long been a place for change: from divestment from fossil fuels to divestment from South African apartheid. Lastly, ASSU Senate members need not be experts on Palestine/Israel to understand how the companies we seek to divest from are directly contributing to violence against Palestinians.

6. Why single out Israel? Don't a lot of Arab countries have equally bad or worse human rights records, especially concerning the status of Jews and women?

We recognize that Israel is not the only perpetrator of human rights violations in the world. However, the United States government is more directly implicated in human rights abuses in Israel than elsewhere in the region. The United States provides Israel with more aid than any other country, and most of this aid funds Israel's military. As students of an American university, we feel a responsibility to act, given how vital the financial contributions of American companies and the American government are to sustaining human rights violations and oppression in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Multinational corporations also tend to treat Israel differently by disproportionately conducting business in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories as compared to other conflict areas (e.g. Syria and Iran) where binding law often prevents engagement with human rights violators.

Also, the existence of other unjust regimes does not excuse the unjust practices of the Israeli state nor should it allow us to ignore them. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu notes, *"Divestment from apartheid South Africa was certainly no less justified because there was repression elsewhere on the African continent."*

7. The measures that claims are harming Palestinians (i.e. the separation wall and checkpoints) exist to protect Israeli citizens from Palestinian terrorist attacks. There are fewer terrorist attacks on Israelis now thanks to the wall and checkpoints.

There are several issues with this argument. First, this is a blatant claim that the lives of Israeli civilians are worth more than those of Palestinians, and that Palestinian suffering is justified and necessary to maintain the existing level of safety for Israelis. Second, this argument is made under the pretense that ALL Palestinians are violent, or are terrorists. Both of these arguments are based in Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism, and serve to dehumanize, vilify, and criminalize Palestinians. The U.S. was guilty of this kind of racism during World War II when Japanese-Americans were labelled as security threats and forced into internment camps. The lesson our country has (theoretically) learned from that horror is that taking away someone's rights based on their racial or ethnic identity is wrong. If it was wrong to imprison and take away the rights and freedom of the Japanese in the 1940s, then it

is also wrong to use walls and checkpoints to take away the rights and freedom of Palestinians today. Israelis deserve to live and move freely just as much as Palestinians. But their safety should not come at the expense of the full autonomy of the Palestinians. Also, the wall could have been built inside Israel or on its legal border with the West Bank. Instead, it seizes some of the most valuable farmland and water resources of the West Bank so that Israelis but not Palestinians can access them.

8. Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East.

Israel's democratic principles only apply to its Jewish citizens. There are over 50 laws that discriminate against Palestinian citizens of Israel, who make up 20% of its population. Democracy is characterized by an individual's right to self-determination. But self-determination has been completely stripped from Palestinians: Israel's use of the separation wall, checkpoints, segregated roads, and blockades severely restrict access to food, water and medicine for Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank, and separate Palestinians from schools, hospitals, jobs, and their farmland. Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank have absolutely no say in the policies that directly affect and negatively impact their lives. Israel should still be subject to the same scrutiny as any other state.

This claim distracts from the specific violations of human rights that the majority of the world acknowledges, and excuses these violations because of a comparison between Israel and other states. But nothing justifies violating human rights.

9. Palestinians are employed by these companies, therefore divestment will hurt Palestinians.

Palestinians made the original call upon the international community to use BDS. They know better than we do the path to their freedom. Any potential short-term consequences of divestment are a small price to pay for its long-term benefits. This is the same argument that was used to dissuade against divestment in the case of South Africa. It was misguided then, and it's misguided now; those on the ground know what is truly needed to bring an end to their oppression.

The Palestinians who are employed by these companies still have to live under occupation, and are still subject to the checkpoints, the separation wall, and segregated roads. Remaining invested in them so that Palestinians may keep their jobs will do nothing to bring an end to the violations of Palestinian rights that these companies enable and profit from. Further, the way divestment works is to target corporations and withdraw funds from these corporations until they cease their harmful activities. In the case of Palestine, we would divest from companies until they withdrew from the occupation. We are not aiming to destroy the company or harm its employees; we are aiming to put pressure on them to cease their irresponsible activities.

10. Divestment goes against US foreign policy and harms the peace process.

The issue with this argument is that it assumes diplomacy and divestment are mutually exclusive. One shouldn't assume that a divestment campaign somehow "cancels out"

diplomatic efforts.

However, diplomatic efforts have failed for the past 60 years because the U.S.' unconditional support for Israel gives it no incentive to change. For instance, it doesn't matter how many U.S. leaders condemn the construction of new Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory as long as the U.S. government annually sends billions of dollars to Israel without restriction. This is where divestment efforts come in: by tying the need for policy reform to the refusal to invest in companies directly profiting from the occupation, divestment is able to do what diplomatic efforts alone cannot--obligate the Israeli government to effectively change its policies through the application of economic pressure. This would actually promote a more effective peace process, making it necessary to bring an end to the occupation. Political disagreements should be resolved. The status quo must not be maintained at the expense of people who are experiencing systematic violence.

Neutrality can only be achieved by removing our investments from these particular companies that are complicit in the violations of Palestinian rights. Doing so does not cause any harm to pro-Israel students, but ensures that our university is not invested in harm against Palestinian students and their loved ones.

11. “But Hamas” / “But ISIS” / “Terrorism is a thing”

Just like the Republican party does not represent all Americans, Hamas is not representative of all Palestinians, and Palestinians do not deserve to be collectively punished based on Hamas' decisions or actions. However, the Israeli government used Hamas' alleged actions to justify its recent attack on the citizens of Gaza this past summer (killing over 2,000 Palestinians), and anti-divestment students frequently cite Hamas as a reason why Palestinians do not deserve full rights. If you accept that it is wrong to punish the many for the actions of a few, then you must understand why it is wrong to say that the recent Palestinian civilian death toll, as well as the crippling blockade that has been imposed on Gazans since 2007 (restricting medical supplies and even the amount of calories that Israel allows into the Gaza strip) is all acceptable because of Hamas.

We must return to the grounding for our ethical obligations as students. Even if Gaza were not under economic blockade and siege, since Hamas is designated a terrorist organization by the U.S., no multinational corporation with business in the United States can do business with Hamas. We know that our university is not invested in Hamas. We are, however, invested in the collective punishment of a civilian population in Gaza for the actions of Hamas. That is where our moral responsibility lies.

Readings on Intersectionality:

1. The Ferguson/Palestine connection
http://www.ebony.com/news-views/the-fergusonpalestine-connection-403#.VMhZk2TF_NV
2. Gaza in Arizona: How Israeli High-Tech Firms Will Up- Armor the US-Mexico Border
<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/01/us-mexico-border-gaza-israeli-tech-wall%20>
3. Building Unity, Wrecking Walls: Palestinians Come to Ferguson
<http://www.ebony.com/news-views/building-unity-wrecking-walls-palestinians-come-to-ferguson-032#axzz3Q4vCciVe>
4. Dream Defenders, Black Lives Matter & Ferguson Reps Take Historic Trip to Palestine
<http://www.ebony.com/news-views/dream-defenders-black-lives-matter-ferguson-reps-take-historic-trip-to-palestine#axzz3Q4vCciVe>
5. The growing ties between #BlackLivesMatter and Palestine
<http://mondoweiss.net/2015/01/between-blacklivesmatter-palestine>