



Students for a Free Palestine 2013 Resolution

This zine introduces a divestment effort initiated by Oberlin Students for a Free Palestine (SFP). Here you will find the historical context for this

campaign, explanations of the urgency and necessity of engaging in this nonviolent strategy, and information to learn more and get involved.

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Students with sign that reads, "Solidarity with Gaza." Fall 2012, Cleveland, OH.



Oberlin College

Students for a Free Palestine

Our mission as Students for a Free Palestine here at Oberlin is first and foremost to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people. We strive to do this by raising awareness of the oppression and vast suffering of Palestinians under the Israeli occupation both within historical as well as present contexts. We work to create more nuanced dialogue on campus as well as in our larger communities. We recognize that we do not speak for the Palestinian people; instead, we make every effort to enable Palestinian voices and struggles to be heard and widely known.

We as a group do not specifically endorse either a one or two-state solution; instead, we advocate for the right of all Palestinians to self-determination. Furthermore, we call on Israel to adhere to international law. More specifically, we demand that:

1. Israel ends its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantles the Wall;
2. Israel recognizes the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and,
3. Israel respects, protects and promotes the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194.



Students for a Free Palestine

2013 Resolution

WHEREAS, Oberlin College proclaims a proud history of student opposition to oppression and injustice;

WHEREAS, the role of student activists in exposing South Africa's apartheid system and supporting equality, freedom, and dignity sets an example for us to follow as students of global conscience;

WHEREAS, the example of South Africa demonstrates that it is imperative for students to stand unequivocally against all forms of racism and bigotry globally and on campus,

WHEREAS, the Occupied Palestinian Territory is



controlled through military force by the Israeli

government;

WHEREAS, the Separation Wall annexes parts of the West Bank to Israel and restricts access to water supplies and other vital resources for Palestinians;

WHEREAS, according to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), "The construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated régime, are contrary to international law";¹

WHEREAS, according to Article 120, paragraph 4 of the same ICJ opinion, the establishment and expansion of settlements in the West Bank and Eastern Jerusalem is also illegal by international law;²

WHEREAS, Article 49, paragraph 6, of the Fourth Geneva Convention states, “the Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies”;³

WHEREAS, according to the UN General Assembly’s application of the Fourth Geneva Convention the establishment and expansion of settlements “in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially settlement activities... remain contrary to international law and cannot be recognized, irrespective of the passage of time”;⁴

WHEREAS, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asserted that the US policy “on Israeli settlements has not changed and will not change. Like every American administration for decades, we do not accept the legitimacy of continued

settlement activity”;⁵

WHEREAS, according to the Hague Convention, the exploitation of natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is also illegal by international law;⁶

WHEREAS, the international community as represented by the UN Security Council, Human Rights Council Fact-Finding mission in Gaza, the ICJ, the US Department of State, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, and the UN General Assembly have recognized and condemned Israel’s above mentioned violations of human rights and international law. This condemnation is manifested in dozens of resolutions concerning the state of Israel;⁷

WHEREAS, an international independent fact-finding



Resolution, continued.

mission established by the UN Human Rights Council asserted, “Private companies must assess the human rights impact of their activities and take all necessary steps – including by terminating their business interests in the settlements – to ensure they are not adversely impacting the human rights of the Palestinian People in conformity with international law as well as the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights”;⁸

WHEREAS, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, Richard Falk, concluded in a October 25, 2012 report that “the businesses highlighted in the report – as well as the

many other businesses that are profiting from the Israeli settlement

enterprise – should be boycotted, until they bring their operations into line with international human rights and humanitarian law and standards”;⁹

WHEREAS, international corporations have been complicit in these severe and ongoing human rights violations systematically committed by the Israeli government, and their involvement has been documented by human rights organizations including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Al-Haq, Defense for Children International, Addameer, B’tselem, Adalah, Badil, the Israeli Coalition Against House Demolitions, and the Coalition of Women For Peace through its project WhoProfits;

WHEREAS, Oberlin College has no formal policies of



socially responsible investment outlined in its Investment Policy and has minimal investment transparency. Therefore the College may invest in, and thereby profit from, companies which have an active role in the human rights abuses and institutionalized structural violence against the Palestinian people, making it a complicit third-party;

WHEREAS, the following illustrative and non-exhaustive list of companies, which the College may be invested in, play a role in these human rights violations: Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, Group 4 Securicor, SodaStream, Elbit Systems, and Veolia;

WHEREAS, Caterpillar has helped sustain the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory by continually providing engineering tools and bulldozers, routinely used in the demolition of Palestinian

homes, neighborhoods in refugee camps, water cisterns, and agricultural fields; WHEREAS, Caterpillar has also provided engineering tools and bulldozers to expand illegal settlements and construct the Separation Wall and checkpoints throughout the West Bank;¹⁰

WHEREAS, Caterpillar's unmanned D-9 bulldozers were used in Israel's military offensive, "Operation Cast Lead" in 2008, during which 1,400 people, including 13 Israelis and 320 Palestinian children, were killed; the United Nations fact finding mission condemned this action as collective punishment, which is a war crime;¹¹

WHEREAS, Hewlett-Packard Company (HP) has restricted the freedom of movement of Palestinians and reinforced



Resolution, continued.

a stratification of citizenship by providing biometric identification systems used at Israeli military checkpoints;¹²

WHEREAS, Group 4 Securicor (G4S) provides security equipment for Israeli prisons that hold Palestinian political prisoners and for Israeli military checkpoints, as well as security services to businesses in the illegal settlements ;¹³

WHEREAS, Hewlett-Packard Company (HP) and G4S both profit from global mass incarceration; HP provides prisoner data systems for the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs (ICE) Law Enforcement Support Center;¹⁴ G4S operates

private prisons around the world and multiple

privatized juvenile detention facilities in the U.S., operates transportations services for ICE deportations across the U.S.-Mexico border, and provides control systems and surveillance equipment to three prisons designated for Palestinian political prisoners in Israel;¹⁵

WHEREAS, SodaStream operates its main manufacturing plant in the illegal settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim, in the West Bank, on land confiscated from its Palestinian owners by the Israeli military, rendering it inaccessible to local residents without a special security permit;¹⁶

WHEREAS, SodaStream enjoys special benefits awarded to settlement businesses including lax regulation and low taxes, and pays taxes to the Israeli



government and to the local settlement municipality rather than to any Palestinian authority, thereby exploiting the local resources of land, water, and labor while strengthening the illegal settlements;¹⁷

WHEREAS, Elbit Systems (Elbit), a military electronics company, has provided surveillance systems for the Separation Wall which runs through occupied Palestinian land.

WHEREAS, the Israeli military has used Elbit's Unmanned Air Systems, more commonly known as drones, for surveillance and combat actions over the past decade which have resulted in civilian casualties;¹⁸

WHEREAS Veolia Environnement (Veolia,) profits from bus lines and a light rail system that connect Israeli settlements to Israel, and thus contribute to the infrastructure

of these illegal settlements; the buses run on separate roads that are closed for Palestinian use;¹⁹

WHEREAS, Veolia operates the Tolvan landfill in the West Bank, used by settlements for dumping waste from illegal settlements and Israel on confiscated Palestinian land;²⁰

WHEREAS, Veolia operates through its Israeli subsidiaries a wastewater plant providing services to the illegal settlement of Modi'in Illit;²¹

WHEREAS, these six companies have been directly engaged by various public campaigns and concerned investors about their complicit involvement in the previously mentioned human rights violations to no avail;

WHEREAS, on July 9th, 2005, 171 Palestinian Civil Society organizations launched



Resolution, continued.

the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign, a rights-based approach operating within an anti-racist framework that rejects all forms of racism, including Islamophobia and anti-Semitism²²;

WHEREAS, the BDS campaign calls on all people of conscience around the world to engage in nonviolent acts of non-cooperation towards the state of Israel until it complies with international law, including ending the occupation of and colonization of Palestinian land and dismantling the wall, recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality, and respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to



their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194;

WHEREAS, divestment is a nonviolent strategy employed by universities, religious organizations, and civil society organizations around the world to pressure corporations to withdraw from business resulting in severe violations of international law and human rights;

WHEREAS companies such as Caterpillar, HP, G4S, SodaStream, Elbit, and Veolia directly profit from the ongoing violations of international law and human rights and have an economic stake in the continuation of these violations;

LET IT BE RESOLVED, that Oberlin College examine its financial assets to identify its investments in companies

Resolution, cont., & endnotes

that a) provide weaponry, security systems, prisons, or military support for the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories, or b) facilitate the building or maintenance of the illegal Separation Wall or the demolition of Palestinian homes, or c) facilitate the building, maintenance, or economic development of illegal Israeli settlements, outposts, and segregated roads and transportation systems on occupied Palestinian territory;

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, that Oberlin College instruct its investment managers to divest fully from these aforementioned companies, within the bounds of their fiduciary duties, until such companies cease the practices identified in this Resolution;

²³LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, that Oberlin

College will not make further investments in any companies materially supporting or profiting from Israel's occupation in the above-mentioned ways.

ENDNOTES

1. Legal Consequences of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, ICJ Reports 2004, p. 136, *available at* www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/131/1671.pdf.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Peoples in Times of War, August 12, 1949, 6 U.S.T. 3516, 75 U.N.T.S. 287, *available at* <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/FULL/380?OpenDocument>.
4. UN General Assembly, A/RES/ES-10/6: Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, February 9, 1999, *available at* <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/>
5. The Arab American Institute. "Urge President Obama to Support the UN Resolution Condemning Israeli Settlements." Last



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modified February 17, 2011. <http://www.aaiusa.org/blog/entry/urge-president-obama-to-support-the-un-resolution-condemning-settlements/> (accessed March 13, 2013).

6. Hague Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and Its Annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land, October 18, 1907, Article 55, available at <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/full/195>.

7. i.e. S/RES/171 (1962) [S/5111], S/RES/228 (1966), S/RES/237 (1967), S/RES/248 (1968), S/RES/250-S/RES/252 (1968), S/RES/256 (1968), S/RES/259 (1968), S/RES/262 (1968), S/RES/265 (1969), S/RES/267 (1969), S/RES/270 (1969), S/RES/271 (1969), S/RES/279 (1970), S/RES/280 (1970), S/RES/285 (1970), S/RES/298 (1971), S/RES/313 (1972), S/RES/316-S/RES/317 (1972), S/RES/332 (1973), S/RES/337 (1973), S/RES/347 (1974), S/RES/425 (1978), S/RES/427 (1978), S/RES/444 (1979), S/RES/446 (1979); "UN independent expert calls for boycott of businesses profiting from Israeli settlements." United Nations News

Centre, October 25, 2012.

8. UN General Assembly, Report of the independent

international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, February 7, 2013, A/HRC/22/63.

9. "UN independent expert calls for boycott of businesses profiting from Israeli settlements." United Nations News Centre, October 25, 2012.

10. Global Exchange. "Why Caterpillar?" 2011. <http://RES/446> (1979); "UN independent expert calls for boycott of businesses profiting from Israeli settlements." United Nations News Centre, October 25, 2012.

8. UN General Assembly, Report of the independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, February 7, 2013, A/HRC/22/63.

9. "UN independent expert calls for boycott of businesses profiting from Israeli settlements." United Nations News Centre, October 25, 2012.

10. Global Exchange. "Why



Caterpillar?" 2011. <http://www.globalexchange.org/economicactivism/caterpillar/why> (accessed March 18, 2013).

11. Richard Goldstone. "Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict." September 2009. <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/12session/A-HRC-12-48.pdf> (accessed March 18, 2013).

12. The Coalition of Women for Peace. "Technologies of Control: The Case of Hewlett Packard." Last modified December 2011. http://www.whoprofits.org/sites/default/files/hp_report_final_for_web.pdf (accessed March 13, 2013).

13. The Coalition of Women for Peace. "The Case of G4S: Private Security Companies and the Israeli Occupation." Last modified March 2011. <http://whoprofits.org/sites/default/files/WhoProfits-PrivateSecurity-G4S.pdf> (accessed March 13, 2013).

14. Global Exchange. "Why Hewlett-Packard?" <http://www.globalexchange.org/economicactivism/hp/why> (accessed March 18, 2013).

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March 2011. <http://whoprofits.org/sites/default/files/WhoProfits-PrivateSecurity-G4S.pdf> (accessed March 13, 2013).

16. Who Profits. "Sodastream: A Case Study for Corporate Activity in Illegal Israeli Settlements." Last modified January 2011. <http://www.whoprofits.org/sites/default/files/WhoProfits-ProductioninSettlements-SodaStream.pdf> (accessed March 13, 2013).

17. Ibid. 4, 6, 7.

18. Global Exchange. "Why Target Elbit Systems?" Last modified February 26, 2013. <http://www.globalexchange.org/economicactivism/elbit/why> (accessed March 13, 2013).

19. The Coalition of Women for Peace. "Veolia Environment Israel." http://www.whoprofits.org/sites/default/files/the_activities_of_veolia_in_israel_-_an_update.pdf (accessed March 3, 2013).

20. Ibid, 1.

21. Ibid, 2.

22. "BDS Movement Position on the Boycott of Individuals." Last modified February 21, 2013. <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2013/bds-movement-position-on-boycott-of-individuals-10679#sthash.z5o1svwx.dpuf> (accessed March 13, 2013).

**see www.bdsmovement.net
for more information.**



Palestinian Call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions

BDS is a campaign started by 171 non-governmental organizations in support of the Palestinian cause for boycott, divestment, and international sanctions against Israel. Find more information at bdsmovement.net

One year after the historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which found Israel's Wall built on occupied Palestinian territory to be illegal; Israel continues its construction of the colonial Wall with total disregard to the Court's decision. Thirty eight years into Israel's occupation of the Palestinian West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights, Israel continues to expand Jewish colonies. It has unilaterally annexed occupied East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights and is now de facto annexing large parts of the West Bank



by means of the Wall. Israel is also preparing – in the shadow of

its lanned redeployment from the Gaza Strip – to build and expand colonies in the West Bank. Fifty seven years after the state of Israel was built mainly on land ethnically cleansed of its Palestinian owners, a majority of Palestinians are refugees, most of whom are stateless. Moreover, Israel's entrenched system of racial discrimination against its own Arab-Palestinian citizens remains intact.

In light of Israel's persistent violations of international law; and Given that, since 1948, hundreds of UN resolutions have condemned Israel's colonial and discriminatory policies as illegal and called for immediate, adequate and effective remedies; and Given that all forms of internation

al intervention and peace-making have until now failed to convince or force Israel to comply with humanitarian law, to respect fundamental human rights and to end its occupation and oppression of the people of Palestine; and In view of the fact that people of conscience in the international community have historically shouldered the moral responsibility to fight injustice, as exemplified in the struggle to abolish apartheid in South Africa through diverse forms of boycott, divestment and sanctions; and Inspired by the struggle of South Africans against apartheid and in the spirit of international solidarity, moral consistency and resistance to injustice and oppression;

We, representatives of Palestinian civil society, call upon international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the

apartheid era. We appeal to you to pressure your respective states to impose embargoes and sanctions against Israel. We also invite conscientious Israelis to support this Call, for the sake of justice and genuine peace.

These non-violent punitive measures should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.



Why divestment? Why Oberlin? Why now?

Words from current Oberlin students about why they're involved with divestment at Oberlin now.

As both an American and a Jew I feel implicated in the persistence of occupation and apartheid in Israel Palestine. This is not to say that I am in anyway ashamed of my Jewish identity. To do so would be to duplicate the faulty assumption (perpetuated by Zionist rhetoric), which equates Jewish identity with the interests of the Israeli state. I do not appreciate having my Jewish identity reduced to the limited confines of a racist and xenophobic mind set. Nor do I appreciate being excluded from my own Jewishness for attempting to remain faithful to my own moral compass. The two are not mutually exclusive. Yet I am cautious to assert that my Jewish Identity is what gives me the right to critique the Israeli state. doing so would completely contradict my attempt to recognize my privilege in this matter. This is perhaps the "personal baggage"



that I bring to this campaign, but it is also part of the work itself.

-Aaron Braun,
2013

I support divestment because it educates people around the world about the grave human rights abuses being committed against the Palestinian people, while simultaneously forcing the international community and the US government to address the unequal power differentials of the conflict, which are most explicitly characterized by Israel's apartheid policies. Divestment is an effective strategy because it is non-violent, has worked in the past, and is something everyone can easily be a part of.

-Brittany Dawson, 2013

One reason I support BDS is because of the many ways in which Israel's border operates as a U.S. border in the service of empire. I reject all militarized, racist, colonial borders, locally, nationally, and globally. Solidarity has to be about locating ourselves in relationship to struggle, and as an American Jew I strive to be in solidarity with Palestinians who have issued this call, because I don't want walls built in my name.

-S.G., 2014

This divestment campaign is extremely important because if our own government refuses to hold Israel accountable for its ongoing violations of Palestinian rights, then the responsibility to make change falls upon private citizens and institutions like Oberlin College. For too long, Israel has acted with complete impunity as it has destroyed the lives of Palestinians and assaulted their human dignity. For decades the Israeli state has been sheltered from international scrutiny and accountability by the exceptional diplomatic and economic favors bestowed upon it by the United States. This makes our role as US citizens even more urgent and relevant. Support the divestment campaign, and show the rest of the country and the entire world that we here at Oberlin will not stand by and be silent while atrocities are committed with the assistance of our tax dollars and the complicity of our political leaders.
-Daniel Gould, 2013

The more I work with the Oberlin College administration, the more I find that people get too caught up in finances to see how they can make justice happen. BDS provides an opportunity for our college to demonstrate the commitment to justice that is at the base of Oberlin's existence.
-John Bergen, 2015

I believe in the BDS movement because I believe in Palestinians rights to self-determination and to freedom. I support the BDS movement because it is a grassroots resistance movement directly organized by Palestinians in fighting both Israel's colonial domination and Western hegemony and capitalism. -J.G.

“This is perhaps the “personal baggage” that I bring to this campaign, but it is also part of the work itself.”

I support BDS because it aims to recognize the possibilities for non-violent resistance given the contemporary limiting power of sovereign nation-states. As a U.S. citizen, I actively support the militarized, illegal, violent, and colonial borders that systematically occupy and destroy the Palestinian nation. Oberlin, too, actively supports the gross injustices occurring in the region, and we must support the call for BDS in solidarity with Palestine.
-A.D. Hogan, 2013



Why divestment? Why Oberlin? Why now?

Words from current Oberlin students about why they're involved with divestment at Oberlin now.

Oberlin's divestment initiative exemplifies the inclusive nature of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement. As a BDS initiative, it reiterates the international Palestine solidarity community's commitment to antiracist organizing by recognizing and rejecting discrimination in both local and global contexts.

BDS empowers everyday people, those of us who don't hold high governmental positions, to raise the cost of the Israeli government's noncompliance with international law. Oberlin's divestment campaign provides students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members with a space to employ their knowledge and compassion toward one specific initiative that can truly effect change.

-Amanda Jacir, 2013



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Who has pledged to divest?

Oberlin Students for a Free Palestine are joining an international call! Worldwide, churches, unions, and colleges and universities, have supported the Palestinian call for BDS by launching various campaigns. Some of these organizations include:

- The Presbyterian Church
- World Council of Churches
- United Church of Christ
- New England Conference of the United Methodist Church
- Quaker Friends Fiduciary Corporation
- The Church of England
- United Church of Canada
- Britain's National Union of Journalists

- IMPACT (the Irish Municipal, Public and Civil Trade Union) which is Ireland's largest public sector and trade union
- The Ontario Chapter of the Canadian Union of Public Employees
- The Congress of South African Trade Unions
- UC Berkeley
- UC Irvine
- UC San Diego
- Duke University
- Evergreen State College
- Hampshire College
- Arizona State University
- Brown University
- Brooklyn College
- Columbia



- University
- University of Western Sydney
- University of Manchester





contact information:
sfp.oberlin@gmail.com
oberlin.edu/stuorg/sfp

