

Attendance:

Lisa De Carlo
Peter Levine
Christina Fournier
David Muller
Kayla Rosen
Sarah Cunningham
Fulvio Domini
Annie Phan
Camille Harley

Faculty Presentations

1. Opposition to Divest

Question: Is divestment going to relieve the social harm felt by Palestinians?

- Wording of proposal is too vague
 - Final clause: “institutions that provide products that contribute to violent acts against Palestinian citizens”
 - This could serve as a reason to boycott Israel in general, which is not the intention of ACCRIP
- Over 1.5 million Palestinians still reside in camps
- In many places (Syria, Egypt) they are considered foreigners, with no health care, access to education
- Palestine has not succeeded in creating a solid leadership structure that would allow it to negotiate with Israel
- Only way the situation will be improved is if the situation itself is solved
 - Divesting would simply change the situation, it will not solve it
- Relieving the occupation will not really change the harm to Palestinians
- What needs to happen are **negotiations**, and this will not be brought about by divestment
- Divestment may anger the Israelis and increase the social harm inflicted on Palestinians, possibly result in ethnic cleansing
- If Brown divests, it may be responsible for additional outbursts of violence (acts of retaliation) in the Middle East
- Need to talk to experts, representatives

Pushback: ACCRIP’s role is not to solve all of the world’s conflicts, but to make a statement recognizing the wrongness of Israeli occupation

- ACCRIP’s charge is not only to deal with issues that students bring to it, but to deal with issues that the committee feels appropriates

2. Brown professor: opposes asymmetry of how this issue is presented

- Reflects concern of faculty and students at Brown
- Jewish students feel marginalized
- Is wrong to target just one problem, and villainizing Israel is contributing to anti-Semitism

- Doesn't argue against the purpose of divestment (recognizes the human rights violations of Israel), but is against the narrowly defined scope
- Many other countries (Turkey, China) are also human rights violators

3. Professor in support of divestment

- Is a structural issue that has been going on for decades
- Implicates the US because Israel is the largest recipient of US military and monetary aid
- Takes courage of Brown students to speak up about this
- Represents the petition of 63 faculty members in support of divestment
 - This list, and the Brown divest students, represent what Brown wants
 - Represents all races, religions
- This is a moral issue for Brown
- President Paxson dismissed a vote by students on this issue, and said just in this case students should limit themselves to discussion in the classroom and negotiations
- Israel has been receiving so much support it "does not know how to stop itself"
- Trump administration has equated support for divestment as anti-Semitism, which is not true
- If many Jews stand with Palestinians against injustice, it is impossible to call it anti-Semitic
- The argument that divesting would lead to additional violence in the Middle East is just speculation
- Have historical evidence that divestment does help
- shouldn't talk about the future, should think about the last 17 years of Palestinian injustice
- There are parts of the Jewish community that support divestment
 - Letter from Jewish community against divestment did not consult the Jews who do support divestment
 - ACCRIP should hear the Jewish community that does support divestment

Discussion

- To the groups who bring forth divestment, the Committee wants to know what other alternative measures (other than divestment) were considered
 - Write letters to those companies
 - Go to public meetings at those companies
- David: we must make an educated decision, we must be deliberate and take our time
- Wanted more negotiation on:
 - The language/wording of divestment
 - Profiting vs facilitating
 - Consider alternatives to divestment

Voting

1. Is does the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory constitute social harm?

Yes: 7

Abstain: 2

2. “We recommend that the Brown Corporation exclude from Brown's direct investments, and require Brown's separate account investment managers to exclude from their direct investments, companies identified as facilitating human rights violations in Palestine. In addition, the Investment Office will share with all investment managers the University’s desire to adhere to this investment philosophy. We recommend that the Corporation and Brown’s separate account investment managers maintain the withdrawal of investments from said companies until they cease to engage in social harm.”

Yes: 6

No: 2

Abstain: 1