

BAY AREA WOMEN IN BLACK

DIVESTMENT PROPOSED AT UC BERKELEY

On March 25, the president of UC Berkeley Students Association (ASUC), vetoed a bill calling for divestment from companies that provide military support for the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The bill had been passed a week earlier by the ASUC senate. A senate meeting to override the veto is being scheduled for April 7 or the following Wednesday.

The student senate bill specifically provides for divestment by both the ASUC and the university of holdings in General Electric and United Technologies based on Israel's use of the products of these companies in indiscriminate attacks on Palestinian civilians and on its infrastructure. The bill states:

...General Electric holds engineering support and testing service contracts with the Israeli military and supplies the Israeli government with the propulsion system for its Apache Assault Helicopter fleet, which, as documented by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, has been used in attacks on Palestinian and Lebanese civilians...

...United Technologies supplies the Israeli government with Blackhawk helicopters and with F-15 and F-16 aircraft engines and holds an ongoing fleet management contract for these engines, and Amnesty International has documented the Israeli government's use of these aircraft in the bombing of the American School in Gaza, the killing of Palestinian civilians, and the destruction of hundreds of Palestinian homes...*

The bill provides that

...the ASUC will further examine its assets and UC assets for funds being invested in companies that a) provide military support for or weaponry to support the occupation of the Palestinian territories, or b) facilitate the building or maintenance of the illegal wall or the demolition of Palestinians homes, or c) facilitate the building, maintenance, or economic development of illegal Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian territories...

ASUC President Smelko, who did not attend the meeting, justified his veto by claiming a lack of sufficient debate even though the meeting lasted for six hours and was attended by over 200 people including U.C. students and interested members of the community with 76 people testifying. Prospects for a veto override are favorable inasmuch as only 14 senate votes are needed to override the veto, and the bill was approved by a 16-4 vote. Because intense pressure is likely to be brought to bear on those who voted in favor of the bill, we ask that you support them by attending this important senate meeting. See <http://calsjp.org> for information on when and where the meeting will be held.

* Amnesty International - "Fueling Conflict: Foreign Arms Supplies to Israel/Gaza"
Human Rights Watch - "Fatal Strikes: Attacks on Civilian Homes"
New England Conference of the United Methodist Church Divestment Task Force Report and Recommendations: <http://www.neumc.org/pages/detail/178>
Israeli Air Force - <http://www.iaf.org.il/Templates/Aircraft/Aircraft.IN.aspx?lang=EN&lobbyID=69&folderID=82&docfolderID=211&docID=18321¤tPageNumber=5>

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LEARN MORE

LIST OF BOOKS ABOUT PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

<i>Israel/Palestine: How to End the War of 1948</i>	By Tanya Reinhart
<i>The Road Map to Nowhere</i>	By Tanya Reinhart
<i>The Iron Wall Israel and the Arab World</i>	By Avi Shlaim
<i>Jewish Schizophrenia in the Land of Israel</i>	By Rabbi David. J. Forman
<i>The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine</i>	By Illan Pappé
<i>Palestine Peace Not Apartheid</i>	By President Jimmy Carter
<i>Understanding the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict</i>	By Phyllis Bennis
<i>The Other Side of Israel</i>	By Susan Nathan
<i>The Lemon Tree</i>	By Sandy Tolan
<i>The Israeli Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy</i>	By John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt

PARTIAL LIST OF WEBSITES

Haaretz Israeli Newspaper	http://www.haaretz.org
Christian Peacemakers	http://www.cpt.org
If Americans Knew	http://www.ifamericansknew.org
B'Tselem, Israeli Peace Group	http://www.btselem.org
Rabbis for Human Rights	http://www.rhr-na.org
Aljazeera English	http://www.english.aljazeera.net
Electronic Intifada (Palestinian site)	http://electronicintifada.net
Maan News (Palestinian)	http://www.maannews.net/en
Jewish Voice for Peace	http://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org
Sabeel	http://www.sabeel.org
Brit Tzedek v'Shalom	http://www.btvshalom.org

Bay Area Women in Black are Jews and allies who stand against militaristic and fundamentalist leadership in all countries, including our own. We wear black as a sign of our mourning for all the Iraqi, Israeli and Palestinian lives that have been lost as a result of war, militarization and violence. As part of the international movement of Women in Black, we seek to transform women's mourning for the dead into a powerful refusal of the inevitability of war.

Join us at the Grand Lake Theater every Saturday at noon to register your protest and your presence as we continue to urge the end of the US military and financial support for Israel's disastrous occupation.

The group with flags and signs supporting Israel is the San Francisco Voice for Israel, a local group who oppose Bay Area Women in Black's criticism of the policies of the Israeli government and military. BAWIB is not anti-Israel. BAWIB believes Israel's occupation is wrong and deprives Palestinians of basic human rights. BAWIB calls for the end of the occupation and its violent effects on Israelis and Palestinians. The flyers distributed by Voice for Israel do not accurately reflect BAWIB.