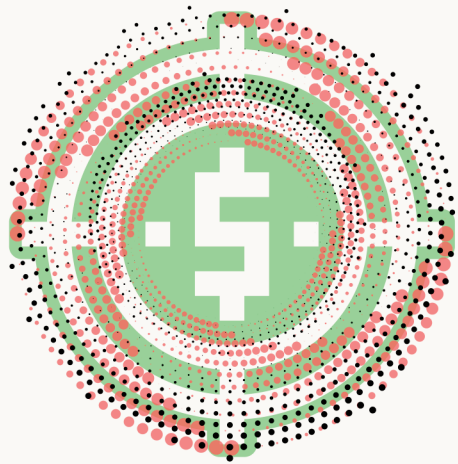




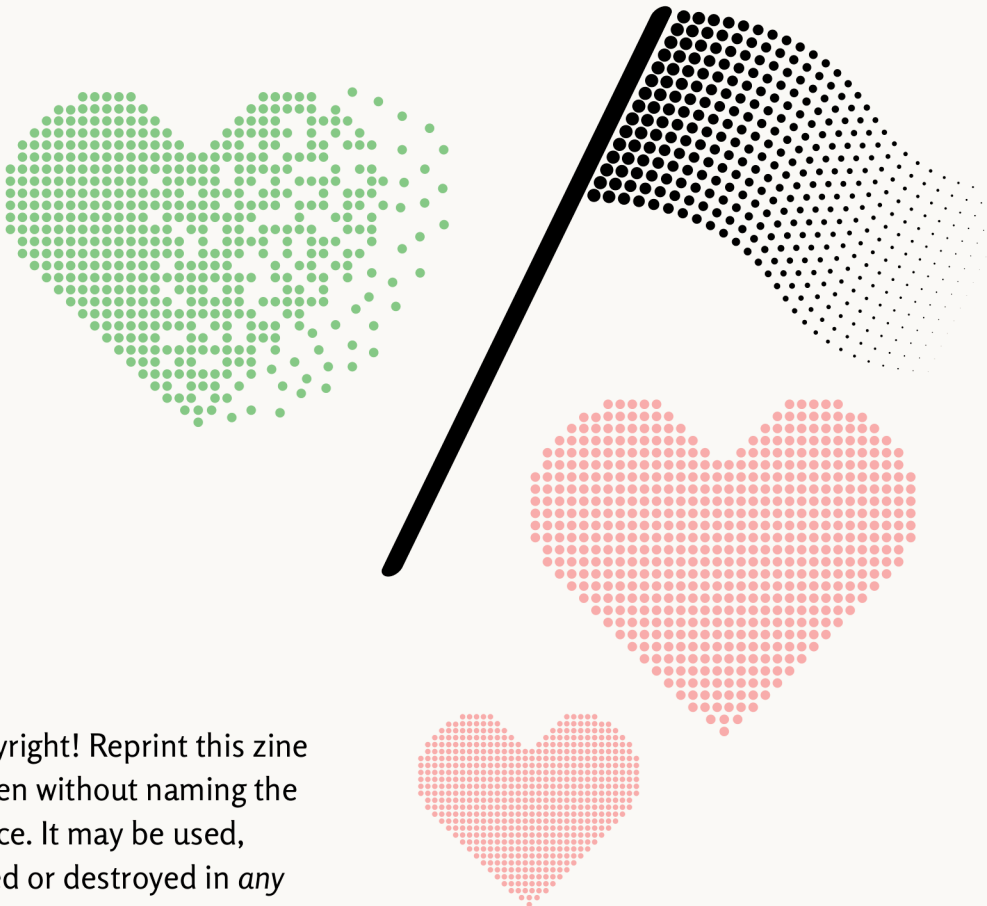
DIVESTMENT IS IMPOSSIBLE
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REFLECTIONS
FROM THE
UNIVERSITY
OCCUPATION
MOVEMENT
SPRING-
SUMMER
2024

The following are some reflections from countless nights sleeping on the quad at multiple universities and countless meetings with friends old and new. The wave of university occupations in solidarity with the people in Gaza have had their ups and downs.

This zine will focus on offering critique but we would like to preference this critique with a recognition. The amount of energy put into this movement has been truly impressive and some really cool things have been achieved. However much momentum we gain with any tactic, it's always good to take a step back and be critical of ourselves and our movements. With love and solidarity the fight continues!



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6/16/2024 @maketotaldistro

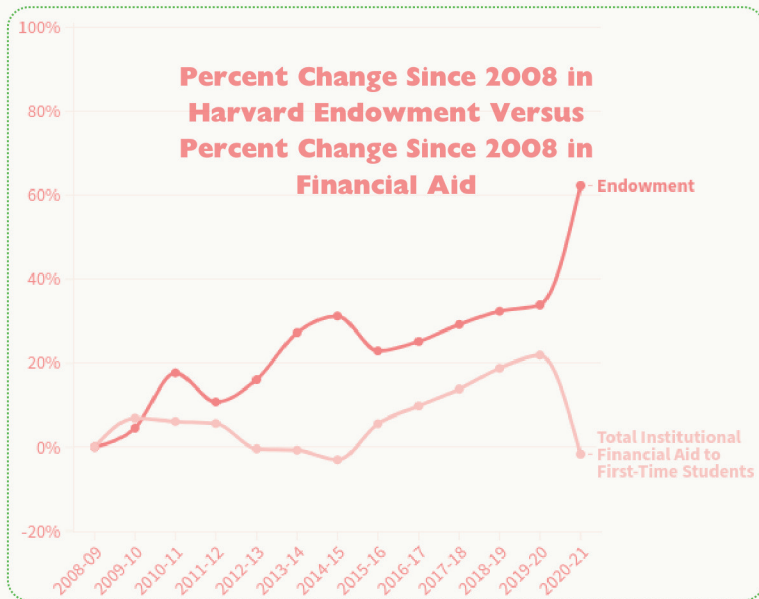
1. DISCLOSURE IS NOT LEGALLY POSSIBLE



Universities function economically as hedge funds; there are laws that govern their ability to disclose their investments in real time. There are also laws in 38 states discouraging any institution from partaking specifically in the BDS movement against 'Israel'. Some of these laws flat out ban any form of participation in the BDS movement: in a legal context, the student movement for university divestment could be argued to be a form of the BDS campaign.

"The BDS movement was established as a comprehensive economic effort to end international support for 'Israel's' colonial occupation of Palestine. While thirty 'US' states have banned the implementation of BDS measures, the efficacy of the movement outside of public relations is hard to quantify. An Israeli state research center found that 'Israel's' merchandise exports to the European Union had nearly doubled since the start of the BDS campaign." -Klee Benally

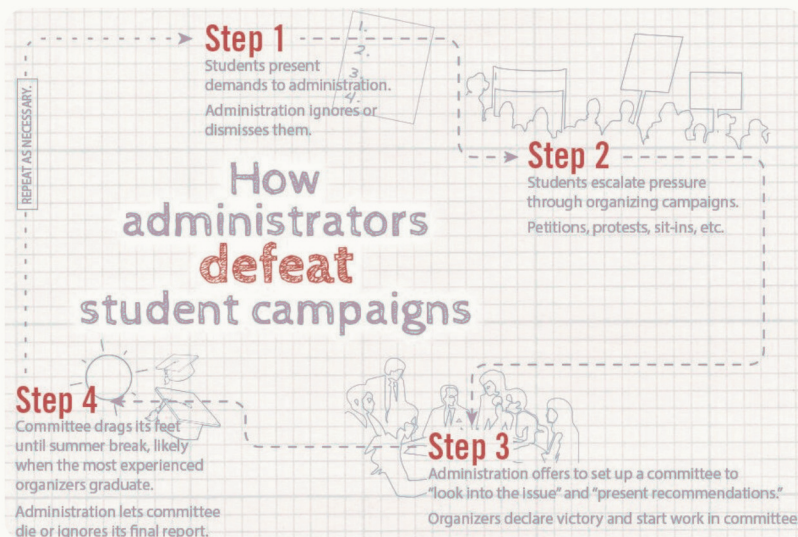
2. THERE IS NO ACCOUNTABILITY



Source: <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/InstitutionProfile.aspx?unitid=acb11abadb2>

Universities, despite sustained disclosure and divestment campaigns and growing pressure from the public to reveal their financial investments, have found many loopholes, and are using a variety of tactics to keep their investments a secret. From 2013-2015, there was a wide student movement calling on universities to divest from fossil fuels, specifically oil. Some universities, instead of completely divesting, re-invested into shell companies that funneled money to the oil companies they had 'divested' from. This greenwashing by the universities allowed them to dodge accountability to their commitments without making any material changes to their structure. Often times universities will commit to some level of divestment without committing to disclosure, often sighting legal challenges (see page 2). By not disclosing their investments, they are insuring that there will be no accountability and if there is, it will come much later once all the original student organizers have left the institution. One example of a lack of accountability is with endowments at Harvard University. Endowments have been defined by universities as a vital source to preserve and grow resources available to the students, and a priority is to use those funds for student financial aid. It can be seen through the graph however, that that is not the case.

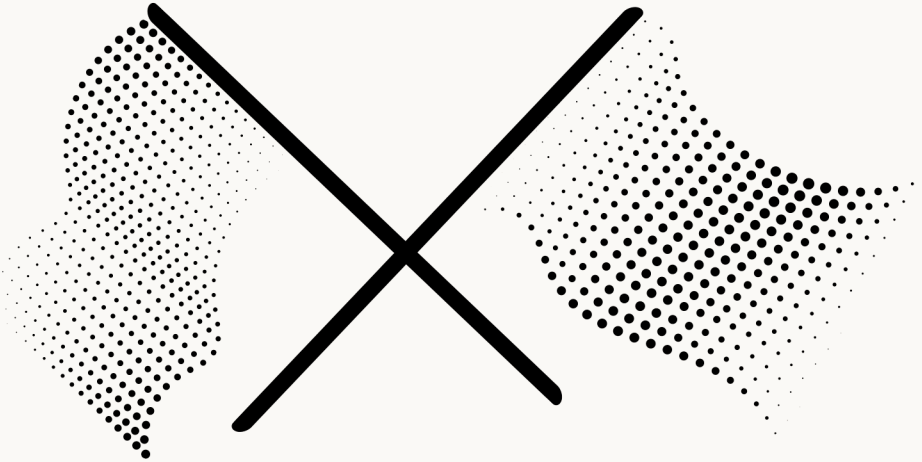
3. NEGOTIATIONS DIFFUSE OUR ENERGY



Often when students are making demands of a university, the administration will find protest participants who are more interested in clout and careerism than a free Palestine. They will offer symbolic seats at the table and sometimes even employment to the negotiators in an attempt to force the camp and campaign to capitulate. The following quote comes from a reflection written by students involved at the Northwestern university occupation that was sold out by the negotiators.

“On April 28th, Day 4 of the Northwestern Gaza Solidarity Encampment, the negotiations team - voted in by an ad hoc group on April 25th, Day 1 of the encampment - successfully sold a deal with the university administration to a room of organizers. The deal does NOT include any material divestment from the Israeli war machine. Apparently, divestment at Northwestern currently only means 'looking into deals with Starbucks and Sabra.' Of course, full disclosure has not been provided which also seems to be a non-issue to those in meetings with admin. The agreement also forfeits the right to escalate, because we will have allowed the university to frame escalation and other non-sanctioned actions as a bad faith breach of the agreement.”

4. EVEN IF DIVESTMENT WERE POSSIBLE, IT CHANGES NOTHING



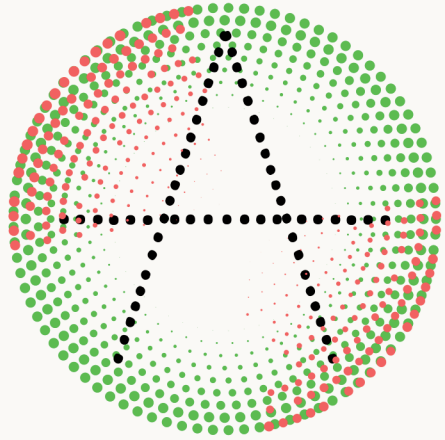
If a university does own shares in a targeted company, selling that stock simply transfers the ownership to another company or hedge fund that cares less about seeming 'progressive'. The system of investment by holding stock is incredibly hard to fight against; it is built in a way that keeps wealth accumulating wealth and cannot be disrupted meaningfully (at least not by divestment).

"Divestment strategies reinforce market logic. When shares are divested they are sold. There's still a market and incentive for buyers to push for returns. Investments are shifted from carbon polluting industries to so-called green ones (while nothing meaningful about the lifeways that are precipitating the crisis change). Boycott and divestment actions treat symptoms and are premised on appealing to an assumed 'good will and conscience' of capitalists. They are negotiations that frame bad investments vs good alternatives. The strategy of moralizing and shifting investments maintains the socio-economic order of capitalism. While it makes strategic sense to deny the necessary resources an opponent requires to operate, the endgame of negotiated financial risk is not the abolition of capitalism, it is the salvaging of it through agreeable reforms." -Klee Benally

POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES!

"Nobody in the world, nobody in history, has ever gotten their freedom by appealing to the moral sense of the people who are oppressing them"

-Assata Shakur




US support for the Israeli occupation for Palestine is bipartisan. No matter how loud our voices the people running the American colony are not going to stop their support for 'Israel'. The only way to stop the genocide is to actively stop the US war machine, the flow of capital, and zionists by any means necessary, which has been the main ask of Palestinians in Gaza since October 7th.

We can engage in resistance to the military industrial complex with the networks we built and lessons we learned from the student occupation movement. This can look like any number of things: Staging a protest outside of an arms manufacturer, blockading the entrance roads to an airport (a la A15), targeted graffiti, cockroaches in the admin building, setting off fire alarms during university board meetings, throwing copies of this zine from a rooftop on a windy day, cutting the power or internet or water to zionist businesses or places hosting zionist events, gluing locks, stink bombs in the air vents, showing up to a large protest with friends to escalate, smashing windows, occupying buildings, disrupting railroad traffic, looting, rioting, burning down a police precinct, clandestine asymmetrical warfare, the list goes on. The large marches and occupations haven't stopped the bombs, lets

think creatively about what actually could

IF NOT US, THEN WHO!?
IF NOT NOW, THEN WHEN!?



"Although states have long weaponized economic force through various means, divestment was popularized as an activist strategy against the colonial apartheid regime of South Africa in the 1980s.

Divestment was not the only factor in ending apartheid, the combination of decades of militant resistance, escalating colonial violence, and political campaigns all attributed to its demise. It has been

documented that due to sanctions on oil imports, South Africa built on Nazi technology and commercialized a process to convert natural gas and coal into liquid fuels.

Sasol, a state-operated company that was privatized, is now the seventh largest coal company in the world and their Secunda CTL synthetic fuel plant has been documented as

the world's single largest emitter of greenhouse gasses, releasing 56.5 million tons of CO₂ per year into the atmosphere.

The most effective divestment campaign in history led to the development of the single most polluting fuel plant in the world"

-Klee Benally, No Spiritual Surrender