



FJP-YALE Reaffirms its Solidarity with “Books not Bombs”

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April 21, 2024, Yale University, New Haven – The Yale University chapter of the national network of Faculty for Justice in Palestine (FJP) reaffirms our unwavering support of the “Books not Bombs” and #occupybeinecke actions, and roundly condemns the shameful threats to use disciplinary action or police intervention to interfere with and criminalize the students’ right to peacefully protest on a campus that for so many of them is also their home. We also refute the ridiculous efforts to manufacture patently false claims of violence and harassment of counter-protesters at the peaceful occupation of Beinecke Plaza. These spurious claims are particularly shocking given that the constant surveillance of the event by many faculty, administrators, police, and other authorities proves no such violence has occurred.

FJP-Yale does notice, however, a pattern of false allegations by counter-protesters. The last one was repudiated by the Yale Police Department using the claimant’s own video. These slanders are thus only the latest effort in spreading misinformation and attempting to tar popular and peaceful protest. This is the real story about what *is occurring* on Yale’s campus in desperate attempts to silence and repress pro-justice in Palestine students.

We stand in solidarity with our students as they advocate for meaningful change regarding Yale’s investments in weapons manufacturers. These investments enable the genocide in Gaza, just as they have contributed to ongoing mass violence and death elsewhere in the world. As these students have so eloquently expressed, institutions like Yale should be invested in education, *not* destruction. The students’ steadfast commitment to being heard, to affecting change, to holding the University accountable, and to caring for one another is not only admirable, but endlessly inspiring. They make us proud to serve them, teach them, and learn from them. To the students we say, we will not abandon you.

Since October 7th, 2023, Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank have been under an intense military siege. The U.S.-backed war has destroyed more than 70% of the residences in Gaza, one of the most densely populated areas on earth. The Israeli military, with unwavering U.S. support, has killed more than 34,000 civilians, a count that does not include the likely tens of thousands of others left to die, unburied and uncounted, under the rubble of their homes, schools, mosques, and churches, and those millions at imminent risk of death from the imposed famine.

We know that the decision to occupy Beinecke Plaza is not one taken lightly, but rather as a last resort in the face of the administration’s irresponsible, reprehensible, and shameful refusal to

“Books Not Bombs” SOLIDARITY STATEMENT | FJP (Yale)

engage with student demands for divestment. Over the course of several months, our students have presented detailed reports to the administration with requests for meetings to discuss divestment, all of which have been met with silence. This administrative commitment to silence continued this week with the trustees and administration refusing to engage with students beyond demanding that they leave, cutting their power, and threatening them with arrest for a peaceful occupation.

Through all of this, the students continue to demonstrate tremendous courage, foster radical compassion, and model for the international community that which the administration will not—the moral strength of character to oppose genocide in all its forms. We could not be more humbled or awed by their work, nor could we be more ashamed of this administration’s refusal to meet their demands.

Once again, we encourage the Yale community to remember that our students have the right to peacefully assemble, make their community visible, create art, and foster a community-based education program that grounds and supports their reasonable and necessary demands. Their organizing efforts this week are part of a long tradition of community-based grass-roots initiatives that provide support and education when institutions fail. And Yale is failing—failing in its obligations to listen and respond to students, failing in its mission of global leadership, and failing to model a morally-grounded strength of character in the face of genocide.

It is imperative that the administration listens to the voices of the Yale community and takes meaningful action to address concerns about the university’s investments in violence, war, and genocide. We urge the administration to engage in constructive dialogue with these brave students, reject the preposterous claim by the Investment Advisory Council that investing in weapons manufacture does not rise to the level of grave social harm, and work towards a resolution that aligns with the values of our university, as has been done with similar commitments to divest from gun manufacturing and focus on green investing.

The "Books Not Bombs" and #occupybeinecke actions are not only a call for divestment, but affirmations of the values we hold dear as educators. By emphasizing community education, these students are extending the principles of learning and enlightenment beyond the confines of the classroom. This peaceful, thoughtful action reflects the spirit of inquiry and dedication to global justice that we aim to instill in our students. Their dedication to advocating for divestment from weapons manufacturers aligns with our own commitment to ethical and responsible investment practices. Likewise, their carefully planned action reflects our pedagogical commitments. By fostering this beautiful space of community learning and exchange, they show us the true value of their Yale education: the capacity to think, act, and care beyond the university’s walls; to leave the world—and this institution—far better than they found it. We are proud to be represented by the courageous students who are leading this charge for justice and accountability.

Faculty for Justice in Palestine -Yale Chapter

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