

The Evergreen State College Did NOT Divest!

**Experience of the Evergreen Gaza Solidarity Encampment of 2024 and Lessons
Learned**

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Why an Encampment?

Every school and University in Palestine has been destroyed by the IOF (Israel Occupation Forces) while Major US Universities invest in the companies that fund and arm the Israel Zionist state's genocidal war. In response, students have been starting Gaza Solidarity Encampment's (GSE) in their complicit colleges and universities.

The Evergreen State College (TESC) in Olympia, WA, was one of over 300 of these schools. The goal of these encampments is to pressure Universities to stop sending OUR tuition money to these war profiteering companies.

An encampment is a form of resistance to business as usual. It can take the form of an occupation—i.e. occupying a building or space—or the form of a blockade that prevents business as usual. Blockades, occupations, and encampments have been utilized for many different struggles, including across the history of struggles in Olympia (see Olympia's History of Social Struggle section below).

How is Evergreen Funding the Genocide?

Evergreen receives funding through the University of Washington (UW) which contracts with Caterpillar Inc. (CAT Inc.), a company that provides bulldozers to Israel and the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces). In 2003, an armored Caterpillar Inc. bulldozer crushed Evergreen Student Rachel Corrie to death as she tried to prevent the bulldozer from destroying Gazan homes. Additionally, both Evergreen and the University of Washington have investment/stock portfolios that are tied up with Blackrock and other companies who arm and support the Israeli settler colonial project, like Boeing and CAT Inc. Specifically, Evergreen has a whopping \$20,000,000 in the University of Washington's pooled investments and \$3,000,000 in another Morgan Stanley account. Evergreen's investment in these stock portfolios means that Evergreen State College is directly profiting from the Palestinian genocide.

What Happened to the Encampment?

On April 23, 2024 The Evergreen State College (TESC)'s Gaza Solidary Encampment (GSE) started following a student walkout organized by Evergreen students and the Olympia/Tacoma based Beldaan Solidarity Network. The encampment, designed to pressure Evergreen to divest its funds, was held for seven (7) days. It came to an end on April 30th when a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) offered by the administration at the Evergreen State College was signed by members of the encampment's Bargaining Team, which consisted of faculty and students. The details of the MOU have since been sent out to Evergreen student emails and circulated in the news.

We want to be clear: The MOU is NOT a divestment.

- Evergreen has utilized this tactic to squash student movement before. We believe, given TESC's history and patterns with similar situations, this MOU will amount to nothing except the problematic perpetuation of a false narrative that Evergreen has divested.
- Examples of Evergreen implementing noncommittal MOUs and Disappearing Task Forces (DTFs) to stall and pacify student activism include when students demanded that Evergreen:

switch from using Aramark, divest from CAT Inc., develop police accountability reform measures, create sexual assault survivors advocacy and assailant accountability, develop anti-racist reform measures, and stop acquiring police and stop arming the police.

- A small group of students and faculty who formed the Bargaining Team decided to sign this agreement on behalf of the encampment. There has been frustration that the Bargaining Team acted without consensus of the encampment.

- The Cooper Point Journal wrote a false piece proclaiming that Evergreen divested. This has since been circulated across the internet and in a Democracy Now! report 5/6/24.

- Luckily, the MOU does not reject the creation of a new encampment.

Given the spread of misinformation stating that Evergreen is the first University to divest in the United States, we feel it is important to set the facts straight, to share our experiences, and to call for continued pressure on The Evergreen State College and other complicit institutions to STOP funding this genocide.

Olympia's History of Social Struggle

Olympia has a rich history of social struggle and uprising, including but not limited to:

- 2006-09: The Port Militarization Resistance (PMR) movement that popularly resisted the “War on Terror” weapons being moved through the port.

- 2008: The Dead Prez riot where concert participants rioted and flipped a cop car in response to racial police violence.

- 2008: The Flaming Eggplant Cafe, a student-run, non-hierarchical worker collective on The Evergreen State College campus, opens.

- Annual May Day protests

- 2010: Student vote to divest from Israel

- Anti-Police protests following the murder of John T. Williams in Seattle (2010), Trayvon Martin (2012), Michael Brown (2014), and the local non-fatal shooting of Andre Thompson and Bryson Chaplin (2015), and George Floyd (see below).

- Resistance to Thin Blue Line-type counter-protestors that emerged after Andre and Bryson's shooting, resulting in:

- 2015: Anti-police protest consisting of hundreds of locals (including a black bloc) chased a group of white supremacist skinhead counter-protestors out of downtown. The white supremacists were violently resisted, and their trucks/cars were heavily damaged as they tried to escape. Protesters were met with unanimous support.

- 2016: Reaffirmation of Divestment Vote followed by disruption of graduation by TESC Divest via banner drop after the Board ignored the vote

- 2016: Day of Absence / Day of Presence Event: Some Evergreen students protested racism on campus, escalating into an occupation and a resentment-fueled professor named Bret Weinstein spurring on right-wing outrage over “reverse racism.” This created a crisis for Evergreen as Weinstein went on Fox News and the school received bomb threats, etc.

- 2016: Ongoing anti-fascist disruption of Patriot Prayer protests outside Planned Parenthood (and elsewhere).

- 2016-17: Railroad blockades downtown that prevented fracking proppants from being transported from the port to Standing Rock. The 2016 blockade/encampment lasted one week and the 2017 blockade lasted two weeks.
- 2020: Rent strike and mutual aid organizing in response to COVID-19. Multiple months of abolitionist protests in response to the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, and systemic racial violence.

Stories of the Encampment

Below are two individual anecdotal experiences and takeaways from the encampment at Evergreen. It is worth noting that there remains a lot of confusion around the entirety of the seven-day timeline and these narratives should be understood to be part of a broader story.

“When I came into the camp, there seemed not to be a very clear understanding of the direction of the encampment. After having a conversation with a comrade who welcomed me, I got the sense that there was some feeling that there was a watering-down of demands. I stayed optimistic and approached the situation with an open mind and the understanding that we were all here in solidarity, to stop ‘business as usual’.

Going into the meeting, I was under the impression that there was a regularly occurring general assembly and open dialogue. However, the conversations I experienced were rushed, and only those who had attended previous meetings seemed to be privy to the details of escalation. Still, I was under the impression that a ‘bargaining/negotiation team’ was the current focus, and they would have conversations about escalations, and the terms the negotiation team had decided to fight for were unilaterally supported. As far as I know, there was not a democratic process to elect the bargaining team. It seemed like a lot of them were people who were predisposed to want to have a position of authority.

What followed was pretty confusing.

I had heard that there was discord because ‘outside agitators’ had begun to ‘undermine’ the work of the negotiation team who insisted they were not the sole deciders of the fate of the camp. Sure, that could be argued that it’s up to individuals to decide to continue autonomously, and sure, we must move as a unified front. As more people began to communicate about the encampment on the platform, there was a trickling-in of voices who expressed confusion, sought clarity, disagreed with the tactics being implemented by negotiating with admin, and tried to have an open dialogue about how to meet with solutions, including escalation was not discussed in enough detail.

Those who expressed confusion were met with hostility, and told to just ‘take the win’, and their voices were otherwise dismissed. After participants of the encampment began to cheer for their victory in the signing of the MOU, there seemed to be a sudden realization that what the negotiations team had done by cooperating with the administration was, quite frankly, a joke.

At one point, a few days in, the original bargaining team came back saying that one of their hard lines was that the bargaining team could only be students or faculty, no community members. It also seemed the case that people who would have held their ground more in bargaining (anarchists) did not want to go to sign up as bargainers because of security culture. They didn’t feel safe having admin know who they were. So the people that ended up volunteering were peo-

ple unconcerned with having their identities known by authorities. After people made a ruckus about wanting more transparency from bargaining team, the students with hard lines decided that they would totally switch out the bargaining team, except for one person who was incredibly patriarchal, refused to wear a quality mask in groups of people, talked over and condescended on comrades many many times. It just felt overall really shitty. The bargaining team clearly felt they were representing the majority of the encampment, or the people whose opinions mattered at the encampment. They definitely were not representing people well at all, there were so many people involved who did not want them to sign that memorandum and anytime people expressed criticism, bargaining folks said those people expressing criticism were making it all about ego and not centering Palestine. I think the bargaining team knew that people disagreed with them but decided that those opinions did not matter.

Ultimately, this was absolutely not a win; this was a betrayal.

If I had to offer any kind of solution, it seemed like everyone was tired, there didn't really seem to be a sense of familiarity, and more focus on the difficult parts of this work rather than on community building, education, and focus on growing the number of participants. People were bullied into silencing dissent, and maybe as a community, we can come together and learn how to prevent that.

Educating our community members about other forms of keeping each other safe, including militant defense tactics, encouraging complex conversations instead of keeping dialogue only available during certain hours of the day, and allowing the encampment to grow organically into the beautiful show of solidarity and liberation it can be—this is what I hope for future movements.”

“So, this is sort of pieced together from students who were there from day one, people who live in town and tried to lend their support, alumni, and the more fruitful and tenable conversations with, for lack of better terms, the ‘organizers’ and ‘authorized representatives.’

After the camp started there was already some tension between the more Leninist / committee with central leadership organizing model and other people who wanted a more horizontal approach. One valid criticism from them was that at certain points a lot of anarchists and more autonomist-leaning Marxists would show up and use a lot of jargon people weren't actually familiar with and exercise their expertise in consensus decision-making in a way that felt like railroading. Another is that the discussion about Palestine wasn't present enough. Unfortunately, in the end, this led to more and more stereotyping and in-group out-group outside agitator fear-mongering with identity opportunism and loaded appeals to moral emotion used to basically stifle any criticism of the fundamental scheme or any slippage of control away from a specific cadre.

Multiple people tried to engage in good faith discussions that seemed to get somewhere but then in meetings, they would just revert to the same hostile rhetoric about anarchist bomb throwers and so on, leading some to believe at least a couple of people in the more Leninist part of the cadre were just doing politics in the one-on-one conversations and primarily cared about maintaining control over the situation. This behavior had been witnessed at other times with other projects with these individuals. Essentially trying to isolate the struggle from a larger base of support in the process by keeping it to a certain class of people. This is all too reminiscent of the original use of the trope of outside agitators because two of the people who were most implicitly called out for being anarchist outsiders were Black.

As someone who held out hope for common ground and encouraged meetings between more centralized socialist Palestine organizations and anarchists in Tacoma and Seattle, I encouraged people to find common ground but seems like it was a lost cause. The discourse around anarchists and outside agitators is reflected in police and other capitulating student leadership across the country and serves to separate the students from mass power and thus from the capacity to exert real pressure on the institution. One other disagreement is the nature of the institution itself. While it may make sense to parse out why burning everything down immediately would be a bad idea there was a general chauvinism about how great Evergreen is that essentially whitewashed the institution and admin and elided the reality of Evergreen as a business which will only give concessions if their bottom line is being effected and a more drastic escalation is in the horizon.

Some alumni including myself who worked on previous divestment campaigns and who happened to be anarchists and were involved in radical activity on campus were invited to the camp to give a talk to answer questions about radical activity on campus and past struggles and in my case about the situation in Palestine itself. This attempt to glean some institutional memory (something admins often have that students lack) was met with hostility while we were giving this talk. People close to the bargaining committee trashed pretty much all the signs and were making it out as the camp called for their abolition when the consensus had been people wanted more transparency. This to me highlights a pattern of defensiveness when accountability was asked alternative models or creative brainstorming were suggested. People were shamed for wanting to have fun and use their imagination which to me had the hallmarks of a certain kind of burn-out inducing militancy that forgoes ingenuity and morale in exchange for obedience and stultifying misery. That of course is an overstatement in this case, and it does make sense people would be hyper-vigilant about flippant engagement when there's a genocide going on. This exact strategy of giving DTFs in exchange for people standing down has been used to pacify the struggle at Evergreen and also elsewhere in the country.

This is not an advanced concession in my opinion and also does not mean Evergreen will divest if the DTF says they should, the Board of Trustees still has to make that call six months from now. Maybe people will not graduate or will burn out before this is over and maybe they'll be able to find a new source of the \$15 million tied up with UW's Zionist-linked funds.

What's important now is finding ways of continuing to mobilize and apply pressure while there's still energy and urgency and tap into that large body of supporters that were willing to come out when there was activity on campus.

Regarding Anarchists: Anarchists were both called young and naive or 'grown ass adults' meddling in their affairs so to me this was just more identity opportunist smokescreen. In the past in Olympia anarchists and autonomist communists have worked alongside ISO (International Socialist Organization), the DSA (Democratic Socialists of America), and other groups and many even have strong disagreements with other anarchists so there is possibility here. We can even look at A15 (April 15 — a networked day of action on simultaneously targeting and shutting down IDF related logistics across the country) as a successful action done by network-oriented anarchists working with larger more authority-minded orgs. There's plenty of discourse internally about repression and care being taken when actions do take place, but also the need for generalizable fundamentally conflicting action in these times, which could look like logistics-oriented blockades. There's also a bunch of scaremongering about graffiti which like if someone is really uncomfortable or it's a chill event maybe read the room, but graffiti is pretty low stakes

in Olympia and police are usually escalated due to the content of your protest, not its form, hence the brutality against protests all over the country.

Regarding Peace Policing: In the encampment, Palestinians were upset by a diverse group tagging stuff, but then after they agreed to stop, just 20 minutes later a security team surrounded them and started pointing them out to the police.

Regarding Police: Just because the stick aspect of social control isn't cracking down doesn't mean there isn't a method of control being implemented a la the carrot in this analogy.

Also in terms of identity opportunism, I think it's important to remember that SWANA (South-west Asians and North Africans) and Palestinians aren't a monolith, and attempts to lambast one of the most active sections of a radical movement using token members of oppressed groups who are basically elevated to be representatives of said oppressed group on its entirety should be met with criticism WHILE also taking into account how marginalized people can feel further marginalized in movements when they very well should be being centered. There's really no reason that with proper respect autonomous action and bargaining can't implicitly work together and not become each other's wreckers and so on and an interest to hear people's paths forward to answer the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine)'s call for unity and (thought out) escalation."

Quotes from the Encampment

Here are quotes from those who were at the encampment which we hope serve as sources of inspiration and education for future actions.

What Went Well? Inspirations!

"For me, hope came from conversations about spirituality and sacrifice, kindness, and inclusion of an unhoused student who didn't even know what Palestine was, and the tree planted for Rachel Corrie."

"Folks who showed up with a warm attitude and showed genuine interest in connecting with the community, folks who took initiative to help with tasks, people practicing COVID safety."

"I am thankful for everyone who was there holding down the encampment and supporting each other."

"I would salute the comrades who were bullied and threatened and attacked but kept showing up every single day and night in the rain, talking to community members, helping people set up tents and tarps, organizing food, keeping camp clean, and doing generally a ton of care work without recognition."

"I think many folx put in effort, work, and had the best of intentions I think that means a lot and it matters."

Inspirations from Other Encampments:

"Some of the beauty in the other encampments was cultural exchange, dance, song, creation of cultural strengthening space and people showing up with their families or communities behind them."

“When we build autonomous zones where our needs are met, we can have free-flowing and continuous discussions—that’s one of the successful tactics I have seen at other encampments.”

What Went Wrong? Frustrations

These quotes made up the bulk of our conversations and are organized into categories for clarity.

1. Lack of Communication, Connection, and Preparedness

“Hostility and urgency in the meetings, rudeness to community members, the mud and no heat sources, TESC defining the terms for us.”

“Everything moved so fast, I was so confused about how things were moving forward when absolutely no one could direct me to integral sources of information.”

“The disorganization, the communication gaps, the weird victory of negotiating demands were red flags.”

“From day one too, like, the end of the week I hadn’t had a full conversation with anyone at the camp other than my own circle, it felt very loose and very lacking in direct communication.”

“When I asked for folks to share the sources they got their information from regarding Evergreen’s endowment portfolio, Evergreen’s connections with CAT Inc., and informed the demands and explicitly connected Evergreen with Israel, I felt like it was treated as an unimportant question.”

“The lack of other roles established for folks to step into, or at least the communication of them to those seeking clarity, seems to be one of the most prolific sources of frustration that’s been expressed.”

“Alongside bargaining, there should already be preparation for escalation and retaliation, whether it actually occurs or not.”

“I do think the lack of centering care/capacity building/tending to one another’s emotions within the space, as far as I can tell, was a major dilemma that eventually resulted in things like physical altercations, esp. when paired with burnout.”

2. Hierarchies, Leadership, and Peace Policing

“Labor was consolidated within a mostly fixed group, who seemed to simultaneously invite the wider community to come to support the encampment and then refuse to let them step in and relieve them in their roles so they could rest and avoid burn out, or to educate and explore more foundational tactics to bolster the health, security, and effectiveness of the encampment.”

“I was frustrated by the secret conversations between the GSE ‘representatives’ and the Admin, and the fact that the GSE representatives signed the proposal without talking to the GSE while other members of the encampment were peace policing.”

“I think the bargaining team alienated community members (with rhetoric condemning outside agitators) who could’ve supported militant actions like those taken at other universities (building occupations, defense against police raids), all of which could’ve disrupted the administration’s operations and create a better bargaining position, instead of just having a campout. And people threatened to snitch on each other if any laws were broken. Not a good atmosphere to create if you want to inspire trust and willingness to act boldly.”

“I remember from the second day asking around about how we were going to help the wider community plug-in, and it was shut down by folks who wanted to keep it ‘student only’, completely killing the momentum of wider community solidarity and involvement.”

“The bargaining team didn’t move at a pace the encampment could keep up with to allow the necessary time needed to get its shit together and have basic important discussions (like security, information dissemination, establishing community culture, etc.) so we could move together as a unified intifada with a well thought out plan.”

3. Hostility

“One member of the GSE ‘organizers’ said they’d run another attendee out of town if they didn’t leave. One person snuck up on and hit someone in the head and then threw a shoe at them over a disagreement. Paint cans, that were for community use, were torn out of one anarchist’s hands before the conversation about their use happened.”

“There were other repeated moments where black and brown and trans people were bullied and made to feel unsafe in the space—this wasn’t a secret but completely overlooked and there was no community accountability to improve the conditions of safety for marginalized comrades. And ‘outside agitator’ discourse nonsense that functioned to push out anarchist comrades in the community who ARE absolutely dedicated to the movement.”

“There was a lot of transmisogyny and anti-blackness used by a lot of the people who appointed themselves organizers and leaders to maintain control of the group and it was horrible to see a lot, if not most, of the people at the camp stand behind them and defend them.”

“I had also talked to a comrade who was doing graffiti who told me they were chased down by a member of the night watch and chased around camp with a flashlight in the name of the peace police and stopping graffiti! How absurd at the lack of respect for the diversity of tactics and peace policing!”

“On the downside, I also seen a lack of solidarity between comrades and community members including, recreating ageist power structures in the form of being ageist towards our younger high school comrades and disrespecting them on the basis of age.”

“A lack of acknowledged white privilege within the space, bearing witness to white community members talking over Palestinians and POC, trying to ‘whitesplain’ them and interrupt them while talking, re-creating racist power structures and acting like settlers.”

“Another incident witnessed is when anarchist comrades came in solidarity and were being accused of being outside agitators, this was a clear incident of a lack of solidarity.”

4. Meeting Styles

“The classroom style (blackboard, front of ‘class’ some standing others sitting) was the source of a lot of tension.”

“Meetings were a shit show, there were no meeting protocols ensuring respectful communication, coherent note taking, task accountability, post-meeting report outs, etc. I mentioned and shared a zine multiple times about how to hold a good meeting (see ‘Rusty’s Rules of Order’ in Further Reading section) and the response was giving the vibe of, ‘Yeah, I’m not reading that shit.’ And I don’t bring this up for no reason—meeting structure and procedures have a purpose, and it’s all spelled out clearly in the zine. If folks participating in meetings had read that zine and practiced applying those protocols, we could have avoided a lot of the problems that ended up unfolding in and after the general assembly meetings.”

5. A Lack of Focus on Palestine

“Also, the fact that a local political candidate (Desiree Toliver) as well as openly Zionist folx had any ounce of space communicating and swaying ‘organizers’ just seems painfully misdirected and uncomfortable for Palestinian community members, and folx who went to be a part of the change.”

“There are many ways Palestine could have been centered better from the beginning too. Creating a safe altar and spiritually hygienic presence in the group to hold space for the fucking heart-wrenching grief we all hold for the martyrs would have been nice to see—hearing about an unattended altar burning down a table was disturbing. A lack of study groups to read news articles and ground ourselves in the present moment of what is happening in Palestine was a lost opportunity. Sharing out first-hand accounts of Palestinians experiencing genocide and their direct demands for escalation would have been helpful—I did hear people bring up Palestinian calls for escalation but it was steamrolled by peace police.”

6. Our Goals Were Not Met

“The ‘wins’ were merely reforms and the concessions were not being decided by consensus but rather by the self-appointed leaders of the bargaining team.”

“The signed proposal gives the idea that the encampment’s demands were fulfilled without actually divesting.”

The Aftermath: Questions and Answers and Lessons Learned and Ways Forward!

These were some of the lessons learned and questions asked (and answered!) by the members of the encampment and the community at large:

Q: If the stirrings of leadership and hierarchies within movements like these tend to spell their failures, how can we shy away from folks leaning into leadership roles? How can we dismantle hierarchies that form out of situations like this?

- A: It is important to establish communal values and agreements for the space of the struggle, to focus in on the less romanticized aspects of struggle. This includes: care work, who is doing the cleaning and washing up, is there a space for emotional processing? And educational shared space is really important. Trust isn’t built through exercises only, it is built through re-humanizing ourselves and each other.

- A: In certain movements, folks in an assembly will select ‘delegates’ whose role it is to communicate what the assembly votes to communicate with (in this case) the administration but does NOT have the power to make decisions on the assembly’s behalf. Making sure to communicate clearly and get as many people’s input as possible to make informed decisions collectively is absolutely key.

Q: How can participants effectively navigate disagreements and distrust within a movement while maintaining a clear vision of the goal, and not letting little fissures destroy a movement?

- A: Focusing on organizing consensus practices that prioritize every voice being heard while not derailing, and making sure needs are met. In a movement where collective agreement is required, there should be some communal agreements. This isn’t hierarchy but immune defense against opportunism.

- A: Vigilance is a necessity of course and infiltration is always possible. But if we recognize that there is a lack of trust, a lack of or breakdown in communication, a lack of material safety and sustainability, those needs are paramount and should be conveyed and given the necessary attention. Consolidating leadership/power/labor into fixed entities is not conducive to liberatory praxis. I hope moving forward there can be dedication to comprehensively assessing and addressing the needs of the entire collective that ends up being involved. Perhaps that would be in the form of some more stratified and effectively communicated roles or affinity groups to plug into.

- A: Community development should have been a priority too—I could tell everyone was feeling off-put by the unfamiliarity and standoffish attitudes normalized from the beginning. Trust-building activities and group discussions that weren't related to decision-making or arguing political stances could have been beneficial.

- A: What helped after splits like this in Seattle was the creation of intentional informal time for folks to talk in a less high-stress setting and find common ground despite disagreement about opinions about centralized committees.

- A: I think in order to get to that kinda solidarity it might be prudent to root dialogue in something other than specific ideological distinctions, doing so tends to devolve into constant spats of ego-driven conflict that is not conducive to the longevity of this movement. Like there's a time and place for that kind of debate and articulation of tactics and it's important to distinguish between affiliates of specific orgs/groups who might be involved, but in order to build something that holds we gotta base it in the shared reasons we're here, the reality we are in and the action it necessitates.

Q: How can we mitigate burnout, which lends itself to fissures, defensiveness, and problematic behavior?

- A: We should try to prevent toxic martyrdom and implement a structure of people taking breaks, while also building in community emotional processing, grief processing, learning how to regulate our nervous systems so they don't get fried, building in joyful activity and appreciation for one another, etc. Centering care for one another is radical and necessary and the only way we're going to move forward.

- A: Individuals in this kind of organizational effort getting to that point [of burnout] should be something that's actively accounted for and mitigated accordingly. People burning out because of the labor they're doing means that they're shouldering too much of it on their own, and/ or they are actually lacking support from the rest of the group.

- A: Community gathering spaces and events like house shows, parties and things to do on campus or downtown has been an issue since COVID-19. I feel these spaces make up a lot of cross-pollination that assist in community identity and connecting on a personal level.

Q: How can we inspire a better movement in the future?

- A: I think also what should have been worked on during the encampment is working on not recreating the outside world within the encampment, but rather creating a different world we all know is possible and actively working towards it by creating dual power structures and acting by outliving and creating the world we want within our actions. For me I didn't just see the Palestinian solidarity encampment, but also saw a community space where dual power can be created where students, workers, professors, and members of the community can gather to collectively pursue social revolution and a world where many worlds fit. It was so beautiful and nice to have for a time all our basic needs met and have free food and a community space for everyone.

- A: I think the entire community should have been called in from the beginning and camp foundational infrastructure, protocols, and conversations could happen in a non-hierarchical way. Many students who were at the camp sporadically were there as much as they could possibly be, so other members of the wider Olympia community could have served the role of holding shit down had they had the opportunity.

- A: I think a potential solution might be that as much as it's not ideal (we want a unified front) in Seattle during 2020 there was a separation group/march/event/location wise between

people who wanted to cater to the institutional end of organizing, and the people who wanted to employ direct action. Allowing people who are prioritizing their own safety, for whatever reason, to participate. Both can be valid, in my personal opinion, and can work really well together and not everyone has to participate in both methods. If distinguishable, a separate encampment could have been a legitimate solution.

Q: What's Next for Evergreen?

• A: From my perspective, there will only be Evergreen divestment if a campaign continues that educates, mobilizes, and acts strongly in support of divestment and Palestine and against the Israeli occupation. A coordinated inside-outside strategy where those who support divestment on the DTF are accountable to a strong organization on the outside is necessary. That will make possible the initial negotiated MOU become meaningful. In my opinion, the initial occupation was a first step that is not the end of a campaign but a meaningful beginning.

In Summary

Members of the encampment voiced the desire for more external support and a frustration at organized hierarchies/leaderships. The encampment suffered tension and disagreement largely due to: distrust, bad faith, hostility, and a lack of communication and community building.

In future struggles, we suggest:

- Setting aside ideological differences that get in the way of far more important and immediate goals
- A rejection of leadership and making no decisions without proper informed discussion with the members of the encampment
- The prioritization of working on creating more spaces and opportunities for external support, and understanding better practices for dealing with disagreements
- Uplifting the voices of the struggle
- Deeper community connection

Again, we would like to refocus on the ongoing issue at hand. There is a genocide in Palestine. The Evergreen State College and many other complicit institutions are bribing and breaking encampments and a false narrative of divestment is being spread. We must continue to put pressure on these and other complicit institutions to cease their financial support of this genocide BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY.

Our own individual grievances mean nothing in the face of the lives that are being taken in Palestine and we must put aside our differences to fight for the freedom and the salvation of the Palestinian people.

Our List of Demands

1. End the "Many Israels" class offering from the Evergreen course catalog and cut all ties with the Academic Engagement Network, and the Jewish Studies Zionist Network
2. End the militarization, surveillance, and political repression of pro-Palestinian activism on ALL college campuses
3. Abolish Evergreen police and parking services
4. Do not approve study abroad trips to occupied Palestine

5. Divest from ALL companies profiting from the occupation of Palestine
6. Pressure state legislature to divest from “israeli” corporations and Organizations
7. End U.S. “aid” to the false zionist entity and end the occupation of Palestine
8. Release ALL Palestinian prisoners

From an Anonymous Lawyer Speaking about the Failure of the MOU:

TESC Divests? Not Really At All.

D.C.

May 2, 2024

Yesterday, the Cooper Point Journal ran a story with the headline: “TESC AGREES TO DIVESTMENT: Greeners say ‘The Struggle Continues!’” In uncritical, triumphalist language, the article summarizes the terms of a supposed agreement entered into between four individuals claiming to represent the “Evergreen Gaza Solidarity Encampment” and TESC.

Despite the article’s claim that the agreement represents “won divestment processes”, the document really doesn’t do anything – and it certainly does not mean TESC will divest its investments from the State of Israel or the Israeli, American, and international companies that enable the genocide in Palestine.

To focus on what real and/or legal effect this agreement could possibly have, we’ll have to set aside a few issues like how the “Duly Authorized Student Representatives” came to represent the camp, etc. Taking the agreement at face value, does it even accomplish what it set out to? In a word, No. The agreement merely creates an “Investment Policy Disappearing Task Force” that is “charged with proposing revisions to investment policies.” The task force will “address divestment from companies that profit from gross human rights violations and/or the occupation of Palestinian territories.” Ultimately, the task force will only gather information and “complete a recommendation.” These are just vague and unenforceable promises, and TESC will be free to ignore whatever the task force does. The agreement does not contain any specific, concrete commitment to divest.

The ability to “propose revisions” and to “address divestment” is nothing the movement doesn’t already have. We don’t need to wait years to make our recommendation – it’s already clear: We want TESC to stop providing direct or even indirect financial support for American and Israeli wars, and specifically the genocide happening in Gaza right now. TESC has the information it needs to make this happen. It can and should identify its own investments and eliminate the ones that profit from the ongoing crisis in Israel and Palestine.

Why is this agreement so bad for us? Well, the whole point of the farce is to mollify the movement. The Investment Policy Disappearing Task Force lacks power and authority by design. And it’s shocking the Cooper Point Journal article uncritically praises the agreement. TESC’s way of killing student activity by creating dead end task forces is well-developed at this point. As Peter Boehmer observed in an article he published in last year (coincidentally one day before October 7):

- A common tactic by the Evergreen administration is to set up a task force called a DTF (Disappearing Task Force), where students have a token representation or the administration selects students who will go along with the objectives of the Evergreen administration even if they conflict with justice or real student power.

The Cooper Point Journal article quotes an unidentified student who said, “this is the beginning not the end.” But we know the opposite is true. By negotiating the end of the encampment in exchange for a nebulous task force that could only ever make mere recommendations, the four representatives bargained away what leverage the movement made this week and only got indefinite and unenforceable promises. This is an unqualified victory for TESC, which got the pacification they wanted and keeps complete control over its investments.

It’s an unqualified loss for the movement against genocide.

Further Reading

Info on the last decade of the Olympia/TESC BDS movement

Defending the Camp: A Report from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Gaza Solidarity Encampment

Communique From Autonomous UCLA Students After Zionist Attacks on Night Six of Palestinian Solidarity Encampment

History of Student Movements and Activism at The Evergreen State College

How to Hold a Good Meeting: Rusty’s Rule of Order

If We Burn: The Mass Protest Decade and the Missing Revolution – Vincent Bevins

List of History of Olympia Activism on It’s Going Down

List of History of Olympia Activism on Puget Sound Anarchists

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Anonymous
The Evergreen State College Did NOT Divest!
Experience of the Evergreen Gaza Solidarity Encampment of 2024 and Lessons Learned
November 14, 2025

Retrieved on December 3rd, 2025 from
<https://pugetsoundanarchists.org/evergreen-did-not-divest/>
This zine was a collective conversation between autonomous “students” and “community members” – or people who all live and fight in the same small town – reflecting on their experiences of the Palestine solidarity encampment at The Evergreen State College [in Olympia, WA, in the spring of 2024]. It’s not conclusive, nor of course does it seek to represent the thoughts and reflections of everyone who wished to see it escalate and expand beyond the physical and social borders of the school and student identity but it is a worthwhile analysis to share none-the-less.

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