

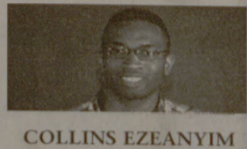
A doomed undertaking

Divestment campaign too simplistic to succeed

In the early 1980s, college students helped to eliminate the apartheid regime from South Africa through a divestment campaign, according to *Time* and *Newsweek*. This is a movement by students to pressure their universities to review their investment portfolios and eliminate stocks of companies they believe are aiding human injustices. The anti-apartheid divestment movement is a shining example of how focused and passionate college students can organize and make a difference in the world.

Now a new divestment movement is sweeping campuses from coast to coast. According to *Time*, the campaign involves students' efforts to pressure their universities to divest from any company doing "substantial business with Israel." The goal of divestment activists is to pressure Israel into changing its policies toward the Palestinians, which the students consider oppressive. According to *Time*, major universities involved in this divestment movement include the University of Michigan, the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Texas at Austin. Targeted companies include General Electric, IBM and McDonalds, according to *Time*. Unlike its anti-apartheid predecessor, this modern divestment movement is unnecessary, unjustified and ineffective. It also comes dangerously close to becoming anti-Semitic.

The problem with any movement against Israel is that the activists involved will always be suspected of harboring anti-Semitic feelings. Unfortunately, in the heated rhetoric that often accompanies discussions concerning Israel and the Middle East, it is hard to distinguish anti-Israel and anti-Semitic feeling. For example, according to *Time*, the Hillel Center for Jewish students at Berkeley was vandalized on the first day of Passover when someone threw a cinder block through the door and spray-painted its wall with an expletive regarding Jews. There was no evidence of a link to Berkeley's strong divestment campaign, but members of the movement have a duty to vehemently condemn any anti-Semitic words or actions. Instead, what they offered were weak and non-effective statements such as the one signed by 21 Berkeley faculty in which they "unequivocally" rejected "all forms of racism," according to *The Daily Californian*, Berkeley's student newspaper.



COLLINS EZEANYIM

Another deficiency of the divestment movement is its overall lack of effectiveness. This defect is twofold. First, the universities simply do not agree with the campaign, and see no reason to divest from Israel. As *Time* explained, "schools are not rushing to sell

right now." Secondly, the divestment movement faces serious opposition from pro-Israel supporters. Even at places such as Berkeley, where the divestment movement has a particularly loyal following, a counter-petition denouncing divestment has been circulated and has collected 4,000 signatures, according to *Time*.

This is much more than the divestment movement has been able to accumulate. Christopher Cantor, a member of the campaign for U.C. Divestment from Israel, said in a *Daily Californian* column that this counter-petition "does indeed have many more signatures than the corresponding divestment petition."

As it wears on, the divestment campaign grows more and more egregious. Especially when its supporters try to compare Israel's policies to that of apartheid, as did Archbishop Desmond Tutu in a piece titled, "A Moral Campaign to End the Occupation."

This comparison is sick and cruel. Many of Israel's policies concerning the Palestinians are questionable and should be seriously reconsidered, such as Israel's occupation of disputed lands in the West Bank. However, to compare these policies and laws with the travesty of apartheid is immoral and unfair.

This is the ultimate failure of the campaign to divest from Israel. The students involved view a complex issue, the conflict in the Middle East, with too simple-minded a viewpoint. They speak of the human-rights abuses of Israel but conveniently never talk about the homicide bombers that target innocent civilians at will.

As Jonathan Alter pointed out in a column for *Newsweek*, they "say nothing when the Palestinians routinely execute suspected collaborators, including the mothers of young children." The divestment campaign will never be as successful as the anti-apartheid movement unless the student activists

acknowledge these complexities. Their folly shows that any campaign to bring about change in the Middle East can't be "pro-Israel" or "pro-Palestinian," but must be pro-peace to succeed.

Collins Ezeanyim is a senior computer engineering major.



SARAH FOWLER • THE BATTALION

Diversify A&M through study abroad program

"The top universities in America are world universities," says Vision 2020. Those universities open themselves to international students and provide substantial opportunities for their domestic students to go abroad. The closer Texas A&M moves toward its vision, the more important international experience will become. International experiences are becoming imperative in today's world.



LENTI SMITH

"Study abroad is essential if you want to be competitive in the global market," Erin Delcarson, an A&M study abroad adviser, said.

A&M offers many opportunities for students to get involved in the international experience. Students can study abroad, intern abroad and become involved in organizations focused on emphasizing international relations.

A&M offers more than 60 programs in 20 countries. Many students are aware of major programs the Study Abroad Office offers, but are missing the opportunity to get involved in smaller programs that may hold the key to their interest.

"No matter what your major, there's something out there for you," Delcarson said. With many different programs available, students don't have an excuse to miss a study abroad experience.

Delcarson said that upon graduation, she was continually asked about her international experience by every job interviewer. "Recruiters are looking for people who are willing to take the extra step and aren't afraid to step out of their comfort zones," Delcarson said.

America is a strong international player. Therefore, its citizens should be international players as well. Countries outside the United States are growing in power and influence. The European Union continues to gain momentum and power – the success of the Euro and free movement within the countries certainly attest to that. As foreign influence rises, American citizens will be forced to learn more about it to be able to understand America's international relations.

Students have the advantage of multiple programs at their fingertips designed to benefit them and help them learn.

Melissa Tyroch, a senior political science major, went to study the European Union this summer through the European Summer Academy. "I'd suggest that anyone wanting to expand their horizons and learn a little while being immersed in a different culture participate in a study abroad program," she said.

Many students are concerned about the expense of studying abroad. The Study Abroad Programs Office says the biggest complaint student have is the cost of studying abroad. However, the Study Abroad Office has more than \$300,000 available in scholarships, so money is available. As the programs grow and the support gains momentum, more money will be available to students to ensure that no one is left out of these opportunities.

Being willing to take the experience is the first step towards realizing how international relations can help one personally. New programs are developed each year and organizations such as Aggie International Ambassadors are being founded to help emphasize the importance of international experience.

Many of the faculty and the University's top leaders recognize that a strong international experience is important – it is time the students became more aware of this as well. Studying and interning abroad can be life-changing experiences that help to diversify and globalize the A&M campus.

Lenti Smith is a junior political science and journalism major.

Pesticide restrictions needed

Treaty ratification would limit pesticides in foreign nations

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) works to protect consumers from the potential dangers of harmful pesticides. However, this does not stop U.S. companies from exporting these pesticides.

According to the *New Informationalist*, 33 percent of the pesticides on sale in developing countries do not meet international standards.

The United Nations environmental agency called for a ratification of a 1998 treaty to tighten the ban on the export and use of pesticides in other countries, according to CNN.com. The crackdown is concentrated on pesticides that are banned in the United States but not in developing countries. This ratification is a step closer to controlling harmful pesticides that endanger lives.

The EPA regulates which pesticides are legal in the United States. The EPA bans pesticides and chemicals that are unfit for the environment. Although pesticides such as DDT are banned in the United States, there is no regulation stopping the manufacturing and exporting of such a pesticide to foreign countries. Since Americans trust the EPA to ban certain pesticides in the United States, the United States should support the banning of exporting those very same pesticides.



ANDI BACA

Since the EPA regulates pesticides in the United States, it is the United States' responsibility to ensure that harmful unregulated pesticides can have on them.

According to the Australian Fertiliser Services Association (AFSA), the United States imports food from many countries it exports pesticides to. Ecuador, which uses imported pesticides, has polluted rivers, where shrimp are harvested and exported. Ecuador is the number one exporter of bananas as well. Since these products are imported into the United States, it is safer to support a tighter ban on harmful pesticides not approved by the EPA.

Tightening the ban on exporting identified pesticides will improve the harmful conditions environments are exposed to. Harmful pesticides negatively affect the environment. Pesticides cause irreversible damage to land and water supplies. They are responsible for illnesses and deaths of people exposed to them. CNN.com said the pesticide monocrotophos causes nausea, blurred vision, respiratory problems and death. Monocrotophos is one of the pesticides the intended treaty would ban.

Although banning the export of dangerous pesticides to foreign countries is a beginning to improving the quality of the environment, it does not eliminate dangerous pesticides.

The biggest problem is what to do with banned pesticides. According to the *New Informationalist*, it will cost Africa \$80 million to dispose of all banned pesticides. Underdeveloped countries will have a harder time paying for the disposal of unused pesticides. However, the *New Informationalist* said that the agricultural industry has agreed to pay 30 percent of the costs of disposing banned pesticides. Despite its steep cost, disposal of banned pesticides is an unavoidable task.

While pesticides have allowed underdeveloped countries to maximize their scarce agricultural resources, the harmful affects of some pesticides are dangerous enough to require tighter regulation. The EPA uses strict guidelines to judge the pesticides used in the United States, and similar regulations are required in other countries due to today's global community of trade.

Simply banning pesticides in one country will not prevent their potential harm in others.

Although many U.S. citizens will never experience the harmful effects of dangerous pesticides, thousands will. The world consists of one community resource, recycled repeatedly. Poisoning one country will poison the United States in the long run.

Andi Baca is a senior journalism major.

MAIL CALL

Bad experience with Corps escort

In response to Sara Foley's Oct. 10 column:

I have nothing against the Corps of Cadets. My father and two uncles served in the Corps and I have nothing but respect for it. I do, however, have serious grievances against their escort service.

As a freshman, new to campus, I called the escort service to walk me to my dorm, and I was embarrassed and humiliated by the experience. The person on the other end of my escort's walkie-talkie asked questions about my physical appearance, ending in "What does she look like?" to which the escort replied, "She's nothing special!"

I will never call the escort service again, no matter what time of night it is or how unsafe I feel. I refuse to be rated by someone who doesn't even know me, especially when the assumption is based solely on physical appearance.

I think it's sad that I can no longer trust the escort service, considering that they are fellow Aggies, and when my female friends heard my experience, they also decided that calling the service was not worth it.

As I have shared this story, I've found that other lady Ags have had similar negative experiences, and it's time that someone ends this very un-Aggie-like behavior.

Jamie Hall
Class of 2004

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 200 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number. The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 014 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters also may be mailed to: 014 Reed McDonald, MS 1111, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Fax: (979) 845-2647 Email: mailcall@thebatt.com. Attachments are not accepted.