

Consumer Boycott of Israel - A How to

When thinking about a consumer boycott, it is important to remember that there are different levels to which a store or company is complicit in the regime of Israeli Apartheid. For instance, there is a difference between store that stocks some Israeli products and a company which actively supports the Israeli Army or builds factories on occupied lands.

It is important to keep these differences in mind when thinking about what kinds of actions to take. In some instances, it might be more useful to lobby a store to stop carrying a certain Israeli product than to boycott the entire store. In other cases, it might be more useful to demand that a company change its actual policies, or to boycott the company itself.

Even if you don't feel able to completely boycott a company, there are ways you can still effect change. Below are ways you can take action to help develop a consumer boycott campaign.

1. Don't buy goods from Israel or companies that support Israel

This is easier than it sounds and a list of common products from Israeli companies can be found on websites listed in the Resource section. You could also send a letter to the supermarket, the media and local political parties in your country informing them of your decision and the reasons.

2. Identify and lobby retail outlets that stock Israeli goods

Outlets that stock Israeli goods can be lobbied to break off such business relations in response to Israeli policies. You can send letters to local shops and large retailers asking them to de-shelve Israeli products or find organizations and networks that would be willing to endorse the letter in order to achieve a more powerful effect. This is especially powerful with stores that are member-run. For example, Mountain Equipment Co-op stocks Israeli-made water systems and MEC-brand underwear, but that doesn't mean you must boycott them completely. There are great opportunities to get involved in co-ops, to go to meetings and lobby them to stop stocking Israeli products.

3. Boycott and picket outlets that do not respond to lobbying or that are complicit in supporting Israeli Apartheid Policies

If a company, such Chapters/Indigo, is especially militant in its support of Israeli Apartheid policies, set up a boycott picket of the store or company. Pickets can be great educational events, which allow you to pass out boycott flyers on the street and talk to concerned consumers. As well, they are great symbolic actions, which put a lot of pressure on companies to change their policies.

4. If you are unable to set up a picket or boycott a company, consider noting your displeasure

If you can't live without your Starbucks coffee, make a point of talking to the manager every time you buy your coffee and register your displeasure with their policies. Alternately, contact the CEO or president of these companies explaining why you think their actions and support are wrong. These small reminders and pressures do add up.

Resources

For information on boycott Israel campaigns and their history

www.caiaweb.org

www.bdsmovement.net

www.bigcampaign.org

For more comprehensive lists of Israeli products and companies

<http://s109811772.websitehome.co.uk/bigcampaign/uploads/pdfs/bigcampaignboycottlist.pdf>

www.whoprofits.org and http://gush-shalom.org.toibillboard.info/boycott_eng.htm

Consumer Boycott of Israeli Goods



The Israeli government is dependent on a strong export-orientated economy, so the goal of a consumer boycott is to use economic pressure to make Israel change its apartheid policies. A boycott does so both by educating consumers about Israel's apartheid policies through consumer politics and by applying direct economic pressure to the regime.

This boycott began in 2004 in response to the overwhelming destruction Israeli forces have wrought on Palestinian people. Since September 2000, five thousand Palestinian civilians have been killed through targeted assassinations, and shelling and shooting into densely populated residential areas throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Israeli military has also destroyed 10,000 Palestinian homes, hundreds of thousands of olive and fruit trees, 31,000 hectares of cultivated land and crucial civilian infrastructure, including electricity power plants, roads, bridges and water, sewage and telephone networks.

It is also a response to Israel's rapid construction of a 721km Apartheid (separation) wall on Palestinian land, declared illegal by the world's highest court. B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights group, describes the system as bearing "clear similarities to the racist apartheid regime that existed in South Africa".

Only international pressure can make Israel cease its violations of international law and human rights. As governments have failed to hold Israel accountable, people of conscience worldwide must heed Palestinian calls for equality and justice. Individual consumers can show their opposition to Israel's project through a boycott of Israeli goods and services. A boycott can also put pressure on companies whose actions and policies are linked to the Israeli occupation and apartheid.

**BOYCOTT ISRAELI
APARTHEID CAMPAIGN**

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Consumer boycott of Israel – Some companies

CanWest Global – (Vancouver Sun, Global TV, National Post, etc.) CanWest is the largest media conglomerate in Canada. Owned by the Asper family, CanWest is openly anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim and refuses to publish unbiased stories about the middle east. As the editor of the Montreal Gazette recently explained “We do not run in our newspaper op-ed pieces that express criticism of Israel and what it is doing in the Middle East.”



Caterpillar – Caterpillar is the biggest producer of earth-moving construction vehicles and has a clothing line. Since 1967, the Israeli army has used Caterpillar bulldozers to destroy over 12,000 houses in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, leaving tens of thousands of men, women and children homeless, as well as bulldozing hundreds of public buildings and private commercial properties and vast areas of agricultural land. Caterpillar's bulldozers have been used in the building of the Apartheid Wall.



Chapters/Indigo – Chapters/Indigo/Coles is a bookstore chain whose principal shareholders Heather Reisman and Gerry Schwartz are the founders of the HESEG foundation which gives up to \$3 million per year in scholarships to “lone soldiers.” Lone Soldiers are soldiers who have no family in Israel, but decide to move to Israel to fight with the Israeli military. Many of these lone soldiers are directly involved in the occupation of Palestine serving at check points and as part of combat units. Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid is conducting an boycott of Chapters/Indigo. For more information, see www.caiaweb.org



Estée Lauder – Chairman, Ronald Lauder, was also chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and president of the Jewish National Fund – a quasi-governmental agency that will not sell or lease land to non-Jews. It's main function is to legitimise Israeli occupation of Palestinian land.



Galil Winery – Galil Winery is part of the Golan Heights Winery. They produce wines from grapes grown on occupied Syrian land in the Golan Heights. This is in direct contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention and stated Canadian policy. The Canadian Palestine Association currently has a campaign against Israeli Wines. For more info, see www.cpavancouver.org



Home Depot – Founder, and Co-Chairman of the Board, Bernard Marcus is an active Zionist. He is on the board of directors of Emet, the Pro-Israel Media “War Room” whose function is to ensure that all media in the US stays biased in favour of Israel.



Intel – One of the biggest supporters of Israel. Their very first development centre outside the US was opened in Haifa in 1974. Since then they have continued pouring billions in to Israel. The Intel plant at “Qiryat Gat” is built on land Israel confiscated from the Palestinian village of Iraq al Manshiya. The original Palestinian inhabitants were terrorised out of the village and then the village was razed to the ground to prepare the way for the new Israeli settlement of Qiryat Gat. Today the remaining population from Iraq al Manshiya is still not allowed to return. Legal action against Intel for building on looted land is being considered.



Johnson & Johnson – Purchased Israeli company Biosense for \$400 million. In 1998, Roger Fine on behalf of Johnson & Johnson, received the Jubilee Award from Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. This is the highest tribute awarded by Israel in recognition of those individuals and organizations, that through their investments and trade relationships, have done the most to strengthen the Israeli economy.



Kimberly-Clark – One of the largest consumer companies in the world with a turnover of \$14 billion. Robert Van der Merwe, chairman of Kimberly-Clark Europe received the Jubilee Award from Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. This is the highest tribute awarded by Israel in recognition of those individuals and organizations, that through their investments and trade relationships, have done the most to strengthen the Israeli economy.



MEC Brand – Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) “partners” with Israeli suppliers for its house brand seamless underwear and hydration backpacks. For more information on its hydration systems partner see Source Vagabond Systems below. MEC also carries Patagonia underwear and Nike footwear made in Israel.



Motorola – Designs and manufactures communications and electronic equipment and operates a plant in Tel Aviv, Israel. Motorola has a contract with the Israeli military to provide a wide range of communications technology to “support military operations in peacetimes or at war”, and provide a “nationwide military cellular network for the Israel Defense Forces providing dependable, deployable voice and data services to military commanders.”



Nestlé – Owns 50.1% of Israeli food processing company Osem Investments and has invested millions of dollars in establishing a research and development centre and factory in Sderot, a town in Israel's Negev desert. Together Nestle and Osem produce snack foods for international export from the centre in Sderot.



News Corporation – Owner Rupert Murdoch is a staunch supporter of Israel whose media outlets are responsible for some of the most biased, racist news coverage of Israel's actions towards Palestine. Owns Fox News, 20th Century Fox and Harper Collins.



Sara Lee – One of the world's largest clothing manufacturers and owns 30% of Israel's leading textile company Delta Galil. Sara Lee enables Israel to access world markets by selling clothes originating in Israel under famous brands. In 1998, Sara Lee's CEO, Lucien Nessim received the Jubilee Award by the Israeli Prime Minister, which is awarded to those who have done the most to strengthen the Israeli economy through investments and trade relationships. Sara Lee owns Hanes, Champion Apparel, Playtex and Wonderbra. Delta Galil makes clothes (mostly underwear) for many brands such as GAP, Ralph Lauren, J. Crew, Banana Republic, Marks & Spencer, Donna Karan and Calvin Klein.



Starbucks – chairman Howard Shultz has been praised by the Israeli Foreign Ministry for his strong support of Israel and was honoured by the Jerusalem Fund of Aish HaTorah in 1998 with the Israel 50th Anniversary Friend of Zion Tribute Award for “playing a key role in promoting close alliance between the United States and Israel.”



Source Vagabond Systems – designs and sells military and “leisure” hydration products. Source boasts on its website (source-military.com) that “[Founder] Yoki and most of the members of our R&D team are experienced ex-officers of elite IDF (Israeli Defence Forces) units” and that “50,000 have been purchased by the IDF.” Source systems are sold at MEC, among other outdoor companies.



Vegetables and Fruit – A variety of fresh and canned vegetables and fruit grown in Israel (usually on occupied land) has been spotted in Vancouver over the last year. Products to check for “Grown in Israel” labels include: organic peppers (yellow, red and orange), organic avocados, oranges, and organic canned tomatoes. This produce was not “branded” as being from Israel so you may have to check the small print.

