

# Boycott Announcement

The Board of Directors has decided that the Olympia Food Co-op will boycott Israeli made products and divest from any investments in Israeli companies. The Co-op would stop carrying the Israeli products it currently sells and would not stock new products from Israeli companies. If the Co-op has money invested in Israeli companies or bonds, we would terminate those investments. We would refrain from dealing with non-Israeli companies that sell products or services to Israel that are used to violate the human rights of the Palestinians.

Members requested that the Co-op honor the international call for boycott. The Board made the decision while following the Olympia Food Co-op Boycott Process (available at the Co-op website at [www.olympiafood.coop](http://www.olympiafood.coop)). The Board consulted and used the Co-op Mission Statement and the By-Laws to guide in making this decision:

## **From the Mission Statement:**

*Support efforts to foster a socially and economically egalitarian society*

## **From the By-Laws:**

*Adopt policies which promote achievement of the mission statement and goals of the Cooperative*

## **Why boycott?**

Boycott is a nonviolent tool for social change that has been tested and proven effective in a variety of campaigns. It is an essential part of the engaged civilian's toolkit and is an empowering process that everyone can participate in.

There is a rich history of boycotts for social change, from the Indian "Swadeshi" boycott of British goods, to the Montgomery bus boycott in the 1950s, to the California grape boycott in the 1960s, or the more recent Coalition of Immokalee Workers boycott of Taco Bell.

The Olympia Food Co-op has engaged in a number of nationally and internationally called boycotts including: products from China (human rights abuses); products from Norway (whaling abuses); products from Colorado (anti gay legislation); Gardenburgers (farmworker abuses) and more.

Perhaps the best example of this nonviolent tactic used to change the policies of a country is the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign (BDS) on apartheid South Africa. As Nelson Mandela has pointed out; "Boycott is not a principle; it is a tactic depending upon circumstances.... A boycott is directed against a policy and the institutions which support that policy either actively or tacitly. Its aim is not to reject, but to bring about change."

## **Why an Israeli products boycott?**

The Israeli products boycott is part of a nonviolent international grassroots campaign of boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) to compel Israel to follow international law and respect Palestinian human rights.

The campaign's clearest statement comes from a 2005 call for international action, signed by nearly 200 Palestinian civil society organizations and endorsed by prominent activists from

Desmond Tutu to Arundhati Roy to Naomi Klein.

### **Isn't this "anti-Israel"?**

Criticizing US foreign policy is not anti-American and Israeli supporters of BDS are not anti-Israel. Supporting BDS is no more anti-Israel than boycotting South Africa is anti-South Africa or anti-White or boycotting China is anti-Chinese. Boycott is a nonviolent people-powered tool for change. This is about working for peace and justice in the region.

When BDS was leveled on South Africa, the goal wasn't to "delegitimize" South Africa, to eliminate white South Africans, or to destroy South Africa. The goal was specific: To end Apartheid and the human rights abuses associated with it. That was the goal. BDS was the tactic.

### **Why should the Co-op honor the boycott?**

The Olympia Food Co-op operates with an awareness of economic, ecological, and social justice, which is imbued in its mission and in its policies. The Co-op has a history of factoring in social ethics to its merchandising decisions — choosing not to carry certain products due to a workers' strike or an existing boycott campaign. The Co-op has also refused to stock items that contain packaging construed as racist or sexist.

Because the Co-op understands that social ethics and social justice are inseparable from providing the community with goods, it is only appropriate that the Co-op honors the boycott campaign, which fits perfectly with its existing boycott policies. Honoring the boycott help the Co-op live up to its goals and mission statement.

### **What ends the boycott?**

As outlined in the Palestinian Call for Boycott, the boycott will end when:

- 1. Israel ends its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantles the Wall;*
- 2. Israel recognizes the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality;*
- 3. Israel respects, protects and promotes the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.*

### **As a member, how do I give input on this decision?**

The Board welcomes all feedback from members. You can contact us by emailing [board@olympiafood.coop](mailto:board@olympiafood.coop) or by calling our business office at 357-1106 ext 13