

# Towards a Global Movement for Palestine:

*A framework for today's  
anti-apartheid activism*



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**A guide for  
Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions**

## Introduction

Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) have gained currency in recent years as a series of strategies used to pressure Israel in the pursuit of justice for Palestinians. Reminiscent of the global anti-apartheid movement against South Africa, various BDS initiatives have emerged within a loose coalition of social movements, trade unions, churches, civil society groups and activists. In the infancy of BDS campaigns there have been some notable successes. Yet, it is clear that initiatives need to strengthen and gain greater popular support if they are to be an effective force in support of Palestinians.

We consider the scope for the development of a global BDS movement which can work in accordance with the goals set out by Palestinians in their calls. We assess the various objectives of BDS initiatives and conclude with a framework of goals, priorities and aims to take such work forwards. The oft-cited model of the international anti-apartheid movement against South Africa will be explored to see if it forms a relevant basis for today's BDS activism, and what strategies may be applied from past campaigns. The Arab League boycott will also be considered, and what can be learnt from other boycott experiences that stretch back over half a century.

This report is a summary of an extensive BDS study to be pub-

lished in 2007, containing further detail and referencing. With the aim of supporting grassroots campaigners, the study comes at a time when BDS solidarity has the potential to grow into a truly global movement. Materials, resources and tools – based upon the framework of the report - are being constantly added to [www.bdsmovement.net](http://www.bdsmovement.net), an invaluable site for today's Palestinian solidarity.

## 1. What are BDS?

A united Palestinian Call for a comprehensive BDS campaign against Israel emerged in 2005 and has been signed by over 170 Palestinian organizations. Importantly the signatories represent the three major components of the Palestinian people: the refugees in the *diaspora*, Palestinians under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the subjugated Palestinians who hold Israeli citizenship. Their appeal for external support invoked specific solidarity strategies, all of which have historical significance in challenging injustice.

**B**oycotts, at least by name, originate from the experiences of an Irish community in relation to an agent of a British landlord called Captain Boycott during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a means of expressing local grievances held against Boycott, the community successfully isolated the agent and refused to deal with him. After he returned to England, the story immortalized his

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last name and boycott has been used ever since to describe the collective power of a group to advance their goals via strategies of ostracism. History has shown how a variety of boycotts can successfully overcome forms of injustice. Today activists and groups have many forms of boycott at their disposal:

- Consumer/Payment
- Trade and Embargo
- Cultural
- Academic
- Secondary (surrogate)
- Sports
- Tourist

Increasingly in northern-based societies boycott refers to consumer rights and as an important tool of protest, exercised through not purchasing the products of an offending country, company or institution. In other parts of the world, boycotts remain one direct mechanism to ensure the attainment of basic rights and services (such as over rents, electricity and water). Boycott calls can also be made in situations where an oppressed

## BOYCOTT ISRAELI GOODS



Don't Squeeze a Jaffa  
Crush the Occupation

populace looks for external support in their struggle to bring about social or political change. This becomes even more pertinent when the offender depends upon external backing in order to carry out and perpetuate crimes.

**S**anctions can be deployed across a wide array of institutions, taking in measures made by local community groups, to municipalities and city councils, to international forums and bodies. They are embodied in the actions taken to rebuke or inhibit the activities of the offender, in ways conducive to attaining change. Momentum for sanctions tends to begin at a grassroots level even if implementation often relies upon decision-making bodies which have some claim to representation. The phenomenon of “peoples sanctions” developed by the anti-apartheid movement referred to the success of campaigns that called for and succeeded in ensuring mechanisms of pressure were put upon South Africa. In some instances sanctions institutionalize the boycotts promoted by grassroots campaigns.

At a higher level, sanctions are implemented by governments (local and national), associations such as the EU or NAM, or global agencies such as the UN or WTO. It can be argued they reinforce the strength and legitimacy of powerful actors, many of whom have questionable commitment to human rights and



social justice. However, making demands on these bodies also ensures that powerful states and global institutions face up to their responsibilities regarding such rights and international law. Moreover, a strong movement advocating sanctions can stimulate consciousness-raising amongst the public and adds an important element of moral pressure to campaign work generally, even if the sanctions themselves are not always attained. In recent years sanctions campaigns have emphasized various forms:

- Diplomatic
- Military/Arms
- Economic/Trade
- Oil/Energy

**D**ivestment was first used in the 1950's as a way to describe the stripping away of economic investments as a mechanism of protest and pressure. Today it is referred to as the process in which an individual, group or institution disposes of its stocks and shares within a business or holding.

In solidarity work, divestment is similar to sanctions in that it can rely upon securing certain actions by others (in this instance, shareholders or companies withdrawing investments). However, a variety of institutions exist in which individuals and constituents hold considerable stake and influence (churches, unions, universities, pension funds), and which hold great potential for BDS campaigns.



## 2. Legacies of BDS: Activism and Apartheid South Africa

South African history has enshrined boycotts, divestment and sanctions as invaluable tools in combating oppression and injustice. How they were deployed can yield important lessons for a BDS movement today, and are also relevant given the parallels drawn between Israel and apartheid South Africa in public opinion and academia. However, their effectiveness and contribution to the South African struggle requires consideration if current campaigns are to emulate previous solidarity.

While resistance to white rule preceded the struggle against the apartheid system introduced from 1948, it was not until the late 1950s that appeals for BDS emerged and solidarity campaigns were launched. Early studies recognized that the South African economy was vulnerable to external pressure and campaigns were organized around imposing sanctions on the regime (oil, diplomatic and military), as well as developing boycotts against key

South African exports (agriculture, coal). In other parts of the world, especially in states directly opposed to recognition of racist South Africa, boycotts were promoted in sports, the arts and culture.

In Europe in 1963, Danish dockers set an important precedent when they refused to unload a shipment of South African goods. Dockers in Sweden also refused to unload the cargo and later that year governing parties in Scandinavia jointly proposed a resolution advocating economic sanctions on South Africa. It revealed how initiatives taken on the ground could pressure or influence those with political power.

By the 1970s activists advocated that apartheid could not survive without the external assistance which was fuelling the economy and entrenching a system of racial capital based upon the exploitation of black labour. Divestment activity emerged on US university and college campuses and in city and town councils, targeting any companies with links to the regime. Typically solidarity was driven by committed grassroots activists. The Connecticut Anti-Apartheid Committee (CAAC) formed in August 1978 had a nucleus of between six and ten people on the steering committee for the first 18 months. They undertook a wide range of educa-

tional and support-building activities: distributing fliers and pamphlets, getting endorsements from community leaders, showing films, sponsoring conferences and organizing speaking engagements with black South Africans and Americans with knowledge on southern Africa, submitting newspaper articles, holding cultural and social events, doing research on Connecticut investments and obtaining support and endorsements from organizations around the state. Out of the relatively small group emerged a lobby powerful enough to influence wider changes at a state level, symptomatic of the success of outreach programmes across the country.

The NAM and the UN became more vocal in their condemnation of the regime and South Africa emerged in the 1980s as an increasingly isolated pariah state. Nevertheless, western governments and companies maintained their economic ties with the regime. Western leaders claimed that apartheid could be reformed, while banks with strong interests in South Africa (such as Barclays) stated that “economic ties and investment” were “the only viable instruments of peaceful change.” However, South Africa’s internal resistance rejected anything other than overthrowing apartheid and by the mid-1980s brought the country to a point



where many predicted the regime's imminent collapse. Internal uprising was complemented by BDS measures in the rest of the world which in turn catalyzed popular rhetorical support for the liberation struggle. Trade unions, church groups, pension fund holders, town councils and universities were all instrumental in this process and their actions spurred a greater collapse of confidence in the regime at another level, taking in banks and governments.

By 1985 the South African economy was in serious difficulty, owing western financial institutions \$24 billion, \$14 billion of which was short-term debt. The declaration of a state of emergency in June 1985 added to the pressure and American banks refused to rollover loans and demanded their capital back. European banks followed suit. As the Rand plummeted on foreign exchange markets, South Africa responded by freezing all repayment, followed on 1 September with the declaration of a debt standstill. A year later in November, after a decade of high-profile campaigning, Barclays announced it's withdrawal from South Africa, shattering the myths it propagated of economic ties bringing peaceful change. Sports, cultural and tourist boycotts were equally important in breaking the morale of the regime and its backers, helping to facilitate



the climate in which domestic South African capital considered the possible transition to black majority rule.

There are numerous contesting accounts of the final demise of the regime, but most are unanimous that BDS strategies in one shape or form contributed in the struggle to end apartheid. However, the regime did to some extent, consolidate its financial position after

1985, leading many to value the sustained symbolic and psychological impact of BDS initiatives just as much as the economic impact they achieved. Upon closer inspection, even some the most celebrated victories of divestment revealed continued trade and links below the surface. At least 46 US firms that had pulled out of South Africa from 1984 were later found to be licensing technology to former subsidiaries or held distribution and franchise agreements with South African firms. One Israeli subsidiary of US corporation Motorola, continued to do business in South Africa after the parent company had officially pulled out and gained considerable praise for divesting its holdings.

While solidarity work in support of South Africans created a legacy for BDS campaigns, it is important to highlight that BDS formed one means of challenging injustices. It assisted rather than directed the

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liberation struggle, which was led first and foremost by the internal resistance.

### 3. Lessons Learned: The Arab League Boycott

If South Africa is the oft-cited model of current solidarity activities, the boycott of Israel by the Arab League receives little mention despite the wealth of experiences of a movement which had a far-reaching influence during its peak in the 1970s. Anti-Zionist boycotts had already been initiated before the Israeli state had come into being. These were begun in protest at the presence of the Zionist movement in Palestine, which other states in the region perceived as an external and colonial threat.

In 1948, the League banned all commercial and financial transactions between Israel and its member states and developed three mechanisms of boycott. A primary boycott prohibited direct trade and relations between Israel and the League states, a secondary boycott was directed at companies that did business with Israel and the third tier of boycott blacklisted firms that traded with other companies carrying out business with Israel, or which maintained Israeli capital. A central boycott office (CBO) was established, alongside national offices, and over the next two decades they accumulated detailed information on Israel's economic activities, efforts to ensure targeted firms and countries acceded to the boycott. A central blacklist of

companies was developed and maintained, working alongside national lists.

Typically, companies would receive a request to end business relations and ties with Israel, threatening their addition to the blacklist if they did not take steps to rectify their activities. This met with mixed success, with some companies acquiescent, and others openly challenging and defying the boycott. On occasion League members continued business relationships with blacklisted companies, weakening the boycott's influence. Nevertheless, it became standardized practice in business dealings between League countries and a third party for assurances that no part of the transaction included merchandise, technology or input from Israel. In many cases this took on an automatic function, with companies ensuring they had no official ties and links with Israel to avoid being targeted.

In the first decades of the boycott, attempts to suppress its impact relied upon the efforts of Israel's external supporters, an anti-boycott office in Tel Aviv, as well as secret or third party trade. Pro-Israeli groups established mechanisms of pressure on companies to maintain or create trade with Israel, largely relying upon exposure of the boycott as a means by which to garner public support. In a climate where there was little understanding or sympathy for the League boycott in the west – whe-

re Israel carried out the majority of its trade – exposure of the issue formed the major weapon of anti-boycott activists. This task was often made easier in that the League had little in the way of outreach activities to promote the reasons and rationale for the boycott and which sought acquiescence to its terms via economic coercion.

Attempts to publicly shame companies known or thought to be acceding to the boycott were made alongside accusations of anti-Semitism and of cynicism for engaging in the boycott under the motivation of profits and markets in the League states. Nevertheless, the boycott stepped up after the 1973 war with League countries using their oil resources as a further means to extend their influence. By 1976, 2,200 companies in the US reported over 97,000 transactions with boycott conditions or requirements. Britain's largest food can company, Metal Box, was one typical example of the boycott's influence when it divested from its 27% equity share in the Israel Can Company in 1977 so as not to lose important sales in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The Wall Street Journal noted in December of 1974 how individuals and businesses established their own boycott rules that were much tighter than the official boycott and that "to be on the safe side they lean far over to be friendly to Arabs even if this means being overtly unfriendly to Israel." Amer Sharif's study of the boycott in 1970 noted: "Many companies,

more than those which get black-listed, have complied with the Israel boycott regulations when their attention was drawn to the subject and its consequences." Moreover, significant companies acceding to the terms of the boycott came from the US and Western Europe, from countries with the strongest historical links with Israel.

The backlash against the boycott saw US Congress enact amendments to the Export Administration Act in 1977, to prohibit companies from cooperating with the League's demands. What the change in US laws did not prevent was continued cooperation amongst American firms with the League states, particularly in the immediate years following the legislation. On average in the early 1980s, 50 businesses per year were fined for cooperation with boycott. Despite the threat and implementation of fines, some American companies preferred to pay fines rather than endanger the loss of business with League states.

The decline of the boycott in the 1980s was a reflection of the splits in pan-Arab co-operation and growing regional disunity. It also stemmed from the numerous occasions when League states continued to trade with blacklisted companies, in line with sovereign or elite interests and to the detriment of boycott unity. Egypt's treaty with Israel in 1978 had already sharpened the regional fractures and as pan-Arab cooperation declined the boycott gradually relaxed from the early

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1980's. Many companies that had previously stayed out of the Israeli market began to invest including Toyota and Nestlé. The Oslo Accords and normalization appeared to land a final blow to the boycott, and today bar a few exceptions, trade and links with Israel are developing across the Middle East.

Estimates of the yearly loss to Israeli GDP as a result of the boycott have fluctuated from 3 to 10%. In 1993, then President of the Israeli Chambers of Commerce Danny Gillerman along with analyst Danny Lipkin estimated the financial loss to Israel since 1950 at somewhere between \$45 and \$49 billion, while the Syrian boycott office has estimated anything up to \$90 billion covering the period until 1999. With or without the boycott, Israel would have engaged in a concerted effort to develop key sectors of its economy, but it is clear such development would have been more favourable without the impediment of the boycott.

Discussion of the boycott is made problematic in that it was pursued by various states which took on increasingly authoritarian traits within domestic policies and issues, leaving them with little legitimacy and recourse to a moral dialogue. However, the history of the boycott reveals the potential for BDS campaigns today to achieve a real impact. It shows how building unity and consensus in a movement can yield successes and fundamentally that divestment and boycott can be institutionalized into the operations

of companies and businesses across the globe. At the same time boycott experiences suggest that transforming economic success into concrete political and social changes requires key characteristics which were lacking in the League boycott. Public relations and media campaigns; an open and transparent movement; accessibility of the campaign to the wider public and a clear set of aims and objectives were all missing in the League's work. Added to this was the absence of civil society input into the working of the boycott, despite the groundswell of regional grassroots popular support for Palestine.



## 4. Resurrecting Boycott as a Tool for Change

The Oslo Process and normalization transformed the dynamics of the liberation struggle as important elements in the PLO entered the structures of the PNA. While endless negotiations failed to bring about any of the Palestinian objectives, the PNA became absorbed with the tasks of day-to-day administration over the disparate Bantustans of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGs).

The second *intifada* provided the catalyst for a renewal in global solidarity work and the revitalization of ties with social movements and civil society organizations. BDS strategies against Israel took on increasing resonance, receiving popular support across the Middle East, Asia and in solidarity groups in the west.

The BDS call of 2005 was quick to spread on a global level and came as an important development in forging a common position from which to base solidarity relations with the rest of the world. These had core goals which guided the vision of BDS work:

- *Ending its [Israel's] occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;*
- *Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and*
- *Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.*

External solidarity groups differ in the emphasis taken towards influencing social and political change. All BDS campaigns agree on the need for some kind of collective action to put pressure on Israel, but there is not a consensus as to the goals driving the appeal. For example, NGOs and faith-based organizations in Europe and North America have backed and/or begun various initiatives that tend to focus only on the urgent need to end

Israel's occupation and colonization of the 1967 areas. These do not usually include ending discrimination against Palestinians under Israeli rule since 1948, or the right of return for Palestinian refugees. Indeed, campaigns can be influenced by the Israeli "peace" lobby which sees the '67 occupation as the issue to overcome, but does not consider the right of return as an acceptable platform for BDS work. This is clearly at odds with the Palestinian position in which the opposition to Zionism as an ideology forms the major impetus for the struggle. The rhetoric of other campaigns – notably from South Africans who struggled against apartheid – view BDS work as the means by which to challenge "Israeli apartheid". Such similarities between Israel and South Africa as apartheid states have been comprehensively detailed. A wide range of today's BDS initiatives are motivated by the recognition of the rights of all Palestinians and are based upon anti-racist or anti-apartheid frameworks.

In Palestine where colonial and post-colonial dynamics are still unravelling, external solidarity movements need to be responsive to the calls of the oppressed and ensure that relationships are not characterized by external organizations becoming the dominant partner. Finding commonalities with Palestinian civil society organizations that are accountable to the people, and using their popular appeals as a basis, can reflect the ideals forming

the basis of solidarity assistance to an oppressed people. Moreover, for Palestinians, re-establishing links with other oppressed peoples in the global south can be a source of inspiration and unity in challenging injustice.

## 5. Challenges Ahead

Successful BDS campaigns are built upon diligent and detailed research which can guide the efforts of activists in their outreach work, and in which the dissemination of such information to a network of solidarity movements is vital. Challenging and opposing Israeli crimes requires the presentation of clear and easily identifiable means by which people get involved in campaign work. Outlining the nature of the Israeli policies and the overall Israeli economy presents opportunities for BDS work to develop effective mechanisms of pressure.

In 1949 fruit juices and citrus fruits accounted for 67% of Israeli exports. Almost sixty years on, the Israeli economy has been totally transformed from settler based agrarian production to a high-tech, highly diversified economy. Today, Israel is viewed as the technological and industrial powerhouse of the Middle East, and as one of the most attractive markets for (and which is

dependent upon) foreign investments. Israel has strong export markets which are reliant upon four interlinked core sectors: technology, Research and Development (R&D), diamonds, and arms. In addition, it has received approximately \$3 billion in aid per year from the US since the mid-1980s.

Israel began to implement policies of trade liberalization in the early 1990s, setting the country on a trajectory of privatization which continues today. Yet the economy retains a duality in state/private activities, ensuring apartheid and occupation policies go hand-in-hand with neoliberalism. Many business and economic practices are integrated into Israeli “security” objectives and are further interwoven into wider circles of capital and investment. Israel in 2007 has a highly-diversified economy, driven via transnational accumulation and particularly sensitive to the fusion of local capital into the global circuits of ownership. While it shares R&D projects with a host of countries, the US is the major player in buying into the Israeli economy. Israeli investments are also strong in the US and Western Europe, but are increasingly represented in the eastern bloc and Africa, specifically in construction, diamonds and arms.

Israeli export markets (bar diamonds) are predominantly depend-



ent upon the EU and the US (33% and 28% respectively). However, emerging markets in Asia and the Middle East have meant that trade in these regions has steadily increased over the last decade. Lacking in many natural resources, Israel is dependent upon imports of petroleum, coal, food and raw materials. It also relies on other countries (notably the US and Germany) for the transfer of advanced military equipment which it is unable to manufacture internally. In terms of imports, figures show (excluding diamonds) that 56.5% arrive from the EU or US which means (in light of the African diamond market) that Israel is dependent upon a significant proportion of imports from the rest of the world. Israel's energy imports (various types of crude oil) have risen by 42% over the past four years, from \$3.1 to \$4.5 billion, of which Russia accounted for a third.

## 6. How can a boycott work? - Tackling key economic sectors

“Israel enjoys the highest concentration of high-tech companies outside of the Silicon Valley.”

*Robert Greifeld President & CEO NASDAQ 2004*

Almost every major multinational is involved or linked into the Israeli economy which has evolved from settler-based agriculture to a centre of transnational investment in high-tech industries, manufacturing and research. Israeli technology

finds its way into the everyday consumer goods manufactured in countries across the world and the deep integration of the economy into high-tech markets causes obvious problems in sourcing Israeli components and products.

The high-tech sector currently accounts for 33% of Israel's total exports. Over the last two decades, a significant transformation has shifted the emphasis of business activity into the field of computers, software and electronics; communications; biotechnology; medical, agricultural and scientific equipment; and advanced weapon and military defence systems. Technology plays a significant part in production across nearly all sectors of the economy.

The Ministry of Finance has suggested that after Sweden, Israel spends more on the R&D sector than any other country. However the government keeps aspects of R&D programmes confidential, specifically the military sector which has been estimated to usurp 2% of GDP. Israel's overall R&D expenditure is thus considered to be 4.3% of GDP – 85% above the OECD average, and 30% more than Sweden. It has various incentives in place to boost the R&D sector, which grew out of the Oslo agreements as a financial and cooperative enticement from the global community for the “peace process”.

Yet despite the transnational nature of the economy, various opportunities exist for extending an effective boycott. Israeli companies

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can lose their competitive edge in a climate where divestment initiatives target selective companies holding key or symbolic interests in the economy. Campaigns against the R&D sector – and the joint programmes held with over 20 different countries – form another target for BDS work in ending the external cooperation and funding for Israeli growth and production.

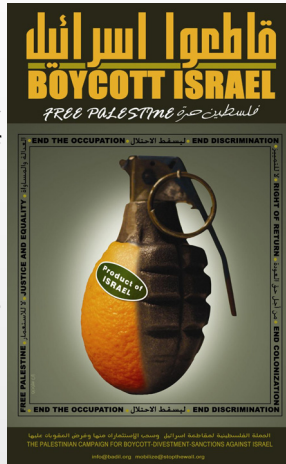
Moreover, technology is built into a handful of core economic industries which form viable targets for BDS campaigns. One of these central markets is that of diamond processing.

### Israeli diamonds

Diamonds make up a massive 28% of Israeli exports and Tel Aviv is the hub of a trade with extensive moral and ethical implications. In 2005 Israel's diamond industry ended the year with growth in all areas of activity, maintaining its position as the world manufacturing and trading centre for polished and rough diamonds. Diamond exports broke, for the first time, the \$10 billion threshold. Net polished exports in 2005 rose 5.8% to reach an all time high of \$6.707 billion, compared to \$6.337 billion in 2004. Rough diamond exports from Israel rose 20.5% in 2005 to reach \$3.517 billion, up from \$2.920 billion in 2004. Israel processes about 75% of the annual production of higher-value

gem diamonds, and plays a key role in the overall control of the trade. Moreover, Israeli dealers have been linked to conflict or blood diamonds in Africa where virtually all the unpolished diamonds that enter Israel are sourced. The industry makes up a vast contribution to the economy and is interwoven into

the oppression not just of Palestinians, but also of the Africans who own the raw resources. Like South African coal and food exports were key characteristics of the export economy and later subject to embargo and boycott, Israeli diamonds have the potential to be the focus of an international campaign.



### Arms Exports – Sustaining Occupation, Fuelling Conflict

Israel is one of the world's major exporters of military equipment. By the 1980s Israel joined the top ten countries of the world in military production and by 2000 officially recorded exports reached a new high of over \$2.49bn. In 2004, official figures showed Israel's sale of armaments to "developing" countries amounted to US \$1.2 billion. However, unreported clandestine deals could mean that this figure does not represent the full extent of arms exports.

Israel has a long history of aggres-

sively marketing weapons in the rest of the world, as well arming a variety of dictators, juntas, factions in civil wars and regimes well known for systematic human rights abuses. Israel has also taken on the mantle of a major subcontractor and broker for US arms to the developing world.

Only around a quarter of current Israeli production in the military sector is produced for the internal market. Consequently, Israel, contrary to the norm of large arms producing countries (such as the US), gears production towards external markets to bring in vital cash flows for the economy, perpetuating conflicts, mini arms races and violence.

## 7. Conclusion - Where Next in Building Unity for a Global Movement?

*'Don't doubt the damage of the sanctions fight, devastating, them boycotts bite*

*The more we know the more we can do, so get on down, it's up to you*

*Don't mess, don't wait, don't hesitate, do your thing*

*Hit the Apartheid State, cos' the little bit more*

*That we take away, the little bit closer To the VICTORY day - AMANDLA!*

*- From London Anti-Apartheid News, Summer (1989)*

Historically, boycotts show that in order to be effective the public cannot be overwhelmed with targets and goals. Developing strate-

gies with specific campaigns can bring in the wider audience and conditions needed for a broad anti-apartheid movement to take root. Campaigns on the arms trade and diamonds have been highlighted, but other forms of boycott can have both symbolic and economic value. The question of BDS should not solely be judged on its economic efficacy, but rather the role it plays in educating people about the real ties that exist between their every day existence and Israeli apartheid and occupation.

Produce symbolic for its origins in the Israeli economy (e.g. fruit, cut flowers) form a useful basis for BDS work alongside the boycott of goods which make a fundamental contribution to the economy (e.g. technology deployed in cell phones). Campaigns around "soft" targets that centre upon the most abhorrent and illegal Israeli practices are useful starting points for BDS work. Consumer boycotts and divestment campaigns can look to be more encompassing once BDS work is accepted and established as the prime focus of solidarity work.

However, symbolic and start up boycott campaigns on economic production directly linked to the occupation of the 1967 areas, cannot alone challenge the main facets of Israeli occupation and apartheid. Companies with obvious complicity in Israeli apartheid such as Caterpillar and Veolia form the starting point for a broader campaign as much as companies supporting the Israeli military or the continued

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discrimination against Palestinians with Israeli citizenship. That investment in Israel represents investment in a system of occupation, injustice and apartheid must be reinforced as the basis for campaigning.

Boycott and buycott lists will need to be managed in democratic and transparent ways in a solidarity movement which can develop the mechanisms by which to coordinate serious research in the sourcing of Israeli production and in its outreach work. Institutions and groups could pass boycott resolutions, which include mandates to investigate the levels of trade pursued with Israel and share such data amongst activists on a global level. Campaigners can as well target a series of intergovernmental bodies – from the UN to the NAM – and their monitoring and reporting commissions to take up the valuable task of research. Calling those bodies to responsibility leads the way into sanctions campaigns within these organizations.



Sanctions campaigns can look to annul Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and other preferential agreements with Israel, sever diplomatic ties and maintain arms embargoes, until more comprehensive measures can be put in place. As we see from the South African anti-apartheid

movement, people's sanctions can look to local councils and other community decision-making bodies to adopt progressive legislation and positions.

Aside from forms of economic boycott, a variety of other initiatives are at the disposal of campaigners, and have already emerged in academia, sports, culture and trade unionism. These can have a powerful impact on Israeli society as a whole, sending a clear message that occupation and apartheid will no longer be accepted in the rest of the world.



Yet while Palestine BDS work has already become established by various campaigns, the lack of a common discourse or framework has left initiatives isolated or in the pursuit of different aims. Binding efforts together requires common reference to the 2005 Boycott Call and a realization amongst solidarity movements that BDS is meant as a strategy of support for all Palestinians struggling for liberation. For those movements unable or unwilling to adopt this position, particularly in the US and parts of Europe, their contribution can assist BDS initiatives but should not come at the

expense of subverting the calls and appeals of Palestinians.

The opening of new historical narratives, finally revealing the full subjugation and horror experienced by the Palestinian people as a result of Zionism, is making new waves in global discourse and perceptions. Part of this is the achievement of solidarity work which has already influenced popular opinion as well as the “opinion makers”. Personalities such as UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights John Dugard and even ex-US president Jimmy Carter, are clearly raising the profile and discussion of Israeli apartheid and hence the need for a strong and effective BDS campaign. However, BDS campaigners need to be aware of the constraints or underlying interests of opinion makers and ensure that communication with Palestine remains the pillar on which global solidarity needs to be anchored. BDS styled campaigns can achieve great heights in taking this further and in working for a lasting and genuine peace, but should be aware that external groups are not the ones to define the political and social objectives of the work. In maintaining an awareness of these dynamics, continual dialogue and communication is nec-

essary from civil society and movements in Palestine with the rest of the world. BDS movements, no matter how powerful, cannot and should not look to replace the resistance and struggle of those people they are trying to support. They can, under the right circumstances, make a positive and proactive contribution in supporting the attainment of human rights for others and for securing long-term justice.

*Detailed references for the quotes and information contained in this work as well as the source and context of the photos can be found in the longer version of the report to be published soon or obtained from [global@stopthewall.org](mailto:global@stopthewall.org)*  
*Front page painting: Dora McPhee.*



## Palestinian grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign

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