

We American Jews Whole-Heartedly Support Ben & Jerry's Decision to Leave Israel's Illegal Settlements

We, members of the Jewish communities of Oregon and Southwest Washington, congratulate and thank the Ben and Jerry's company for their recent decision to end sales of their ice cream in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). We whole-heartedly support this courageous decision. It is a credit to the company's two Vermont Jewish founders' commitment to social justice.

Ben & Jerry's decision is consistent with the 1998 call of the Israeli Peace Coalition, Gush Shalom, founded by journalist and peace activist the late Uri Avnery, to boycott goods produced in the settlements.

A 2004 advisory opinion of the International Criminal Court and UN Security Council Resolution 2334 of 2016 declared that all of Israel's exclusively Jewish settlements in the OPT, including East Jerusalem "have no legal validity." The ever-expanding settlements are the most egregious and oppressive examples of Israel's massive and ongoing theft of Palestinian lands. They are a major obstacle to resolving the Palestine-Israel conflict. Businesses that operate in, trade with, or profit from these settlements are complicit in the crimes they represent.

Israeli political leaders have vilified Ben & Jerry's decision as "a new kind of terrorism"¹ (President Isaac Herzog) and a "surrender to antisemitism"² (Foreign Minister Yair Lapid). Right wing Israeli and American Jewish pundits have absurdly smeared Ben & Jerry's as "Nazi collaborators."³ These vicious reactions say more about the indefensibility of Israel's illegal occupation and dispossession of the Palestinian people than they do about Ben & Jerry's.

Lies and vitriol, no matter how baseless, can still damage and undermine even the most just cause. So we must actively defend Ben & Jerry's against these unhinged attacks aimed at pressuring the company to back down. We call upon our elected representatives and Jewish community institutions to take inspiration from Ben & Jerry's to speak out and take action to support justice for Palestinians.

Some Members of the Jewish Community of Portland, Oregon

Joel Beinin

John Blank

Melisa Crosby

Carol Landsman

Carol Mazer

David Newman

William Singer

Randolph Splitter

Stephen Auerbach

Rabbi Ariel Stone

Michael Heumann

Kathy Gordon

Sharon Adelman Reyes

Johanna Brenner

Carla Basom

Gerson Robboy

Sandy Polishuk

Julie Clark

David Lewis

Jodi Zeisel

Steven Goldberg

John Linder

Miriam Beinin

Jessica Elkan

Alan Cahn

Jackie Brookman

Eileen Eliana Fromer

Vanessa Elkan

Chuck Sheketoff

George Feldman

Virginia Feldman

Laurie King

Joel Shapiro

Ken Lerner

Zac Cramer

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Wendy Busch

James Ofsink

Jack Lazareck

Sarah Levy

Beth Kaye

Barbara Gundle

Adam Segal

Sherry Archer

Jan DeWeese

Betsy Zucker

Maro R Sevastopoulos

Ken Rosenberg

Bill Resnick

Marty Lahr

Laura Orgel

Sue Abrams

1. Israel's President: Ben & Jerry's Boycott Is Part of 'A New Form of Terrorism', Jonathan Lis, Ha'aretz, July 21, 2021

2. <https://twitter.com/yairlapid/status/1417169814867484676>

3. Opinion | Ben & Jerry's Aren't Nazis and Their Settlement Boycott Isn't Antisemitic, Joshua Shanes, Ha'aretz, July 21, 2021