
The following letter was sent to the Georgia Straight on Feb. 15, 2008.

It might interest your readers to know that the "new-generation Israeli wines" that Jurgen Gothe was promoting (Feb. 14/08) are literally fruit from the vines of Israeli occupation. We recently sent a letter to the BC Liquor Distribution Branch on this very subject which they have responded to claiming this matter is not under their "jurisdiction" and they offer products on a commercial demand basis. Here are some excerpts of our original letter.

"The Golan Heights Winery (of which the Galil Winery is a joint venture) produces wines from grapes grown on occupied Arab land and some of their wineries are located on occupied Syrian land in the Golan Heights. All of this is in direct contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention and stated Canadian laws http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/middle_east/can_policy-en.asp#06. To add insult to injury, you are displaying these products from occupied Arab territory under an Israeli banner, against all international norms and practices. There is a reason your suppliers insisted on having the Israeli banner used, an issue that has already caused problems for European liquor boards, particularly Sweden, and you may not be aware you are being used to advance an illegal occupation and annexation of the Golan Heights. The Israeli peace bloc Gush Shalom includes all the Golan Heights wines on their national boycott list of settlement products, under the heading "A Penny to the settlements is a Penny against Peace" http://gush-shalom.org.toibillboard.info/boycott_eng.htm.

Regrettably, your actions are rewarding Israeli occupation, ethnic cleansing and war crimes that are committed daily by the Israeli Government against the Palestinian and other Arab peoples. It is also offensive to people all over the world who are interested in peace with justice in the Middle East. Please consider our request to immediately stop carrying these Israeli wines, and do not repeat your historic mistake when you carried wines from the South African Apartheid regime."

Unfortunately, the BCLDB and now your Jurgen Gothe (hopefully unknowingly) are aiding and abetting an illegal occupation and hindering the chances for any future genuine peace in the region.

Yours truly,
Hanna Kawas, Chairperson
Canada Palestine Association

The Georgia Straight edited and published only the following condensed version of our letter.

<http://www.straight.com/article-133001/bitter-fruit-goes-into-israeli-wines>

February 21, 2008

Bitter fruit goes into Israeli wines

It might interest your readers to know that the “new-generation Israeli wines” that Jurgen Gothe was promoting [“Israeli wines take a big, bold leap forward”, Feb. 14-21] are, literally, fruit from the vines of Israeli occupation. We recently sent a letter to the B.C. Liquor Distribution Branch on this very subject, which they have responded to, claiming this matter is not under their “jurisdiction” and that they offer products on a commercial-demand basis. Unfortunately, the BCLDB and, now, your Jurgen Gothe (hopefully unknowingly) are aiding and abetting an illegal occupation and hindering the chances for any future genuine peace in the region.

Hanna Kawas / Chairperson, Canada Palestine Association / New Westminster