

July 16, 2010

On May 24, 2010, we in the Canada Palestine Association (CPA) issued our call for a total boycott of Mountain Equipment Coop (MEC), and since then, supporters have written MEC informing them of their decision to no longer shop there. In response MEC management not only defended their support for Israeli Apartheid, they also defended Israel and its institutions. Here is a quote from a representative from the MEC Service Centre in reply to one such letter: "Israel has a vibrant and functioning democracy, which has put in place independent judicial systems, free press and organized labour initiatives." And David Labistour, the CEO of MEC, answered other emails by sending a link to a Histadrut Press Release on the Flotilla Attack, which justified Israel's murderous action against the peace activists taking aid to Gaza (see: http://www.histadrut.org.il/index.php?page_id=1801). This Histadrut PR spin mentions the Palestinian trade union PGFTU, but conveniently forgets to state that PGFTU was one of the initiators of the global boycott Israel (BDS) movement.

It is also worth noting that several representatives of the local Palestinian solidarity movement, including representatives from CPA, met with the management of MEC and its CEO on April 8, 2009, to explain the history of the conflict and the Israeli Apartheid policies against Palestinians in general (including 20% of Israel's own citizens). It seems the MEC people in that room were not listening carefully or they do not care at all about the human rights violations against the Palestinian people.

We feel that our call is the only way to force the MEC management to listen, because obviously all they care about is their bottom line and financial gains, not humanitarian or cooperative ethics as they would like consumers to believe. In fact, CPA felt a total boycott of MEC was the optimal strategy over a year ago after the resolution to stop dealing with Israeli products failed at the MEC 2009 AGM. (See: <http://www.nationalpost.com/news/canada/story.html?id=1553265>). At that time, we agreed to wait for those who wanted to continue efforts at dialogue. However, it has now been proven that MEC is not interested in dialogue of any sort, no matter how well-intentioned, and thus the momentum for a general boycott of MEC is both urgent and necessary. The Palestinian BDS National Committee issued a call after Israel's deadly raid on the Gaza flotilla to intensify our efforts at boycott campaigns and in this context, we will be examining other companies in Canada and calling on supporters to do exactly the same national action as with MEC. No business as usual and no dealings with those who support Israeli war crimes – we must take a stand now as the Palestinian people are counting on us to defend their human and national rights. HISTORY WILL BE OUR WITNESS.

(We are heartened by the support the campaign has received and will be updating the list of endorsers from time to time, so please feel free to approach friends and other organizations to join this campaign.)

Following is the CPA statement and the organizational and individual endorsers to date:

The Canada Palestine Association in Vancouver, BC calls upon all Palestine solidarity organizations and all those who support Palestinian human rights in Vancouver and Canada to *focus* their efforts on imposing a general boycott on Mountain Equipment Coop (MEC). Despite

efforts to engage in constructive dialogue on various occasions, MEC has refused to divest from Israeli products. Within the framework of International Humanitarian Law, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all relevant international conventions, the Canada Palestine Association:

1. *Considers* importing products manufactured in factories that have ties with the Israeli state or any of its instruments such as the “Israeli Defense Forces” as morally abhorrent and detrimental to efforts to uphold Palestinian human rights, and
2. *Calls* upon all Palestine solidarity organizations and individual supporters of Palestinian human rights to impose a general boycott on Mountain Equipment Coop until it cuts **all** ties with Israel.

Organizational and Media Endorsements:

Canada Palestine Association, Halifax

Canadian Arab Federation, Toronto

Palestine House Community Centre, Toronto

Palestinian and Jewish Unity (PAJU), Montreal

Shuswap Association for the Promotion of Eco Desarrollo (SAPED) Transitions, Clinton, B.C.

Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights SPHR - UBC

The Comox Valley Peace Group, BC

Voice of Palestine, Vancouver

Individual Endorsements: (groups listed for identification only)

Amir M. Maasoumi, President, One democratic state in historical Palestine/ Razaq Faraj Group, Montréal.

Andrew Phillips, New Westminster

Betty Beeching, Vancouver

Cynthia TAHA George, BC

Dave Bleakney, National Union Representative, Canadian Union of Postal Workers

Earle Peach, Vancouver (member of MEC)

George McFetridge, Victoria

Irene Ducharme

Janet Hall, Vancouver

John Beeching, Vancouver

Katy Hanna, Montreal, QC

Lawrence Boxal, Vancouver

Mira Khazzam, Montreal, Canada, member Independent Jewish Voices (Montreal)

Noah Lepawsky, Vancouver

Prof. Lawrence Davidson, Department of History West Chester University, Pa., U.S.

Roger Howard

Sameer Parmar, Minnetonka, MN, USA

Wendy Strachan

Yvon Raoul, Vancouver