

LA Jews for Peace Policy Statement

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Ben & Jerry's Takes a Small Step Towards Peace

LA Jews for Peace applauds Ben & Jerry's decision to stop selling its ice cream in illegal West Bank settlements while continuing its business inside Israel proper. This shows that Ben & Jerry's recognizes the 1967 Green Line border as the demarcation separating sovereign Israel from the Occupied Palestinian territories. They said, "We believe it is inconsistent with our values for Ben & Jerry's ice cream to be sold in the Occupied Palestinian Territory."

LA Jews for Peace agrees with Ben & Jerry's assessment of the geopolitical situation. Their decision is a legitimate, peaceful protest against the systemic injustice of occupation/apartheid and a reminder that the settlements are, in fact, illegal under international law and not recognized by the U.S. government as part of Israel.

Right-wing pro-Israel groups and the Israeli government are calling Ben & Jerry's decision anti-Semitic. That is absurd. Ben & Jerry's obviously did not act against Jews or Israel as a sovereign state — they will continue to do business inside Israel. Rather, Ben & Jerry's simply choose not to do business in illegal settlements that are widely recognized as a barrier to peace.

Ben & Jerry's decision will not end the Israel's apartheid regime, or even its occupation of Palestinian land. Rather, Ben & Jerry's action, combined with similar actions of many individuals and companies, may eventually have two effects:

- Isolate Israel from the community of states, and that in turn will cause Israel to rethink its occupation/apartheid policies. Similar isolation of South Africa was a key driver that convinced White Afrikaners that their apartheid system had to change.
- Convince the U.S. government to exert diplomatic pressure on Israel to end its occupation/apartheid policies. That pressure should extend to sanctions on Israel and conditioning or even ending the \$3.8 billion the U.S. gifts to the Israeli military every year until Israel abandons those policies.

LA Jews for Peace encourages others to follow Ben & Jerry's lead towards peace by recognizing the significance of the Green Line, and by ending business activities in illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

This can work. Zionist Michael Oren said that Ben & Jerry's action, combined with similar actions of others, can contribute to a "steady erosion of Israel's legitimacy." That is wrong — it does not question Israel's legitimacy. But it will convince the U.S. government to pressure Israel to make a lasting peace with the Palestinians.