

# BOYCOTT

Even the apples you buy could have an impact on countries that abuse human rights...

By PATRIC DOSFELIPES

**A** product. They make it. We buy it because we see it, the same as any other product. But there is a difference between products; and the difference hurts.

Take apples, for instance. We stroll through the grocery store looking them over. Green, yellow or red, the price is more or less the same. They come from different parts of the world, however, and which we choose to buy could have an impact on the country of origin.

To buy one type of apple may encourage an Okanagan, B.C. farmer to continue to harvest fruit and maintain a lifestyle in B.C.'s interior valley. If one buys apples imported from Chile, however, the money is going to support that country's regime and encourage the cycle of repression. Chile is a dictatorship and any apples to bought give the government foreign exchange through export earnings. The workers who pick the apples barely have enough money to even purchase an apple, and their labour becomes a tool of repression because their exported fruit becomes tanks, guns and bullets.

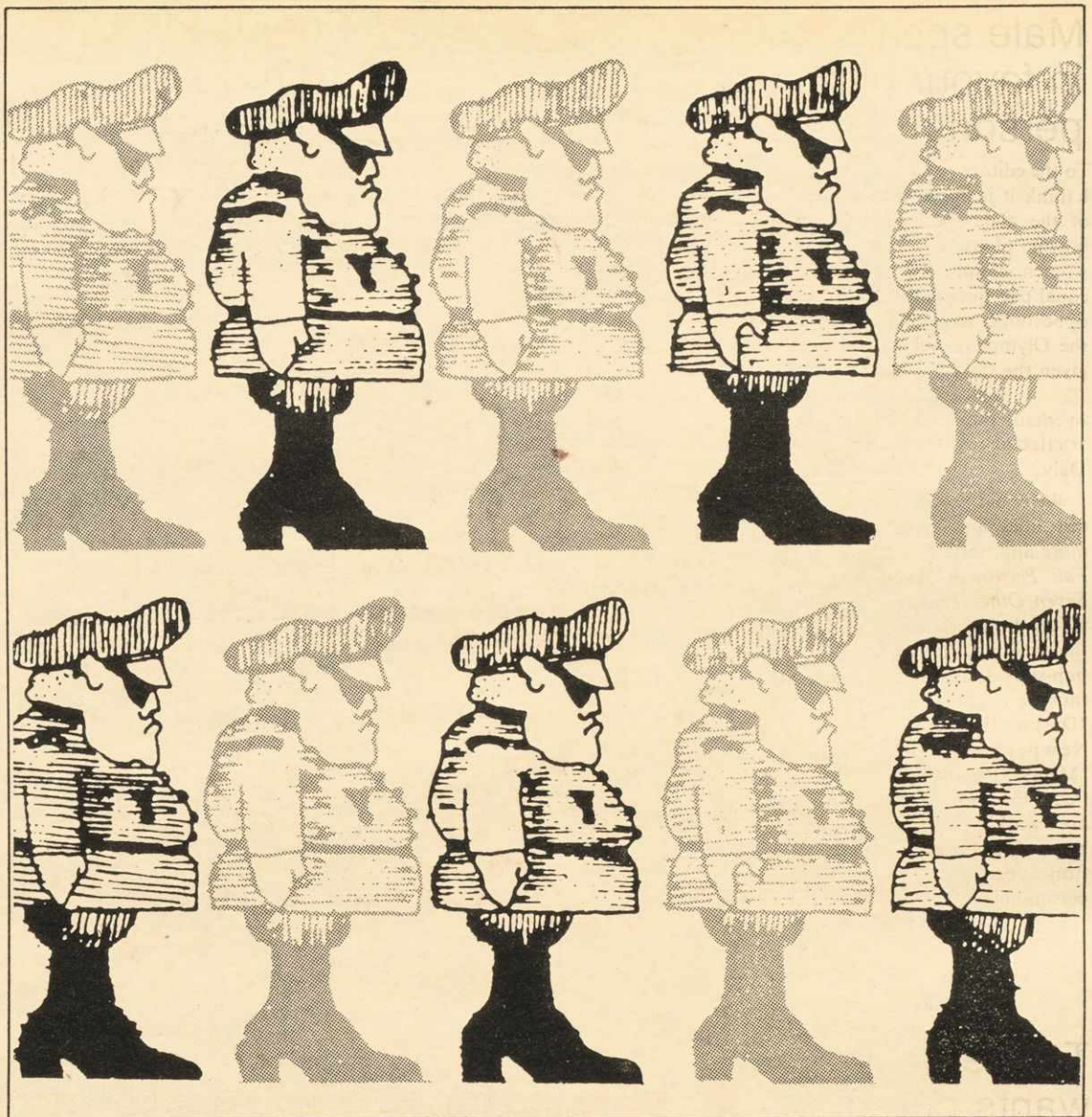
The conscious social ostracism of a group or company is called a boycott. Boycotts have been around for a long time, although the word boycott has only been used since the 1880s.

One of the most famous historical boycotts against another group was the boycott of British tea by Americans on the

eve of the American revolution. The boycott began with the dumping of tea into the Boston harbour in protest of a tax on the tea the Americans felt was unfair. This act prompted active aggression against the British troops and the eventual political confrontation.

The actual act of boycotting comes from Ireland during the 19th century where it was used as a form of social excommunication against landowners and their agents. The potato famines of the 1830s had a profound impact on the Irish peasant families, and many land owners used the famine to consolidate their holdings by taking over indebted peasant's land. Through agents, the landowners kicked impoverished peasants off the land their families had farmed for centuries.

Someone named Captain Boycott was the agent of Lord Erne in county Mayo, Ireland during this period. He was one of the most hated land agents. The people of county Mayo decided to excommunicate Captain Boycott socially and refused to interact with him or his family. This boycott caused the development of what later became the Land League, and many peasants used boycotts to stifle the land grabbing which was in progress.



Boycotts were used in the early years of the trade union movement in a similar manner. Workers who did not observe a strike and went back to work were socially ostracized in their communities. In this way, unions maintained a more secure position and strike solidarity.

Modern boycotts have retained their grassroots appeal. Boycotting has been used on a greater scale by individual countries, although the success of these boycotts has been marginal and they have tended to be failures. U.S. President Jimmy Carter's boycott of Soviet products following the invasion of Afghanistan failed to

dissuade the Soviet Union from occupying that country.

Successful boycotts remain in the hands of the consumer. Although North American boycotts have had an effect on certain companies, Europeans have been the most successful consumer boycotters. The 260 million consumers represented in the European Common Market have become a major lobby group against companies such as Nestle's (the third world baby formula producer), the practices of certain veal processing companies, Coca-Cola and baby harp seal pelts. The Scandinavian countries have also strongly boycotted South African

and Chilean products.

North Americans may not understand the boycott process as well as Europeans do, but there have been some successful major boycotts. In Vancouver, some boycotts have focused on the labour practices of certain retail companies. Army and Navy, Eaton's and Slade and Stewart are current notorious culprits. Worldwide pressure on Nestle's on its marketing of baby formula to third world countries has resulted in that company agreeing to market its formula according to World Health Organization standards.

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## Some of the ads the Gazette boycotts...

JUST AS YOU CAN TELL THE political beliefs of a consumer by the products in his shopping cart, you can see the politics of a newspaper or magazine by the advertising on its pages. Like most other newspapers the *Gazette* boycotts advertising from companies and institutions whose investment practices or management policies contradict our editorial stands.

Every year member papers of Canadian University Press submit a boycott list to our national advertising agency Campus Plus. The *Gazette* also retains the right to refuse publication of text or graphic material the staff considers to be racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise objectionable. The following is our boycott list. We recognize its imperfections and welcome your suggestions.

**Universite de Moncton** - The *Gazette* began this boycott in 1982 when the Universite de Moncton Administration ordered police to quell a student occupation on campus and later expelled

15 of the students involved. The student occupation was organized to protest tuition fee hikes.

According to a draft report by the Canadian Association of University Teachers the university has expelled 26 students in the last 15 years, more than any other Canadian university.

**Department of National Defense (DND)** - One of the *Gazette's* editorial stands is in favour of disarmament. Different staff members may have different ideas about how we should get from here to there but most would agree the DND has little to offer in way of a plan to disarmament. In Halifax nuclear submarines from the United States rest in our harbour and out West US cruise missiles are being tested. Canada is not a nuclear free power.

**Royal Canadian Mounted Police** - Canada's national police force subscribes to a hiring policy allowing discrimination against people based on sexual preference. The RCMP argue that this policy protects high security agents against blackmail. They feel a gay RCMP officer may give out

information or refuse to charge somebody if they threatened to make her sexual preference known publicly. To us this sounds as silly as not hiring men who practice adultery for fear they'll compromise themselves rather than go public with the information. And whatever their reasoning, we believe that discrimination based on sexual preference is never justified.

**Kidd Creek Mines, Eldorado Nuclear** - Both of these boycotts are connected to the mining and sale of uranium. Uranium mining is connected to the building of nuclear reactors which is in turn connected to the building of nuclear weapons.

**Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Bank of Montreal, Bank of Nova Scotia, Rothmans, Paarl, Carling O'Keefe and DeBeers** - All of the above hold investments in South Africa.

South Africa, as a nation, has gradually become isolated over the past thirty years. South Africa has been ostracized by many countries for its institutionalized discrimination against non-whites known

as apartheid. Black South Africans suffer the most from this policy, and are relegated to doing the most hard and menial jobs. They are also restricted in their movement, must live in specified areas and often must leave their families to secure and maintain jobs.

The South African government's latest tactic has been the formation of homelands, small fragments of land strewn across the nation where all black South Africans will gradually be forced to live. These homelands, or bantustans, are barren lands and are economically dependant on South Africa. Black South Africans living on the Bantustans will be stripped of the South African citizenships, worsening their employment situation and making them aliens in their own country.

The boycott of South African goods, as well as the goods and services provided by companies with ties to South Africa, gives less support to its government and encourages a change in the restrictive apartheid policy.