

## **Minute on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the boycott of products manufactured in illegal Israeli settlements**

*Approved by Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting on April 7th, 2013 in a Meeting for Worship with attention to business*

As Quakers we endeavor to listen deeply to all sides in any situation of conflict in the belief that all sides deserve a respectful hearing, and that no lasting solution to conflict can come unless the just claims of all sides are in some measure satisfied. In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which so sorely torments the international community generally and the peoples of the Middle East in particular, Israel's just claim for security is fully heard and supported by our government, and we join with the great majority of Americans who support Israel's claim for a secure existence.

The just claims of the Palestinians, on the other hand, are not widely recognized nor discussed in this country. Further, they receive little support from our government. Several from our Meeting have had direct experience with the on-the-ground realities in Israel/Palestine and others in the Meeting have undertaken a journey to educate themselves, through reading, conversations and forums about the claims of each side. We believe that three Palestinian claims deserve our support.

- 1) The Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory beyond the 1949 Armistice Line (the Green Line) is illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention, to which Israel is a signatory. Article 49 of that Convention specifically prohibits an occupying power from transferring members of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies. Thus the steady acquisition of Palestinian land for Israeli settlement development is illegal and is eroding the Palestinians' right to a viable homeland.
- 2) The Israeli domination of Palestinian land denies the Palestinians' right to personal freedom, national sovereignty and self-determination. This domination through continued expansion of settlements is preventing substantive peace negotiations from taking place.
- 3) The Palestinians also claim that those who support these illegal Israeli settlements by buying products produced there are contributing to the perpetuation of a grave injustice against the Palestinian people. People may be unaware of the origin of these

products, but once they are made aware that they are illegally produced on the West Bank, they have the responsibility not to be complicit in a continuing injustice.

In support of Palestinian justice, as well as in support of a peaceful and lasting resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we encourage our members and all citizens not to buy products (eg., Soda Stream, Ahava cosmetics, etc) made in the West Bank settlements.

As members of the Religious Society of Friends who believe that all women and men are our sisters and brothers we are led to respond to the cries of suffering of the Palestinian people by supporting the boycott campaign until the Occupation has ended and the basic human rights of those living under the intolerable conditions of this Occupation are secured.