

personal
english



W₄ O₁ R₁ D₂

Word #34
Boycott

FREE PALESTINE



BOYCOTT ISRAEL

A boycott is an act of **voluntary and intentional abstention** from using, buying, or dealing with a person, organization, or country as an expression of protest, usually for social, political, or environmental reasons. The purpose of a boycott is to **inflict some economic loss on the target**, thus trying to compel the target to alter an objectionable behavior. Sometimes, a boycott can be a form of **consumer activism**, also known as **moral purchasing**; among other examples, we can list the numerous international boycotts of products manufactured in Israeli-occupied territories with a view to raising awareness of the pressure exerted by **Israel** on Palestinian territories, which, to this day, are denied self-government. When a similar practice is legislated by a national government, it is known as a **sanction**; an example is the UN Assembly resolution passed in 1962 meant to impose economic sanctions on the **South African Apartheid** system, which later took the form of an international disinvestment campaign in South Africa.

The word *boycott* entered the English language during the so-called **Irish 'Land War'** and derives eponymously from **Captain Charles Boycott**, the land agent of an absentee landlord, **Lord Erne**, who lived near Ballinrobe in County Mayo and was subject to social ostracism organized by the **Irish Land League** in **1880**. As harvests had been poor that year, Lord Erne offered his tenants a ten percent reduction in their rents. In September of that year, protesting tenants demanded a twenty five percent reduction, which Lord Erne refused. Boycott then attempted to evict eleven tenants from the land. Lord Erne and Captain Boycott soon found themselves isolated – so much so that their laborers stopped work in the fields and stables, as well as in Lord Erne's house; also local businessmen stopped trading with him, and the local postman refused to deliver mail. Even earlier than this historical episode, forms of boycott had been implemented by the **Sons of Liberty** during the **American Revolution**, an organization that – in an endeavor to battle the Stamp Act imposed on the Thirteen Colonies in **1765** – encouraged colonists to refuse to buy English goods in order to economically pressure the English Crown.