

Problems with the TSSU Motion to Include Anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Principles in the Bylaws

The TSSU motion to include anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) principles in the bylaws is deeply flawed for reasons including the following:

1. **The motion is discriminatory.** The TSSU bylaws don't refer to any other political conflict or territorial dispute – not even the dispute over the land on which SFU is built. The motion thus singles out Israel as the only nation or group in the world deserving of condemnation.
2. **The motion is one-sided and simplistic.** The motion places responsibility for the resolution of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict entirely in the hands of Israel. None of the other players in the conflict is held accountable. For example, the motion does *not* say that
 - a. Palestinians must recognize the State of Israel and cease acts of terrorism.
 - b. Egypt must end the [blockade of the Gaza Strip](#), dismantle the wall that it built between the two regions, and cease its demolishing of Palestinian homes and infrastructure in its buffer zone.
 - c. Countries such as [Iran](#), [Syria](#), and [Lebanon](#) must cease training and funding terrorists who target Israel.
3. **The motion disguises the fact that the BDS movement has the destruction of Israel as its ultimate goal.** While the TSSU motion calls for Israel's "ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands captured in 1967", the document by the Palestinian Civil Society on which this principle is based in fact calls for Israel's "ending its occupation and colonization of *all* Arab lands". The term "all Arab lands" does not distinguish between the State of Israel as determined by the pre-1967 border (which is internationally recognized) and the territories captured by Israel during the 1967 war (which are disputed). The addition of the modifier "captured in 1967" in the TSSU motion thus disguises the true and publicly stated intentions of the BDS movement: the end of the state of Israel.
4. **The motion overreaches its authority.** Section D of the TSSU bylaws states that "Each Union member will thereby agree to comply with the aims, principles and policies of the TSSU". However, obliging members to follow BDS principles is contrary to the notion that individuals in Canada have the right to freedom of political opinion and action.
5. **The motion is inconsistent with other TSSU bylaws.** Section B of the bylaws states that one of the objectives of the TSSU is to "bring about improvements in working conditions... for all employees, regardless of... national origin...". However, BDS principles are designed to harm those of Israeli origin (which would include Israeli TSSU members).
6. **The motion is unclear on the issue of academic boycott.** The motion states that the "TSSU will boycott [complicit] Israeli... academic institutions". However, the practical implications of such a boycott are not discussed. For example, will visiting Israelis be permitted to join the TSSU and work as TAs or sessional instructors? Will TAs be allowed to work for visiting Israeli scholars?

7. **The motion opposes Israel rather than supporting Palestinians.** As a result, BDS can end up harming Palestinians. For example, in 2015, in the face of pressure from the BDS movement, [SodaStream](#) closed its factory in Ma'ale Adumim (West Bank) and more than 500 Palestinian workers lost their jobs. All but one of the workers who were interviewed by *The Christian Science Monitor* opposed BDS.
8. **Boycotting Israeli products is, for all intents and purposes, infeasible.** Israel is heavily involved in the high tech industry, and develops and manufactures technology that is ubiquitous. There are over 250 [R&D centres in Israel](#) owned by multinational corporations (including Amazon, Apple, eBay, Google, and Microsoft).
9. **Singling out Israel and supporting its destruction as a Jewish state give the appearance of antisemitism.** The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance consists of 31 member countries, including Canada. This group adopted a [working definition of antisemitism](#) that states that “Manifestations [of antisemitism] might include the targeting of the state of Israel” and that antisemitism can include “denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination”.