

PHILLY: SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS IN ISRAEL-PALESTINE: PLEASE DON'T BUY TRIBE HUMMUS!



Tribe Mediterranean Foods has been producing and selling hummus and other Mediterranean food products since April 1994. From its inception until the fall of 2006, Tribe Hummus was produced and sold under the trademark "Tribe of Two Sheiks." Its products are manufactured in a company-owned and -operated "state of the art" 60,000 sq. foot refrigerated facility located in Taunton, Massachusetts, about 40 miles south of Boston.

Tribe is owned by a Tel Aviv-based Israeli corporation, the Osem Group, which bought the company in September 2008 for \$39 million. Nestlé received a 1995 option for the acquisition of 10% of Osem's shares in 1995, and it gradually increased its shares and now holds a 50.1% share of Osem. In addition to Tribe Hummus, Osem produces 1,000 different food items in 10 plants across Israel.

The U.S. hummus market was estimated at \$200 million in 2008 and is project to top \$500 million by 2014. Tribe sales in 2008 were \$32 million, up 25% in that one year.

Osem announces on its corporate website, "Since its establishment in 1942 . . . the history of Osem is intertwined with the history of the modern state of Israel." Osem has expanded steadily over the last 68 years, and today its U.S. subsidiary, based in Englewood Cliffs, NJ, is the largest importer of Israeli food products into this country.

For many years, Osem has been a key supporter and partner of the Jewish National Fund. For example, Osem has run campaigns that promise donations to the JNF - one tree for every 5 boxes of Osem matzah sold. Osem frequently features the JNF on its product packages, promoting the continued planting of trees and the entire JNF land "reclamation" program. The JNF has honored Osem with awards and featured Osem as a key corporate sponsor.

Many Jews in the U.S. and around the world grew up with JNF "blue boxes," which collected money for the Zionist project of "reclaiming the Holy Land" for the Jewish people and "making the desert bloom." For over 100 years, planting trees in Israel has been a theme of Jewish American culture - in many communities and families, every birth, bar and bat mitzvah, wedding, and funeral has been commemorated with the planting of a JNF tree. Less well known is the JNF's role in the dispossession of Palestinians from their homes and ancestral lands since 1948, the disastrous environmental effects of the planting of non-native trees on the ecosystems of Palestine, or the fact that the JNF pine forests were planted on the ruins of Palestinian villages that had been razed in order to prevent their owners from ever

returning to reclaim their homes. Because by law all land owned or administered by the JNF is reserved for the exclusive use of “the Jewish people in perpetuity,” the JNF has played a key role in the “judaization” of Palestine and the ethnic cleansing of its indigenous people.

Today the Jewish National Fund, with significant support from Tribe Hummus and the Osem companies, continues its work of appropriating land for Jews and evacuating Palestinians. Since 1967, the JNF has been the essential partner of the Israeli government and the army in building the infrastructure of the Occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem – building Jewish-only roads and expanding Jewish settlements on stolen Palestinian land. Today its \$600 million “Greening the Negev” project is forcing native Bedouins into seven urbanized Bantustans, destroying their traditional way of life and building Jewish-only suburban enclaves – complete with non-native green lawns and water-wasting sprinkler systems – where a desert community has existed for thousands of years.

As a shopper, you vote with your dollar. Instead of voting for Tribe-Osem and the Jewish National Fund, wouldn’t you prefer to vote for a local Philadelphia-based business that is creating jobs and cycling your money back into your home community? Locally made alternatives to Tribe hummus include Bobbi’s, Bitar’s, Wakim’s, and Moshe’s – please ask the manager of your store to stock these instead of Tribe. (Note: Sabra Hummus, Tribe’s leading competitor, is half owned by an Israeli company that supports the Golani Brigade, a notorious squad in the Israeli army that is known for brutality and violations of human rights – please Boycott Sabra Hummus too!) You can also make your own hummus easily, inexpensively and deliciously:

HOMEMADE HUMMUS

Chick peas, aka garbanzo beans (1 cup of dried chick peas, soaked in water overnight or until soft – or one 15 oz can – reserve the water!)

¼ cup olive oil

3 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed

¼ cup lemon juice

4 tablespoons tahini (sesame cream – look for it near the peanut butter in the store)

Sea salt to taste



Blend all ingredients in a food processor or blender to a smooth, thick puree. Add a tablespoon at a time of the reserved water to get the desired consistency. Chill the hummus and then serve it on a flat dish, with a little additional olive oil spooned over the top and a good sprinkling of paprika. Garnish with lemon wedges and serve with warm pita bread.

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To get involved in local organizing to end the Israeli occupation and promote justice for the Palestinian people, please contact the Philadelphia BDS campaign: phillybdsgroup@gmail.com. Thanks!