

INTERNATIONAL BOYCOTT BUSH CAMPAIGN

“As consumers we do not want our money to be used to fuel wars, environmental destruction and human-rights violations.”

Organise US Presidential Elections in your town!

Tuesday, November 2, 2004

No Bush - No Kerry: Vote with your wallet!

This is a call for you – especially non-US citizens – to organize alternative polling stations for the upcoming US presidential elections on Tuesday, November 2, 2004 **in as many cities and countries as possible (to make it meaningful).***

The 2nd November is a good moment to explain that **we, as non US citizens, cannot vote although US policies affect all of us in everyday life.**

Even if Bush is not re-elected on November 2, 2004, US multinationals and United States' foreign policies will continue to fuel wars, environmental destruction and human-rights violations.

For this reason we are calling for an **open ended boycott campaign** which will continue after the US presidential elections.

We want to state that: "The American public can register their opinions at the ballot box, but for the rest of the world, all we can do is register our opinions via the marketplace." (Gerd Leipold, Greenpeace International Executive Director, April 2001).

We have the consumer power so we will vote with our wallets!

This is a relatively **small, fun and easy boycott action which can attract positive reactions and coverage:** a table, a ballot box, etc..

People do not choose between G.W. Bush or John Kerry (Mr. Bush Light!), but can **vote for the end of the U.S. occupation of Iraq, for Kyoto, for nuclear disarmament, the end of U.S. support of Israel....** and can vote for the boycott campaign.

So far, there will be alternative polling stations for non-US citizens in **Brazil, Belgium, Hungary, Spain and maybe France** as well.

We hope that this boycott action kit will help and encourage more local groups to organize alternative polling stations in their town to get more and more people involved in this international boycott campaign for a better world.

Ian Britton (UK, 2001)



Boycott Action Kit

Contents

- Prepare your action [2]
- Invite people [3]
- D Day [4]
- D Day + 1: The results [4]
- Get your story in the media [5]
- Ballot Paper [6]
- Background info [7]
- Contact details [7]

www.boycottbush.org

* This is a global action proposal from the Belgian Boycott Bush working group which met last September 1st, 2004, in Brussels.

Prepare your action

Action material

* The idea is to open “**real**” **polling stations** morning or afternoon (morning is the best time for media) downtown with a table, ballot box(es), ballot papers, informative panels, posters, a banner, etc. You could try to ask the town hall for the polling material.

* Ask the police for a **permit** to organize an action in the street or place you have chosen. The best places are crowded (commercial) streets where you can give out flyers next to the shops.

* Prepare a nice **ballot box** with a clear message for the media, for example:

**NON-US CITIZENS
BALLOT BOX
www.boycottbush.org
(or your group’s website)**

* If you can have a polling booth, put a message on the curtain



Mask of Bush

Make a paper mask (www.bushcards.com/images/masks/bushmask.pdf) or buy a mask of Bush and wear it during the action with a mask of Bush and a big button “VOTE FOR WAR” to attract attention and invite people (with flyers) to vote in your polling station. Bush can wear a suit or a military uniform, be armed with a toy machine-gun, or he can hold in his hands a false bleeding dove... Be creative! We have used the Bush mask in many actions and it works very well.

Info material

* Print **ballot papers**. We will translate them as soon as possible into Arabic, French, Hungarian, Portuguese and Spanish.

* Print informative material about the **products to boycott** sold by US multinationals in your country and don't forget to inform about the **alternatives** as well. You can prepare a caddie with products to boycott or alternatives (and invite people to try them).

* Also print information about the specific **demands of the Boycott Bush campaign** to the US government. You find them at www.boycottbush.org.

Invite people!

* The polling station action will be stronger if you invite **local personalities** to come to vote.

* You can organize a symbolic and visual boycott action before the 2nd November to advertise the "polling stations" action day. For example, you can perform street theatre with one person disguised with a mask of **Bush spreading flyers to invite people** to come to vote in your alternative polling station on Tuesday, November 2, 2004. It can be useful for the D Day of action as well to attract people's attention.

* You can **use the ballot paper as an invitation**: fill the blank at the end with the place and time of your polling stations and leave the flyers in strategic places where you think people might be interested to take your flyer and to come to your boycott action.

To get more people than just the organising core group (or even just you as one person!) to your actions you need to outreach. There are countless ways of letting people know about your plans and convincing them to join you.

make a **poster** and put it in public places

invite the members of **your organisation**

make a **contact-list of the activists** taking part in your action and invite them next time

write an **article** to be published in activist/alternative-media

get the date of your action published in the **listings and magazines** of other groups and organisations that you invite to join the action

keep **your website** updated and create links with other webpages

send info, an article etc. to different **email list-servers, and activist websites** such as the Independent Media Centre <http://www.indymedia.org>.

create and use an **e-mail signature** about your actions

use your friendly **press contacts** to get your plans published in newspapers, radio...

talk about your actions in **meetings and info-evenings**

go to **actions and demonstrations** of other groups and organisations to invite people (use the flyer!)

invite your friends, family, neighbours...

These are some examples of how to spread the information and reach activists and people who are not (yet) involved in the peace movement.

Be aware that different groups and people may have different reasons for joining the campaign. Here are some examples:

▶ **Bar, shop & restaurant owners:** In the campaign, these individuals -who are not activists- have been very important to visualize and communicate the opposition to the US policies and to demonstrate alternatives.

▶ **Development groups:** Military spending cuts down on development aid programs.

▶ **Environmental groups:** Environmental impact of the Bush administration's policies.

▶ **Families and parents groups, Medical organisations:** Enormous military budgets cutting into social funding programs.

▶ **International issues/justice organisations:** Violation of UN charter and international law. Use of double standards and hypocrisy around the issue of weapons of mass destruction.

▶ **Peace organisations:** Opposed to wars.

▶ **Political parties & lawyers groups:** Legislators are very concerned about the recent events and the impact for the UN & International law. It can be very helpful for your campaign to get politicians on board. It gives you a lot more credibility with mainstream press, the public and other NGO's.

▶ **Public spending campaign groups:** Military spending

If you want your action to be successful, it is vital that you reach people who are outside of the activist "scene". This will show that there is broad public support for your message, and stop you from being marginalized or criminalized.

D Day

Ian Britton (UK, 2001)

- * Make your polling station attractive and colourful to attract people and media but keep in mind that it is a polling station.

- * Have clear message on posters, banners, placards (black on yellow is the best).

- * Be on time for the people and media you have invited.

- * Be active, friendly with people, and don't forget to smile even if you are tired or hungry.

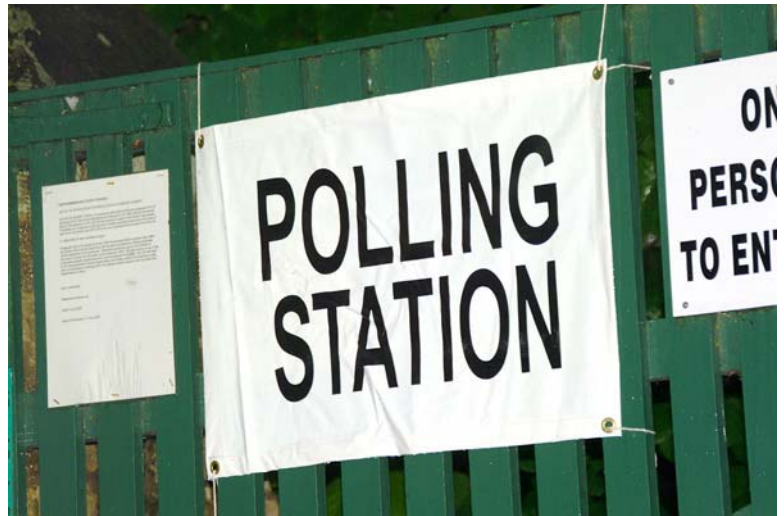


- * Each activist should know her or his role and responsibilities before, during and after the action.

- * Take photographs for your press release.

- * Don't forget to thank activists after the action, have a drink or food together and set a date for an evaluation meeting of the action.

- * Write a press release about the action and send it to us and the media with your best picture(s).



D Day + 1: The results

As with a "real" election, there will be a second strong time in this action: the unveiling of our results.

Write a press release with your results to us and your local and national media.

The International Secretariat of the Boycott Bush campaign will write a press release with a summary of all the polling station actions that took place on Tuesday, November 2, and will unveil the global results.

We will also make it possible for visitors to vote online at www.boycottbush.org. We will send an email to the Boycott Bush International Network as soon as the system is ready.

Get your message in the media

Through the years campaigners & activists have realised that there is effort and skill needed to get a campaign published in the mainstream and alternative media. The following guidelines are to give you a start.

Publishing your action is not just about attracting attention to yourself or even to your political issue. It is also about responsibility. Today you want to stop the violation of the UN charter and international law and get this information to the public and political leadership.

Be aware that members of the media - like all of us in some way - have their own agendas. You need to be aware that sometimes your words and even your issue may be manipulated, even by sympathetic journalists. In other cases your action may not be reported at all, however much effort you put into getting the media there.

Non-violent actions are very good tools to get public attention to your campaign

1. Before the event

First of all, realise that members of the corporate press are not our friends, but also not our enemies. They need us as much as we need them.

Try to identify a **contact person(s)** at every media outlet, and keep him/her informed. Provide him/her with background papers, and let them know that you are committed to the issue.

Don't be afraid to ask about the needs of reporters: how they work, **deadlines**, etc. Please be aware of deadlines! Don't call in the middle of radio-news, or five minutes before closing time of the news desk at the TV-station.

Always keep your **message short and simple**. Speak slowly. Remember your audience. Be aware that only a few sections of the media will give us the opportunity for a more in depth story, (for example some magazines or the opinion-page in newspapers).

Write a short invitation/news release with 'The Five Ws' in first paragraph : **who, what, why, when and where**. Always mention the contact details.

Create a 'visual' action. Brainstorm about the image you want to relay to the general public. Create a photo opportunity, which contains all the elements you want to communicate - five Ws! Think about the image when planning a protest or event. Make clear clean banners (black print on white or yellow)!

Remember that television and photos are the most powerful communication tools today. Photographers and radio reporters want an interesting story, and - do not forget- they want (contrary to newspaper reporters) **movement and sound**.

Contact the wire services (AP, Reuters, your national agency) first, as they will distribute your story to TV, radio, newspapers and magazines. Wire services provide one of the best ways to insure successful coverage. Don't forget the national and international TV and photo-agencies if you can guarantee a good story. A good photo-story might be picked up by several newspapers and reach millions of people.

If you have an important story, arrange for **your own camera** (Betacam, digital or Hi-8) and photographer. Absent agencies might be interested in your video footage and photos. Send your pictures to the picture desk with your photo-story (with 5 w's)

2. During the event

Radio news and news agencies cover events as they happen. Their news desks are among the first to call when your protest has started. Call them with regular updates if your event takes several hours, and brief them once it has ended.

Press contact: Don't forget to appoint one activist responsible for the contacts with the media during the event, to give regular briefings, point out spokespeople and photo-opportunities, take note of their names and contacts, deal with press calls on the mobile, etc

3. After the event

Attention: Too often forgotten. From experience we know that this is very often neglected.

Please write news-reports and send photos to mainstream and alternative media **the same day!** In an ideal situation you would have someone doing this during the action for news-agencies & radio-stations as they want breaking news. Have a final report mailed **immediately after the action** to your complete media list. Also post your news on your website and on your local outlets (e.g. www.indymedia.org).

After the action, send an objective report to your contacts. Mention agencies in your action-report (for example TV footage and photographs through Reuters). This might encourage a local TV station or a newspaper to pick up the story.

Spread the word yourself, using your own media - your own newsletters or magazines, or information evenings and video showings. Publish it on your website as the campaign develops

Use for example www.indymedia.org to publish your story and pictures. Check your regional and local outlets for your 'breaking news' on the internet.

Background info

Bush donors

Last January, Boycott Bush campaigners and activists met during the World Social Forum, in Mumbai, India. We decided to target 6 US multinationals who are important Bush donors and who have global brands, easy to boycott in each region of our Planet.

TOP 6 Bush donors 1999-2004		[4th Oct. 04; Source: www.opensecrets.org]
1. Altria (ex-Philip Morris) :	\$6.830.000	
2. Exxon-Mobil (Esso) :	\$2.730.000	
3. Chevron-Texaco:	\$2.420.000	
4. PepsiCo:	\$1.940.000	
5. Coca Cola co.:	\$1.040.000	
6. McDonalds:	\$780.000	

Find Bush donors' facts sheets and brands at boycottbush.org

Alternatives

By buying local, fair-trade, organic and environmentally-friendly alternatives to US multinationals products, this boycott is a bridge toward an ethical and sustainable economy.

It is very important to locate alternatives and inform people. Without alternatives, a boycott has less chance to be successful.

We recommend two excellent websites:

- * The *Good stuff?* guide at www.worldwatch.org
- * Ethical Consumer: www.ethicalconsumer.org



Contact details

Let us know if you plan to organize an alternative US presidential election in your city!

International and Belgium : Magali Fontanel magali@motherearth.org

Brazil: Marcel Retondario starrkey@terra.com.br

You can download this Boycott Action Kit for the "polling stations" action at www.boycottbush.org
Previous Boycott Action Kit is still available at www.motherearth.org/USboycott/actionkit_en.php
Please get back to us with your ideas and input: boycott@motherearth.org

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