

## ADIDAS ENDS PARTNERSHIP WITH KANYE WEST AT A CONSIDERABLE COST

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For more than two weeks, as Kanye West made a series of antisemitic remarks and embraced a slogan associated with white supremacists, Adidas, the most important partner in his fashion empire, said only that its relationship with the rapper and designer was “under review.”

But as Ye, as Mr. West is now known, continued his offensive behavior, and with the condemnation of his remarks growing more widespread, Adidas announced that it would cut ties with him — a move the company said would cost it 250 million euros this year.

“Adidas does not tolerate antisemitism and any other sort of hate speech,” the company said in a statement. “Ye’s recent comments and actions have been unacceptable, hateful and dangerous, and they violate the company’s values of diversity and inclusion, mutual respect and fairness.”

Over the past month, Ye tested the boundaries of acceptable behavior even for a noted provocateur. At his Paris Fashion Week show, he wore a shirt with the slogan “White Lives Matter,” which the Anti-Defamation League has identified as hate speech and has been adopted by the white supremacist movement. He made antisemitic remarks on social media, including a Twitter post that said he would go “death con 3 on Jewish people.”

Though Adidas was among the first of Ye’s corporate partners to announce publicly that it had placed the relationship under “review,” the fact that the company did not move faster to officially sever the ties began to take a toll. The Anti-Defamation League shot back, “What more do you need to review?”

In Germany, the Central Council of Jews called on the company to cut ties to Ye. “The historical responsibility of Adidas lies not only in the German roots of the company, but also in its entanglement with the Nazi regime,” the head of the council said.

The founder of Adidas, Adi Dassler, belonged to the Nazi Party, and his factory produced munitions in the final years of the war. Thanks to the sworn statement of a Jewish friend, Dassler was allowed to found the present-day company after World War II ended. Antisemitic statements made online can lead to prosecution in Germany, and companies with ties to the Nazi era are expected to act to prevent the return of such sentiment.

As pressure on the company mounted in the United States in recent days, its leadership remained largely silent, frustrating even its own executives. “As a member of the Jewish community, I can no longer stay silent on behalf of the brand that employs me,” a director for trade marketing at Adidas in the United States wrote in a LinkedIn post.

Adidas stock has fallen over 20 percent in the past month.

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