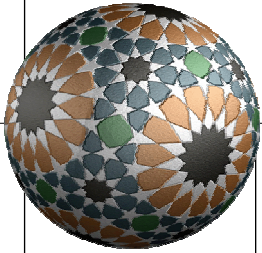


# Fair trade in a conflict zone



- ◇ What is fair trade?
- ◇ How can fair trade benefit Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, land that Israel has been occupying them since 1967?
- ◇ Why buy fair trade? Why buy Palestinian fair trade?

## WHAT IS FAIR TRADE?

Fair Trade is an alternative to the unjust trading rules and practices in the established system of trade in the world today, called Free Trade. Fair Trade is a growing, international movement which ensures that producers in poor countries get a fair deal. Fair trade is not about charity – it provides opportunities for producers to help themselves.

It does this by paying a fair price for their goods, maintaining secure contracts, offering support to gain the knowledge and skills that they need, creating opportunities for disadvantaged producers, and sustaining fair working conditions and wages.

## WHAT IS UNFAIR ABOUT OTHER TRADE?

Free Trade sounds very nice but for the majority of the world's poor it isn't because international trade rules are rigged against them. Powerful trading nations and large corporations reap bigger and bigger profits, whilst farmers, workers and producers get exploited. Despite the massive wealth of today's global economy, a fifth of the world's people still live below the poverty line – meaning they live on less than one dollar a day.

Whilst international trade should be helping them, in the current system, workers are forced to settle for wages below minimum wage standards, to work unreasonably long hours to maintain their jobs, to work in unsafe working conditions, and are forbidden from forming unions which made enable them to improve their working conditions.

In contrast, fair trade promotes workers rights and local environments – and gives, you, the consumer, the chance to make an ethical choice.

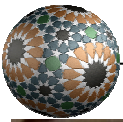


## WHAT ARE THE FAIR TRADE PRINCIPLES?

- ☀ Create opportunities for disadvantaged producers
- ☀ Dealing fairly and respectfully with trading partners
- ☀ Payment of a fair price
- ☀ Safe and healthy working conditions
- ☀ Equality between men and women
- ☀ Protecting the environment
- ☀ Developing producers' independence
- ☀ Long-term secure relationships



*Fair Trade  
Palestinian  
olive oil*



## IS FAIR TRADE ENOUGH?

No, fair trade alone can't address the crisis faced by the millions of small-scale farmers and producers.

Only by fundamentally changing the unfair rules and institutions which govern international trade and putting sustainable development, human rights and protection of the environment at the centre of the picture can things really change. This is precisely what the Trade Justice Movement – a coalition of charities, campaigning groups and fair trade organisations – is campaigning for.



Trade Justice Movement

## WHY BUY FAIR TRADE?



Fair trade gives consumers the choice to use their purchasing power to tilt the balance, however slightly, in favour of the poor. You can make the choice to buy something made in conditions that harm or benefit workers, communities and the environment.

Through your decisions to buy fair trade, you are supporting a system which enables nutritional needs to be met, school fees to be paid, health care costs to be covered, the environment to be protected, and marginalised workers to be empowered.

### WHAT FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS ARE AVAILABLE?

There is a wide and growing range of fair trade products. Agricultural products include chocolate, tea, coffee, bananas, dried fruit, wines, juices – and more.

Fair trade products that you can't eat or drink include clothes, furniture, home décor, jewellery, toys, personal accessories, and much more..

## HOW DO I KNOW IT IS FAIR TRADE?

Fair trade products will usually carry the logos of the Fair Trade Federation or Fair Trade Foundation.

Fair Trade  
Federation



Fair Trade  
Foundation

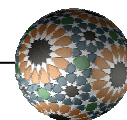


## WHY BUY PALESTINIAN FAIR TRADE?

Fair trade is all about promoting products from marginalised producers and ensuring their social, economic and environmental well-being. Producers in the West bank and Gaza are some of the most marginalised in the world, and their wellbeing is at great risk. Let's see why...

*Fair Trade Palestinian wall hanging—Once a traditional craft practiced by village women, cross-stitch embroidery has become an important symbol of Palestinian culture. The popularity of embroidery springs from both its beauty and its association with the Palestine of the past.*





## Enduring Occupation—Palestinians under siege

Poverty now affects 46 percent of the West Bank population and 80 percent of Gazans. Unemployment is soaring – it is about 19 percent in the West Bank and 36 percent in the Gaza Strip.

The worsening situation of the Palestinian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is not due to natural causes. Rather, it is largely a consequence of measures taken by the Israeli authorities

Amnesty International

The Israeli closure system is a primary cause of poverty and humanitarian crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory, and restricts Palestinian access to health and education services, employment, markets and social and religious networks.

Former UN Secretary General

### How does occupation strangle an economy?

Closure is a policy, in place since the early 1990s, that imposes severe restrictions of movement on Palestinian people, vehicles and goods in the Palestinian territories. This might not sound so bad, but it means that Palestinians often cannot access work, schools, or hospitals. Apart from the fact that this violates people's human rights and makes any semblance of normal life impossible, it means that an economy cannot function.



**Checkpoints** are barriers run by the Israeli army which control the movement of Palestinians. The West Bank is criss-crossed by a web of checkpoints – over 540. Most checkpoints are within the West Bank not between it and Israel, splitting the area into separated islands. To get through the checkpoints you need a permit. The rules for acquiring permits are complicated and often change without warning – plus having a permit is never a guarantee that you will get through. Apart from this, there are many main roads – covering over 700km – which only Jews and a few others, but not Palestinians are allowed to use.

As a result of all these restrictions, many Palestinians can't reach jobs and often have to travel on foot or long donkey routes. For farmers, this means that they may not be able to reach their fields, and sometimes their crops rot as a result. It also means that it is more expensive to transport goods, which makes the goods more expensive, so people don't buy them.

There have been many instances of products such as fresh produce rotting whilst the Palestinians wait to be allowed through checkpoints. It is sometimes near impossible for them to get their goods to the outside world.

#### Access to resources...land and water

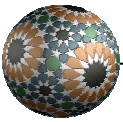
Springs dried up long ago and the Israeli wells are dug deeper into the earth and lower the water level before it can reach the shallower Palestinian wells. The equipment needed for digging deep wells is prohibited in Palestine without a special permit from Israeli authorities

Israeli authorities often "temporarily" seize Palestinian land for "military reasons" and then use it to build permanent structures including settlements and roads for settlers, and has not been returned to its owners.

The World Bank describes the Palestinian economy as a "shattered economic space"

Fair trade will not fix the Palestinian economy—only ending the occupation can provide any hope for that. But in the meantime, fair trade can make the difference to people's lives...





## Fair trade in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

Fair trade provides a sustainable source of income for farmers and for craftspeople working in community based groups.

### Environmental Concern

No chemical fertilisers or pesticides are allowed and recyclable, and/or biodegradable materials are used whenever possible. All farmers in a fair trade scheme use natural and traditional farming methods, which in Palestine have a history of being environmentally friendly.

### Sustainable Development

All aspects of production are done locally by Palestinians in order to create more jobs. All other supplies required for production (such as bottles, boxes, labels, etc...) are also acquired locally where possible. This is an effort to assist the growth of and support a sustainable local economy.

### Maintaining Cultural Identity

Fair trade products are based on producers' cultural traditions and cultural identity. Part of the aim is to protect traditional Palestinian communities in their production methods. Palestinian handcrafts have now become a symbol of the people and their striving for a normal way of life with a national identity, in the face of the Israeli occupation of their land. Making beautiful crafts also helps people psychologically to survive during long hours and days when they are not permitted to leave their homes because of Israeli-imposed curfews. The Israeli authorities have historically denied the Palestinians' ties to the land and even claimed that they are not a people in their own right. This, for the Palestinians, amounts to an erasure of their history and identity. So reaffirming their identity as Palestinians becomes an act of defiance.



#### PRODUCTS

Agricultural—Olive oil, olives, almonds, couscous, thyme (za'atar), sun-dried tomatoes, bourghul wheat, sesame seeds, tahini, capers, and honey

Other—Olive wood carving jewellery, cushion covers, book marks, key-rings, bags, calendars, cards, candle holders, soap, candles, dates



As unemployment soars, many women have become a main breadwinner of their families. Over the last few years, it has become an enormous challenge for these craft producers to carry out their work. Due to the curfew and closure of communities, village women are often unable to bring finished pieces of embroidery to their cooperative to receive wages. It is also increasingly difficult to obtain fabric and threads because of the checkpoints and roadblocks.

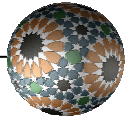
Aseela was established in 2004 in Bethlehem by a group of women who came together with the aim of empowering Palestinian women and promoting exquisitely Palestinian products overseas through a unique combination of grassroots economic initiatives in the West Bank and an international network of progressive organizations and consumers.

### ASEELA WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE

Aseela's vision is to produce top quality olive oil products that are distinctly Palestinian. The women wanted their products to reflect the local tradition that continues to thrive in their everyday customs - the abundant use of olive oil, flowers, spices and herbs in food, body care and medicine.

Wafa Khatib, a resident of Dheisheh refugee camp and co-founder of Aseela, says:

People outside Palestine hear only about violence and poverty. We wanted to show the world something beautiful from our country, by making great products from our excellent olive oil



## TREES FOR LIFE



The olive tree is a defining feature of the Palestinian landscape – in the past, they were everywhere. This has made it into a symbol of Palestine and explains the Palestinians' attachment to it as an expression of their rootedness to the land.

Olives have been a major commercial crop, and the olive oil is used not only in food, but also for lighting and in soap. Even if peasants own only a small piece of land, they will plant five or ten olive trees.

When olive trees are uprooted by the Israeli authorities, it destroys people's livelihoods and is all the more painful because the olive tree is a symbol of Palestinians' ties to the land and of Palestinian identity. The Israeli army uproots centuries old olive trees to make way for settlements (which are illegal communities for Jews only often built on privately owned Palestinian land), for roads that only settlers can use, to increase visibility for soldiers, and for a barrier/wall which Israel is currently building illegally.

To seize an olive tree is like a confiscation of memory

Over 100 000 olive trees have been uprooted so far to make way for the separation barrier.

The Trees for Life project helps offset the enormous destruction of trees by the Israeli army. It provides individual Palestinian farmers with 25 to 50 new olive tree seedlings (3 years old) to plant and nurture in order to renew their ruined groves. Priority is given to: 1) small farmers, 2) young starter farmers that have inherited or acquired land, 3) women that own their own land and are interested in farming, 4) Farmers that have lost trees due to the Israeli destructions



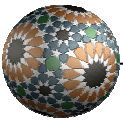
## OASIS

Oasis is a paper recycling and greeting card production workshop in the village of Beit Sahour. It is the only income-generating project in the area that provides an opportunity for adults with mental disabilities to work meaningfully and productively. Adults with mental disabilities from cities, villages and refugee camps in the area enrol for a daily programme consisting of relaxation through music and dancing, discussion to share each other's life, production of recycled paper and gifts, and lunch. The programme provides much-needed social opportunities for the people who are often stigmatized and shunned by society.



The director of Oasis, Mahera Nassar, says:

By coming to Oasis the lives of our members transform positively, as they used to spend their days idly at home, having nowhere to go, nothing to do. Now they participate in the meaningful activities and have social opportunities. It also lightens the immense burden of the families who have to care for them



## Palestinian citizens of Israel

When the state of Israel was established in 1948, the Palestinians who had been living in what was then called Palestine fled. Some ended up in what is now the Occupied Territories, some ended up in other parts of the world. Some, however, remained in the new state and became citizens of the state of Israel. About a quarter of them were displaced from their homes and villages and became internally displaced persons as the Israeli army destroyed over 400 Arab villages. The Palestinian citizens of Israel or Israeli-Arabs number over a million and make up about a fifth of the Israeli population.

The state of Israel defines itself as both Jewish and democratic. Palestinians are not Jewish – they are Muslim or Christian – and so are seen and treated as outsiders.

The Israeli legal system discriminates against the Palestinian community. Government spending is much lower in Palestinian areas than Jewish areas. Arab Israeli towns and districts in Israel usually have far worse housing, public transport, education facilities and general infrastructure than the national average. Much Arab land has been confiscated and now only 3.5% of Israeli land is under Arab ownership. Many Arab-Israeli houses have also been destroyed.

Israeli-Arabs make up more than half of the families living on the poverty line

Fair trade for Palestinian citizens of Israel helps to break the cycles of poverty and unemployment which arise out of the discrimination which they face.

### LAKIYA: NEGEV BEDOUIN WEAVING

Many of the Bedouins, who comprise about 12% of the Palestinian minority, live in villages not recognised by the Israeli state, so they receive no government services such as water access, electricity, health clinics, and sewage facilities.

Lakiya was established in 1991 as an income-generating project for Palestinian Bedouin women. Through a network of 6 women's centres, approximately 150 women are provided with an opportunity to develop the tradition of spinning and weaving, and to acquire new roles and skills in dyeing, production and business management.



### SINDYANNA OF GALILEE

This organisation, run jointly by Arab and Jewish women, strives to develop Palestinian farming and secure the Palestinian land against the confiscation by the State.

Sindyanna focuses on the promotion of products from olive, the sole agriculture sector inside Israel that remains distinctly Palestinian.



Previously, nobody thought about marketing agricultural produce of the Arab villages. That was the exclusive preserve of the big traders, who made their profits at the expense of the powerless Arab producers.

Abed al-Majid Hussein, a farmer from the village of Dir Hana and one of Sindyanna's founders