

- ◇ Why is illegal settlement produce sold in our supermarkets?
- ◇ Why does it matter?
- ◇ What can you do about it?

Did you know that fruit, vegetables and herbs sold in the UK and labelled 'West Bank' are usually sourced from Israeli settlements in the West Bank? Did you also know that some products are falsely labelled 'Israel' and in fact also originate from Israeli settlements in the West Bank? Settlements are communities for Jews only in the West Bank. There are over 450 000 settlers in the West Bank.

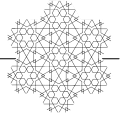
Why does this matter for an ethical shopper?

- * The settlements are illegal under international law, but Israel continues to build and expand them. Many people see the settlements as an obstacle to peace. The British Government also has this view.
- * Palestinian land, property and homes are taken away from Palestinians by the Israeli military for the building of settlements and settler-only roads. Palestinians are forbidden from entering the settlements or using the roads, so 40% of the West Bank is out of bounds to them.
- * Palestinian workers in the settlements are exploited and child labour is used
- * Scarce water resources are used to irrigate settlement produce for export to the UK. Water is diverted from Palestinian areas and redirected to the settlements. Many Palestinians consume less water than is the recommended minimum for human beings
- * Settlements have a detrimental impact on the daily lives of Palestinians. Movement is restricted through a system of separate roads for Israelis and Palestinians, hundreds of checkpoints, and the illegal wall.
- * Palestinians also endure violence at the hands of settlers. But the position of settlers is guaranteed by the Israeli army and according to human rights groups, settlers usually get away with it
- * The Israeli occupying power prevents the export of Palestinian goods. Palestinians face difficulties in reaching export markets as a result of the occupation, while illegal settlement produce makes its way into the UK market.
- * The settlements get a high proportion of their income from agriculture and 60% of Israeli agricultural products end up in the UK. The EU is Israel's biggest importer of goods. This means that Britain and EU are economically supporting the settlements and making their existence more permanent.



In the background of this picture, you can see a settlement on the hilltop where settlements often are as it gives them a military advantage. The land in the front is agricultural Palestinian land that is now covered with rubbish and sewage from the settlement. The Palestinians are concerned that the land will soon be confiscated from them for the settlement, as much of their land already has been.

What's in a label?



What's in a label?

Under an agreement called the EU-Israel Association Agreement many Israeli products are tax exempt when exported to the countries of the European Union.

Technically, Israel does not include the Occupied Territories, and so products from the settlements there should not be included in the agreement. In reality this is not the case – goods produced in the settlements are entering Britain after being illegally exempted from taxes (called tariffs) in violation of the trade agreement.

Article 2 of the Agreement makes Israel's trading preferences conditional upon respect for human rights. This means that that the EU is obliged to suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement if Israel is in breach of human rights. However the EU is strengthening its relations with Israel. In June 2008, Europe announced an upgrading of its relations with Israel.

What action has the British government taken?

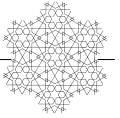
The British government has raised the issue of the sale of illegal settlement produce both in Europe and with the Israeli government. The government is addressing the mislabelling of produce from settlements in the occupied territories labelled as produce of Israel, which results in the producers illegally benefitting from the EU Israel preferential trade agreement, and misleads consumers, preventing them from making informed choices.

Recently, under pressure from the EU to differentiate produce that comes from settlements the Palestinian Occupied Territories from produce coming from inside Israel, Israeli producers in settlements have started labelling their produce as produce of the West Bank. This has confused many consumers who think they are buying Palestinian products when they are not. For consumers to make ethical choices, goods must be clearly labelled.

*In this photo, you can see Palestinians trying to stop a CAT bulldozer. Here Caterpillar is best known for its boots, bags and clothing. For Palestinians, it is more known by the fact that its bulldozers are being used by the Israeli army to destroy Palestinian homes, schools, orchards and olive groves, and their machines are building the Wall. Caterpillar armoured bulldozers have become a key part of the Israeli army's arsenal. Some people and organisations refuse to buy Caterpillar products for this reason. They **boycott** it.*



The barcode of products labelled as Israeli starts with 729



What's in your shopping bag?

As individuals we often feel helpless when it comes to making changes in the world we see around us. The good news is that as consumers, we can make a point quite easily. We can choose how we spend our money. We could choose to boycott...

What is a boycott?

Boycott is the act of voluntarily not using, buying, or dealing with someone or some organisation as an expression of protest. There is a campaign to ban illegal settlement produce. This is part of a broader campaign to boycott *all* Israeli goods, to put peaceful pressure on Israel until it abides by international law and respects human rights. However, as the settlements produce issue is one on which the government can take clear and immediate action, there is a special campaign on this which also focuses on the issue of labelling.

A consumer boycott works in two ways: firstly by generating bad publicity for the offender and secondly by applying economic pressure for change.

The boycott campaign intends to bring Israel to its senses, not its knees

Professor Ilan Pappé, an Israeli who supports the boycott campaign

I've been very deeply distressed in my visit to the Holy Land; it reminded me so much of what happened to us black people in South Africa. I have seen the humiliation of the Palestinians at checkpoints and roadblocks, suffering like us when young white police officers prevented us from moving about

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a much loved and leading figure in the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa

Boycott of Apartheid South Africa

Historical examples of successful boycotts include the boycott of apartheid South-Africa. Apartheid was a system where the white minority ruled over the black majority who suffered discrimination and violence under apartheid. What began as a grassroots movement, in other words a movement of ordinary people, developed until it finally became an absolute boycott of products, sport, culture, academia and tourism. This boycott was essential to fostering the world disapproval which led to South Africa's isolation, until the apartheid system came to an end.

A group of British Jews and Israeli Jews living in the UK have come together to support the campaign to boycott Israeli goods. Their group is called J-BIG (Jews for Boycotting Israeli Goods). They say:

We call on those of our fellow Jews who are inclined to support the State of Israel unconditionally to think critically about what Israel does in our names. We call on every ethical consumer, of any faith or none, to refuse to support the Israeli economy for as long as the illegal occupation and exploitation of Palestine persists



Products that commonly come from Israel and the settlements.