

British connections with Israeli settlements

Over 50% of Israel's agricultural produce is imported by the European Union, of which a large percentage arrives in British stores, including all the main supermarkets. These include: **Asda, Tesco, Waitrose, John Lewis, Morrisons,** and **Sainsburys.**

The Soil Association aids the occupation by providing certification to settlement products.

In December 2009, following significant consumer pressure, the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) issued guidelines for supermarkets on settlement labeling — differentiating goods grown in settlements from goods grown on Palestinian farms. Although this guidance is not compulsory, many supermarkets are already saying that they will adopt this labeling, so consumers will know if goods are grown in illegal Israeli settlements. DEFRA also stated that companies will be committing an offence if they label goods from settlements as produce of Israel. However, as Phyllis Starkey MP pointed out in a parliamentary debate in December 2009, "It is well known that Agrexco, the major Israeli fruit and vegetable exporter, allows agricultural produce from the settlements to be mixed with produce from within Israel, with the whole then being exported as 'made in Israel'."

Unless the British government ends the sale of settlement goods, and British companies stop stocking them, they are continuing to economically support Israeli settlements. This is why we are calling for targeted consumer campaigns. To exercise real choice, consumers need to be fully and correctly informed of the origin of the product.

What the TUC and UK trade unions are doing

- Calling on the UK government to seek EU agreement to impose a ban on the importing of goods produced in the illegal settlements;
- Urging supermarkets not to stock such goods, or failing that, to label them accurately; and
- Pressing the UK government to work with the EU and supermarkets to ensure that goods are accurately labelled.
- Supporting moves to suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement which provides preferential trade facilities to Israel.

Companies involved in the settlements

Key Israeli companies which export settlement products to the UK are:

Agricultural Export Companies: Carmel-Agrexco, Hadiklaim, Mehadrin-Tnuport, Arava, Jordan River, Jordan Plains, Flowers Direct

Other food products: Abady Bakery, Achdut, Adumim Food Additives/Frutarom, Amnon & Tamar, Oppenheimer, Shamir Salads, Soda Club

Dead Sea Products: Ahava, Dead Sea Laboratories, Intercosma

Please note that some of these companies also produce legitimate goods in Israel. It is goods from the illegal settlements that we want people to boycott.

Companies working in the settlements, who are active in Britain

Veolia are a French company that operates bus services in the settlements and is still involved in the project to run a tramline, constructed on confiscated Palestinian land, linking illegal Israeli settlements to the old city of Jerusalem. The tramline will isolate Palestinian neighbourhoods, cement Israel's hold on occupied East Jerusalem, and demolish the possibility of final status negotiations based on international law, with Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state.

Hanson UK is a supplier of heavy building materials to the construction industry. It has a subsidiary in Israel which owns factories and quarries in the West Bank. Hanson UK was acquired in September 2007 by German company HeidelbergCement.

British Israel Investment is an Israeli property company owning a shopping mall in Maaleh Adumim, a settlement in the occupied West Bank.

Get your members involved

- Publish this information in your union's journal or website.
- Distribute the settlement goods leaflet to your members. Electronic copies are available on the PSC and TUC websites. Hard copies can be ordered by contacting bds@palestinecampaign.org or 020 7700 6192
- Put a link on your website to the campaign page www.palestinecampaign.org/ban-settlement-goods
- Encourage members to participate in local consumer actions by contacting: bds@palestinecampaign.org
- Join the Palestine Solidarity Campaign: www.palestinecampaign.org

Trade union briefing

ISRAELI SETTLEMENT GOODS: BAN THEM, DON'T BUY THEM!



A campaign of boycotting goods from Israeli settlements is based on the illegality of the settlements. By ending economic support for the settlements, the aim is to increase pressure upon the Israeli government to abide by international law, dismantle its settlements and end its occupation.

'To increase the pressure for an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian Territories, and the removal of the separation wall and the illegal settlements, we will support a boycott (where trade union members should not put their own jobs at risk by refusing to deal with such products) of those goods and agricultural products that originate in illegal settlements — through developing an effective, targeted consumer-led boycott campaign working closely with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.'

TUC General Council statement, September 2009

Israeli settlements are illegal under international law and in English law

• **The Hague Regulations:** prohibit an occupying power from undertaking permanent changes in the occupied area, unless these are due to military need in the narrow sense of the term, or unless they are undertaken for the benefit of the local population.

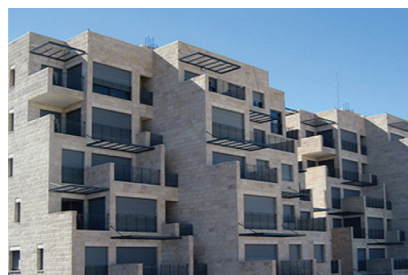
The Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Article 49: "The

Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."

• **1979 — UN Security Council resolution 446:**

"Determines that the policy and practices of Israel in establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East."

• **1980 — UN Security Council resolution 465:** "Determines that all measures taken by Israel to change the physical



character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof, have no legal validity and that Israel's policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants in those territories constitute a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and also constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East."

• **The International Criminal Court Act 2001**, part of English criminal law, makes it illegal to be ancillary to a war crime as defined by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The Rome Statute defines the "transfer directly or indirectly, by the Occupying Power of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies" as a war crime.

• **2004 — International Court of Justice:** "Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are illegal and an obstacle to peace and to economic and social development [...] and] have been established in breach of international law."

British government policy

The website of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office states that "The government has been clear that settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank are illegal."

UN Security Council resolutions 446 and 465 "deplore" the building of settlements on Palestinian land and instruct member states not to assist with the building of settlements. The Geneva Convention states that the transfer of a civilian population into occupied territory is a war crime; to be ancillary to this crime is also a crime in English law.

Government must ban settlement goods

As settlements and profiting from them are illegal under international law, the export of settlement products must be banned. We have a duty not to economically aid those carrying out illegal acts.

Growth of the settlements

1978: US President Carter criticises Israel, asking why 9,000 Israelis are now living in the Occupied Territories in 13 colonies.

1980: Israel seizes 1,000 acres in East Jerusalem to build a Jewish-only quarter. Two-thirds of the land had been owned by Arabs, who are evicted.

'The TUC calls on the British Government to... seek EU agreement to impose a ban on the importing of goods produced in the illegal settlements.'

TUC General Council statement, September 2009

1994: Settlers total around 200,000. Israel continues to expand its settlement programme while it engages in the Oslo peace process, but over the next ten years the number of settlers doubles.

2005: 8,500 settlers withdrawn from Gaza; 15,000 new settlers in the West Bank during the same period.

2006: Newly elected Kadima party declares its intention to incorporate the settlements into Israel.

2007: UN OCHA report says that "more than 38% of the Occupied West Bank is taken up by Israeli settlements, outposts, military bases and closed military areas, Israeli-declared nature reserves or other related infrastructure that are off limits or tightly controlled to Palestinians."

2009: There are 470,000 settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The effects of Israeli settlements on Palestinians

Confiscation of land: this leaves Palestinians without agricultural land, a large part of the economy. For example in the Jordan Valley over 95% of the land is now controlled by the settlers and military. Palestinians are compelled to work as labourers on land belonging to their communities. Due to the extensive network of settler roads and restrictions on Palestinians accessing their own land, Israeli settlements control over 40 percent of the West Bank.



IMEMC

Home Demolitions: This is particularly rampant in East Jerusalem where settlement expansion is part of a policy of illegal annexation to ensure that there is no possibility of a Palestinian capital in Jerusalem. The EU Heads of Mission wrote in a suppressed report that they were concerned at the policies of the Israeli government leading to the Judaisation of East Jerusalem.

Settler violence: This has increased dramatically. In January 2010, the UN warned that 250,000 Palestinians were vulnerable to attacks by settlers.



KavLa Oved reports that Palestinian workers are lifted into date trees early in the morning, and left to work there for the whole day with no way down. They spray dates with hormones and pesticides without protective gear provided.

Working conditions in the Israeli settlements

In the Jordan Valley many Palestinians have little alternative to working in the settlements. Kav LaOved, who work with the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, to organise Palestinian workers in the settlement industrial zones, have documented dangerous working conditions and breaches of health and safety in settlements, including cases where:

- Pesticide is sprayed without protective clothing
- Faulty machinery and lack of training causes accidents.
- Sick pay is rarely given

Kav LaOved have taken up cases of discrimination against Palestinian workers in settlements. Non-payment of minimum wage – Palestinian adult workers are paid from 30 to 70 shekels a day. The Israeli minimum wage is 154 shekels. The Israeli High Court has ruled that Palestinian workers on Israeli settlements must be paid the minimum wage.

The Palestinian National Authority will compensate workers in the settlements that are effected by this — and other — campaigns.

Child labour in the Jordan Valley

Brighton/Tubas Friendship group have produced witness statements on various visits to the Jordan Valley to verify instances such as:

Tomer Settlement: Children aged 14 and 15 have been working in Tomer for several years. The children are paid below minimum wage, exposed to unsafe working practices and missed school in order to work in Tomer. There are videos of child labourers at Tomer settlement.

Mehola Settlement: In 2008 young boys between 13 and 14 year old were witnessed working here and are paid 20 shekels a day (134 shekels below the minimum wage).

Yifat Settlement: Hilo Glazer's report for Kav LaOved states that children working in Yifat receive 50 shekels for 7–8 hours' work and do not receive any pay slips.