The Co-Op, a major chain of supermarket stores in the UK, have recently announced plans to extend their boycott of Israeli settlement produce.

The organization already boycotts all Israeli produce exported from the 'settlements' (Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem), but they have now decided to sever ties with at least four Israeli companies that use products which originate from the territories. The Co-Op emphasize that this is not an 'Israeli boycott' as such, relations with Israeli companies that do not source products from the territories will not be affected. They also say they will be boosting their trade with 'Palestinian' producers. But the announcement, only the latest in a long line of divestment and boycott initiatives now coming out of the United Kingdom, has drawn criticism from the Israeli government.

Quote: *“A spokesperson for the Palestinian Union of Agricultural Work Committees, which works to improve the conditions of Palestinian agricultural communities, said: "Israeli agricultural export companies like Mehadrin profit from and are directly involved in the ongoing* ***colonisation*** *of occupied Palestinian land and* ***theft*** *of our water. Trade with such companies constitutes a major form of support for Israel's* ***apartheid*** *regime over the Palestinian people, so we warmly welcome this principled decision by the Co-operative. The movement for boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it complies with international law is proving to be a truly effective form of action in support of Palestinian rights."*

The Co-Op prides itself on its ethical business policy, but the chain has come under the increasing influence of the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign, a left-wing organisation that lobbies against Israel, branding it an apartheid state and accusing it of perpetrating human rights abuses and war crimes. The decision to boycott Israeli companies that source their produce in 'Palestinian territory' may seem on the surface to be ethical and even-handed, but in reality it is one that is deeply flawed and blatantly biassed against Israel.

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This boycott assumes that Israel alone is responsible for the failure of the peace process. Israel is perceived as being an 'occupying force' that denies Palestinian Arabs their 'rights' and 'steals their land'. This boycott ignores the many abuses committed against Israelis who are regularly denied their 'rights' to live in peace by Islamic terrorism emanating from the territories. Israel would not be in Judea and Samaria today were it not for the continued efforts of Hamas and Fatah to try to destroy the Jewish state.

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This boycott ignores the history of the conflict. The only reason Israel is in these territories in the first place is because the surrounding Arab countries rejected the UN partition plan of 1947, and have repeatedly sought to destroy the Jewish state ever since. Israeli 'occupation' of Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem is primarily a result of the decision by the Jordanian government to declare war on Israel in 1967. During that war, Israel took the territories Jordan had illegally occupied in 1948, in an act of self-defence.

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This boycott assumes that all the land 'occupied' by Israel in 1967 belongs to the Palestinian Arabs. In reality what is commonly referred to as the 'Green Line' is not a border at all, they are armistice lines that were agreed upon following the cessation of war in 1949. There is no UN resolution that declares that everything outside of the Green Line must belong to the Palestinians. This idea is deeply racist. Jews have lived in east Jerusalem for thousands of years. During the War of Independence in 1948, the Jordanian army destroyed dozens of synagogues in the east of the city. This boycott reinforces the idea that Jews will have no right to live or work in a future Palestinian state, as previously admitted by the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas. So a Palestinian state must be ethnically cleansed of all Jews, while Israel must be made to absorb hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arab 'refugees' in any future agreement.

Unfortunately, as you can see, this boycott will do absolutely nothing to promote peace and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. Rather it will drive a wedge between them at best, and at worst delegitimize Israel and further the cause of those who seek to bring about its ultimate destruction.

But those who study the Scriptures will know that all of this is in direct fulfilment of Biblical prophecy. For the Bible states that during the last days, the status of Jerusalem would become a “burdensome stone for all people” (Zechariah 12:2-3), and that Israel's enemies would be “in siege against Judah and Jerusalem
” (modern-day West Bank). This Co-Op boycott, as wrong and as frustrating as it may be, is simply further evidence that what the Bible says would happen is now coming to pass. As believers in the Messiah we have cause for rejoicing in this, not because Israel is suffering, but because it is a sure sign that their redemption is drawing near. For the Lord will allow all of these things to happen in order to bring the nation of Israel back to Himself...

Zechariah 12:10
And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

And what a day it will be when the nation of Israel recognizes their Messiah. As Paul said in Romans 11:15, if their temporary casting away through their rejection of the Messiah brought about reconciliation to God for the rest of the world, what shall Israel's restoration be to us but life from the dead? What a change a believing nation of Israel would make to the world. But what about you? The Bible says he that has the Son has life. But it also says he that has not the Son of God has not life (1st John 5:12). Of course each one of us is alive physically, but spiritually speaking, if we do not have Christ in our hearts and if our sins are not forgiven then we are as good as dead. The Bible declares that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). That is, death is the punishment that our sins deserve (Genesis 2:17). But praise God that Jesus Christ came into the world to save us from our sins. He did not come to condemn the world but to save it (John 3:17). He bore God's punishment for our sins when He died upon the cross of Calvary (Isaiah 53:11). And all who accept Him as their Saviour can have their sins forgiven. Have you trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins? Turn away from your sins and trust in Him for salvation today.

Acts 5:31
Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

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