

# Israel Not Getting Boycotted Where It Counts

It is always a moment of amusement to read the latest fulmination of the venerable archbishop emeritus Desmond Tutu.

On June 17, 2015, he beguiled us again with his message to his dear sisters and brothers in the United Church of Christ, which is holding its general synod in Cleveland June 26-30, 2015. He assured the congregation of his support for its divestment resolution targeting the "Israeli occupation." He fully endorsed the proposal to use the powerful nonviolent tools of economic leverage against the State of Israel.

Tutu is following in the footsteps of individuals and groups, all well-known and respected for their intimate knowledge and understanding of Middle East affairs, and very familiar with all the alleged misdeeds and violations of international law by the State of Israel and the diabolical enemies of peace in the Hebrew University and the Hadassah medical facilities.

The experts are too numerous to mention, but among the most knowledgeable are the executive board of the American Studies Society, most of whom specialize in gender studies; the Irish Students Union, which apparently does not have a map of Israel; the U.K. National Union of Students; Alice Walker, who views Israel as black, not the color purple; and the rock singer Roger Water, whose mission in life is apparently to call on fellow entertainers not to rock in Israel since, unlike Mick Jagger, he gets no satisfaction from this.

All these eminent scholars, who seem unaware of or silent about the war crimes, atrocities, and violations of human rights committed by Hamas in Gaza, have taken their cues from the Palestinian Campaign to Boycott Israel, the organization founded in July 2005. The supposed objective of this campaign, political, economic, academic, and cultural, by countless NGOs and pro-Palestinian activists, is to end the

occupation and colonization of all Arab lands, and to promote the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties. But all know that its real objective is the delegitimization of Israel and the piecemeal and then final elimination of the Jewish State.

The intensive BDS campaign has gloried in its successes, both material and psychological. Yet, if it proudly heralded the decision by the French corporate giant Veolia to sell off its business activities in Israel, it forgot that it takes two to tango. Already, a number of authorities in the U.K., in Ireland, and in Boston have introduced policies barring Veolia from public contracts. Other would-be boycotters should take note of such unforeseen consequences and of the increasing number of U.S. state legislatures passing anti-BDS legislation.

Far more important than the negative results of BDS are the positive developments and increases in external relations of countries and businesses with Israel. Two recent developments are worthy of note: water technology deals and an increasing relationship with China.

One may raise a simple question: do Archbishop Tutu and Alice Water, by their enthusiasm for boycott of Israeli enterprises and products, really want the poorer people of the world to die? Do they know that Israel is preventing that from happening by its innovations, including in water supply?

On June 24, 2015 Israel announced a deal with the World Bank to provide water technology knowledge and expertise for those developing countries with troubling water security difficulties. Israel has committed \$500,000 to the responsible World Bank unit. The agreement includes a number of activities, including study tours that aim to transfer global knowledge on water security issues.

The agreement marks a remarkable change from the time when

Israel was a borrowing country from the World Bank. Israel has been troubled with a continuous shortage of water over the last few years because of drought and its growing population.

Israel, because of this need for water, created innovative policies and solutions that have made it a water world leader, whose impressive policies are admired by the director of water at the World Bank.

Particularly important is drip irrigation, invented in Israel, through which farmers can water their crops using the precise amount of water necessary, thus saving as much as 90% of the amount of water they might otherwise use. Two of the world's largest drip irrigation firms, Netafim and NaanDanDanJain, which is very active in India, are Israeli.

Besides this help to India, Israel is establishing closer relations with China. A number of examples may be mentioned.

The Chinese Railway Tunnel Group, a joint stock company, has joined with the Israeli Solel Boneh Infrastructure firm in a \$750-million tender from Israel's Metropolitan Mass Transit System to build a Tel Aviv light rail Red Line. It will link Petakh Tikva to the northeast of Tel Aviv with Bat Yam to the south. Solel Boneh is a unit of Shikun and Binui, Israel's leading infrastructure and real estate group, and has played a major role in Israel's construction industries.

In addition, three other projects are worthy of mention. One is the deal between Tnuva, Israel's largest food company, and the Chinese company Bright Food. Another is Phoenix, the insurance company, which is being acquired by China's Fossum Group. A third is the deal for \$510 million between the Hong Kong XI0 group and the Israeli Lumenis, the company for equipment for surgical and ophthalmology applications.

In March 2015, the Shanghai International Port Group, the Chinese company that operates the Shanghai deep water port and largest harbor for container cargo, won the bidding to operate the projected new port of Haifa. Already, China Harbor is

planning to build a new port in Ashdod.

No doubt, Archbishop Tutu and Alice Walker are unhappy that Chinese investment in Israeli technology start-ups has tripled since 2012. It is not clear what long-term Chinese investment means for the Israeli economy, but it is a clear signal that China does not welcome the Palestinian BDS campaign. It knows, as the negative two do not know, that the campaign is not only bad for business, but also is an obstacle to peace negotiations.

First published in the