

Abstract

The ever-broader circulation of information and activities regarding the Palestinian movement for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS), through such media as *BDS News*, which has emphasized its connection to the South African experience, has made it vitally important to understand the local and international context in which the boycott emerged and developed as a tool of resistance. At the same time, one needs to relate this popular and civic struggle to more official elements in the national struggle, and to identify the extent to which the BDS movement has evoked responses at the Arab and international levels, again setting this analysis in against the background of the South African anti-apartheid movement.

The present thesis thus describes the emergence, then reemergence of boycott as a nonviolent instrument of resistance in the form of BDS, set against the background of the history of boycotts in Palestine going back to the 1936 revolution and before, and moving forward to events of the first and second intifadas (1987 and 2000). In the process the comparison with South Africa will always be made, so as to understand what in the Palestinian experience is

universal and what is unique, and also to speculate as to the potential of the BDS movement to contribute to the struggle.

Conclusions arising from the analysis indicate that the unification of Palestinian efforts at the popular and official levels is a necessary condition for mobilizing the international community in support. If this difficult condition is achieved, there is some prospect for weakening the hold of the Israeli occupation, as illustrated, once again, by the South African experience.