

Tikkun Magazine Applauds the United Methodist Church Boycott of Israeli Banks which are Funding the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank

by: **Tikkun Staff** on January 13th, 2016 | [4 Comments »](#)

Here is the account from the NY Times:

The pension board of the United Methodist Church — one of the largest Protestant denominations in the United States, with more than seven million members — has placed five Israeli banks on a list of companies that it will not invest in for human rights reasons, the board said in a statement on Tuesday. It appeared to be the first time that a pension fund of a large American church had taken such a step regarding the Israeli banks, which help finance settlement construction in what most of the world considers illegally occupied Palestinian territories.

The five banks – Bank Hapoalim, Bank Leumi, First International Bank of Israel, Israel Discount Bank and Bank Mizrahi-Tefahot – are each involved in financing settlement construction in Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories.

Rabbi Michael Lerner, editor of *Tikkun* magazine, the largest circulation voice of liberal and progressive Jews (and the winner of the Best Magazine of the Year Award from the Religion Newswriters Association in both 2014 & 2015) issued the following statement Jan. 13, 2016:

“Although we at *Tikkun* do NOT support a general boycott of Israel, and wish to see Israel remain strong and its security intact, we welcome the action of the United Methodist Church Pension Fund. The action of the UMC Pension Fund is narrowly focused on boycotting and divesting from Israeli and other firms that help perpetuate Israel’s Occupation of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the construction of “Jewish-only” settlements . The Occupation of the West Bank with its attendant oppression of the Palestinian people is not only a violation of the highest values of the Jewish people, it is also the Israeli activity that most threatens to turn Israel into a pariah state and thereby weaken its ability to protect its citizens from the real threats it may face from surrounding hostile powers and forces. For that reason, we support all efforts to boycott the products produced on the West Bank in Israeli “Jewish only” settlements and to disinvest from Israeli and global corporations and institutions that help make the Occupation possible. The Jewish people in centuries to come will thank those friends of Israel, like the United Methodists, Presbyterians USA, and the United Church of Christ, who are doing all they can to reverse Israel’s self-destructive policies in the West Bank while distancing from the BDS movement that aims not only at the Occupation of the West Bank but at the totality of Israel and the Israeli people.”

Rabbi Michael Lerner, editor of *Tikkun* is author of two national best sellers, both published by Harpers: *Jewish Renewal: A Path to Healing and Transformation* and *The Left Hand of God: Taking Back our Country from the Religious Right*. He is also the author of *The Politics of Meaning, Spirit Matters, The Socialism of Fools—Anti-Semitism on the Left*, and with Cornel West *Jews and Blacks: A Dialogue on Race, Religion and Culture in America*. His latest book is *Embracing Israel and Palestine: A Strategy for Middle East Peace*.