

1/14/2016

U.A.W. International

General President Dennis Williams,

Dear President Williams,

I am writing to you to show my support for U.A.W. local 2865 and the resolution that they passed in support of BDS. I have been the Business Manager for the S.M.A.R.T.(Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers) in Connecticut for 12 1/2 years and President of the Connecticut State building Trades for the past 6 years and Executive Secretary of the Connecticut State AFL-CIO. I can tell you I have never considered myself an expert of foreign issues but last summer I was asked to be part of a delegation of Connecticut Union Leaders to take a trip to Israel and Palestine. I'll be honest I didn't have too much knowledge of the situation between the Israelis and Palestinians other than glancing at reports on television and newspapers. I later attended a presentation presented by the Tree of Life Education Fund and quickly realized that there was going to be a little more to this trip than I expected. I did some research and quickly realized that this was a touchy situation not just for Israel and Palestine but for a U.S. citizen to take a stand on either side of the issue. At that point I decided to do what I always feel works best; I stopped researching and decided that the only true way to understand what was going on was to go on the trip and see for myself. And that's what I did.

President Williams I can tell you first hand and honestly that I would challenge any labor leader in this country to take that trip to see both sides of the story, visit the areas of Jerusalem with all its beauty and religious history and Cities like Hebron and Nablus that are the complete opposite. See the water tanks on the Palestinian homes and the Israeli settlements surrounding them that don't need them. And do as we did and ask the people why some have water rationed and others don't. But what hit me the most was talking to the families and children of the Palestinian workers and hear the stories of the daily torture that they are put through to go to work. Yes I use the word torture because if those conditions were here in the U.S. that's what they would be called. Unfortunately in Palestine it's the everyday grind to support a family.

I have been in the Labor Movement for 34 years. I am a second generation Sheet Metal Worker and I have been taught my whole life that an injury to one is an injury to all. For the first time, I had no idea how to help these people or if it was even possible. I'm not prejudice and I can't take a stand against the Jewish people it's not their fault and that wouldn't solve much. But when you look at what the Israeli Government does with the Billions of Dollars sent to them by this Country that is being used to fund the Occupation that is taking over the Palestinian peoples land and driving them into poverty and horrible living conditions, as voices of labor we have to stand in support of BDS. If not, where is our loyalty to working people or to the generations that taught us to fight together so everyone gets a fair chance at life.

Once again I stand in solidarity with U.A.W. 2865 for their courageous effort to stand for what's right and I hope that your leadership will support the voices of your workers.

In Solidarity

David A. Roche

Business Manager S.M.A.R.T. Local #40

President CT State Building Trades - Ex Secretary CT AFL-CIO