



Labor for Palestine: Challenging US Labor Zionism

Michael Letwin, with Suzanne Adely and Jaime Veve

American Quarterly, Volume 67, Number 4, December 2015, pp. 1047-1055

Online version with footnote references at: <http://laborforpalestine.net>

Recent years have seen rapidly growing momentum behind the Palestinian call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS), particularly in the wake of repeated Israeli attacks on Gaza since 2008–9 that have left thousands dead, maimed, and homeless. In February 2007, as part of this campaign, Palestinian trade union bodies appealed directly for support, including a request for international labor to cut ties with the Histadrut, the Zionist labor federation.

Although these calls have received wide-ranging support from trade unionists in South Africa, the UK, Ireland, Canada, Norway, and elsewhere, Labor Zionism remains ubiquitous in the United States. This first dates to the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and establishment of the Histadrut in 1920.

Such US Labor Zionism grew rapidly in the 1940s, as a combined result of the Nazi Holocaust, the Cold War, neocolonialism, and the USSR's pivotal support for establishment of the Israel state. Even then, however, it has never had significant working-class roots. Since the Nakba of 1947–49, Labor Zionism in the United States has been promoted by the Histadrut's US mouthpiece, the Jewish Labor Committee (JLC). Through such efforts, closely coordinated with Israeli officials, the JLC has organized trade union leaders' support for Zionism.

Notable challenges to this dominant Labor Zionism began in the late 1960s. These include positions taken by the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in 1967 and wildcat strikes against the United Auto Workers (UAW) leadership's support for Israel in 1973.

Since September 11, 2001, Israel's wars and other apartheid policies have been challenged by New York City Labor Against the War (NYCLAW), Labor for Palestine, ILWU Local 10 dockworkers, UAW Local 2865 graduate students at the University of California, the United Electrical Workers, and others. Increasingly, such efforts have made common cause with racial justice and other movements, and—at the margins—have begun to crack Labor Zionism's seemingly impregnable hold in the United States. These recent developments run parallel to, and draw inspiration from, the American Studies Association's own endorsement of BDS on December 13, 2013.

Zionist Roots in US Labor

Through the 1930s Jewish workers in the United States were adamantly anti-Zionist.¹ Jewish Bundists viewed Zionism as a “sinister deviation from the true path . . . a mirage, compounded of religious romanticism and chauvinism,” and after the Nazis took power in 1933, “many Jews within American labor vehemently opposed Zionist efforts.”² For example, the JLC, founded in 1934 to oppose the rise of Nazism, noted that

the great bulk of Jewish labor in the United States are . . . of the opinion that the Jewish question must be solved in the countries in which Jews live and therefore must be solved as part of the more general question of re-adjusting the economic, political, social and cultural life of our country to the needs of a new day.³

In the 1940s, however, US labor leaders enlisted in the Histadrut's well-orchestrated campaign for a Jewish state in Palestine,⁴ and finally won support of the previously anti-Zionist JLC.⁵ These efforts helped enable the impending Nakba (Catastrophe). Labor

leaders established the National Trade Union Emergency Conference on Labor Palestine, which won over Jewish Bundists; silenced anti-Zionist holdouts;⁶ exploited rank-and-file workers' sympathy for Holocaust victims;⁷ and helped convince Truman to support partition⁸ and lift the US arms embargo against the Zionist militias.⁹

The Zionism of these labor officials was closely linked to their support for US imperialism, anticommunism,¹⁰ and racism against workers of color in the United States.¹¹ This was consistent with Israel's self-proclaimed role as “watchdog” for US imperial interests.¹² Meanwhile, nearly all of the US labor Left mirrored the USSR's indispensable support for establishment of the Israeli state.¹³

In the subsequent decades, US trade union leaders across the political spectrum supported Israeli wars,¹⁴ charged “anti-Semitism” against those who criticized Israel's close alliance with apartheid South Africa,¹⁵ and bought huge quantities of State of Israel Bonds,¹⁶ which paralleled overall US government economic and military support for the Israeli state.

Labor Anti-Zionism

The first postwar challenge to Labor Zionism in the United States came from the Detroit-based League of Revolutionary Black Workers in January 1969, which recognized Palestinian oppression as a reflection of the same system of racism and colonialism suffered by black South Africans, Vietnamese, Latin Americans, and African Americans.¹⁷ On October 14, 1973, Detroit was the site of the first industrial action against US labor officials' support for Israel, when three thousand Arab autoworkers joined a wildcat strike to protest UAW Local 600's purchase (without membership approval) of \$300,000 in Israel Bonds. On November 28, 1973, Arab and other autoworkers struck to protest bestowal of B'nai B'rith's “Humanitarian Award” on International UAW president Leonard Woodcock.¹⁸

The next visible labor opposition to Zionism came in the wake of September 11, 2001. On April 18, 2002, Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), a largely African American union with a long social justice history, condemned Israel's attacks on the West Bank and “call[ed] for the halt of all military aid to the State of Israel.”¹⁹ That same day, NYCLAW, a grassroots, interracial organization formed immediately after September 11, 2001,²⁰ linked its overall opposition to the pretextual US “War Against Terror” by calling for an end to US military aid to Israel, Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza, and support for the Palestinian right of return and Israeli military resistors.²¹ NYCLAW also spearheaded unity between two separate coalitions behind a march in DC on April 20, 2002, the first post-9/11 national antiwar protest, in which 150,000 marched with the largest Palestinian contingent in US history.²² Such efforts were accompanied by a small number of local labor resolutions criticizing Israel.²³ Ironically, this emerging labor solidarity with Palestine was blunted by formation of U.S. Labor Against the War in January 2003, whose leadership was dominated by full-time union staffers who argued that criticism of Israel would jeopardize support from major unions.²⁴

Nonetheless, NYCLAW and its allies continued to fight for inclusion of Palestine in the antiwar movement. In April 2004 the Second National Convention of Al-Awda: The Palestinian Right to Return

Coalition, adopted NYCLAW's proposal for a campaign against US labor's complicity with Israel.²⁵ Toward that end, in October 2004, NYCLAW and Al-Awda NY jointly established Labor for Palestine, whose founding statement called on trade unionists to (1) fully support Palestinian national, democratic, and labor rights throughout historical Palestine, including the right of all Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and land; (2) demand an end to US military and economic support for Israeli apartheid; (3) divest all labor investments in Israeli apartheid; and (4) affiliate with Labor for Palestine.²⁶

The founding of LFP spurred additional efforts. In 2006 NYCLAW and several other labor antiwar groups denounced Israeli attacks on Lebanon and Gaza.²⁷ On October 19, 2007, the Chief, New York City's civil service newspaper, published a letter from NYCLAW members defending BDS as "no more unfairly selective or one-sided than the isolation of apartheid South Africa, a campaign in which we and many others actively participated," and pointing out that "this boycott—many of whose supporters are Jewish—does not target Israel for its ethnicity, but for theft and colonization of Arab lands, denial of equality to Arab-Palestinians in Israel, and violation of Palestinian refugees' right to return home."²⁸

On March 23, 2008, NYCLAW condemned new Israeli attacks on Gaza and pointed out that "through a combination of intent, ignorance and/or expediency, much of labor officialdom in this country—often without the knowledge or consent of union members—is an accomplice of Israeli Apartheid."²⁹ On June 5, 2008, fifteen union members and other activists joined an emergency NYCLAW-LFP picket line in front of a "Celebration" of the "60th Anniversary of Israel" held at American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) District Council 37, the largest municipal workers' union in New York.³⁰

The next trigger was "Operation Cast Lead," Israel's brutal attack on Gaza in 2008–9. On December 31, 2008, NYCLAW echoed the Congress of South African Trade Unions and other international labor bodies by denouncing the attack, which it put in the context of "Israel's ongoing dispossession and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians since before the Nakba (Catastrophe) of 1948," and reaffirmed "support for the international Boycotts, Sanctions and Divestment campaign, including an immediate end to all support for Israel—including that provided by US labor leaders."³¹

On December 4, 2009, LFP issued an open letter challenging AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka's opposition to BDS. The letter, signed by scores of trade unionists, called for divestment from Israel Bonds, support for workers' refusal to handle Israeli cargo, an end to ties with the Histadrut, and opposition to US aid for Israel.³² Trade union BDS further escalated in the wake of Israel's lethal May 2010 attack on the Mavi Marmara, an unarmed Turkish merchant vessel carrying humanitarian relief to Gaza in the wake of the Israeli 2008–9 attacks. On June 8, 2010, the executive board of ILWU Local 10 issued a unanimous condemnation of the massacre and a "call for unions to protest by any action they choose to take."³³ This statement was particularly significant, since ILWU members had refused to handle cargo for Nazi Germany (1934), fascist Italy (1935), Chile (1978), apartheid South Africa (1984), and US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (2008).³⁴ On June 9, 2010, 133 US trade unionists signed Labor for Palestine's response, which reaffirmed the BDS call.³⁵

Most importantly, on June 20, 2010, members of ILWU locals 10 and 34 in Oakland reaffirmed their tradition of industrial action for social justice by honoring an eight-hundred-strong picket line against the Israeli-owned Zim Shenzhen ship—the first US labor-based BDS action.³⁶ On December 2, 2010, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) announced that it had become "the first union in the US and the third union in Canada to officially support the Palestinian United Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions."³⁷

On June 13, 2011, in the wake of another Israeli massacre in Gaza, fifty supporters of LFP and other organizations picketed a NYC Israel Bonds "celebration" chaired by Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union and JLC head Stuart Appelbaum, at which New York State AFL-CIO president Dennis Hughes was awarded a "Peace Medal."³⁸

The next major spark was Israel's renewed war on Gaza in July 2014. Hundreds of trade unionists signed LFP's July 28, 2014 statement reiterating its calls for an end to aid for Israel; for "workers to emulate dockers in South Africa, India, Sweden, Norway, Turkey, the US west coast, and elsewhere, by refusing to handle military or any other cargo destined for Israel"; and for "labor bodies to divest from Israel Bonds, and cut ties with the Histadrut, Israel's racist labor federation."³⁹ On July 29, 2014, the eighty-three member Joint Council of UAW Local 2865, representing thirteen thousand graduate student workers throughout the University of California, responded to Palestinian trade union and Labor for Palestine appeals by submitting a BDS resolution for a full membership vote.⁴⁰

Israel's 2014 assault on Gaza also set off an unprecedented community-labor campaign against Zim Integrated Shipping Services, Israel's largest cargo shipping company (and tenth largest in the world).⁴¹ On August 16, 2014, a coalition of seventy San Francisco Bay Area organizations led by the Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC) responded to a call from the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions by mobilizing a mass community picket under the banner of Block the Boat for Gaza to prevent unloading of the Israeli vessel Zim Piraeus. ⁴² Countering Zim's attempts to evade the picket, over three thousand people marched to the docks, chanting "When people are occupied, resistance is justified" and "From Ferguson to Palestine, occupation is a crime." When the ship finally docked, ILWU Local 10 members responded to various pickets, some organized independently of AROC, by refusing to unload it for four consecutive days.⁴³ These events were mirrored by solidarity actions in New York City, Long Beach, Seattle/Tacoma, and Vancouver, and were widely covered in the international press.⁴⁴ Inspired by the victory in August, another picket was called by the Stop Zim Action Committee on September 27, which Local 10 members honored by not working the Zim Shanghai. ⁴⁵ On October 25, Block the Boat once again preempted the ship's return to Oakland,⁴⁶ and Zim line has subsequently abandoned attempts to return to Oakland or Los Angeles.⁴⁷

On December 4, 2014, in the wake of these events, UAW 2865 members voted by 65 percent to adopt their leadership's BDS proposal. Thus the union had "become the first major U.S. labor union to hold a membership vote responding to the Palestinian civil society call for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israeli occupation and in solidarity with Palestinian self-determination."⁴⁸ Nine months later, the United Electrical Workers, with thirty-five thousand members, became the second national union (after the IWW) in the United States to endorse BDS.⁴⁹ Significantly, both of these resolutions embraced the full BDS call, which demands not only an end to the 1967 occupation but equality for Palestinians with Israeli citizenship and refugees' right of return.

Conclusion

Zionism has long been the default position in US labor. However, there has been another, hidden tradition of postwar labor anti-Zionism that began with Detroit in 1969–73 and has slowly reemerged after September 11, 2011, from the antiwar, Palestine solidarity, and racial justice movements. As shown above, such efforts have the potential to play an increasingly important role in the growing BDS movement.



Labor for Palestine Founding Statement

Initiated by New York City Labor Against the War and Al-Awda NY

December 4, 2004

(Available online at: <http://laborforpalestine.net>)

Dear Fellow Trade Unionists and Workers:

International solidarity, the right of national self-determination, and social justice are among the most basic trade union principles. These principles have been reflected in labor opposition to the Vietnam War in the 1960s, in labor's demand for divestment from South African apartheid and opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America in the 1980s, and to U.S. war and occupation in Iraq today.

Trade unionists who have taken these positions have often faced intense criticism. In response, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. expressed his support for the National Labor Leadership Assembly for Peace, by pointing out that, "[i]njustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. . . . Ultimately a genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus." [i]

In that spirit, we ask you to join us in Labor For Palestine.

The establishment of Israel in 1948 inflicted on the Palestinian people a continuing campaign of displacement, discrimination, exploitation and brutality that has continued to this day. This includes:

- Displacement of over 750,000 Palestinians and the continuing refusal to allow over 5 million refugees to return home
- Deprivation of Palestinian human and civil rights, including discriminatory laws, home demolitions, and water and other resource theft;
- Apartheid-like checkpoints and roadblocks that restrict freedom of movement;
- Denial of education and basic public services to Palestinian villages and to Palestinians within Israel ("Israeli Arabs");
- Palestinians are denied access, lease or ownership to 91% of the lands occupied in 1948;
- Construction of illegal colonial settlements on land stolen and occupied by armed and violent settlers;
- Ongoing and brutal military occupation of Palestine, in which US-made helicopters, fighter planes and weaponry are used daily to carry out murder and collective punishment;
- Harsh travel restrictions on Palestinians leading to massive unemployment and poverty;
- Construction of an apartheid wall (declared illegal by the International Court of Justice), that confiscates even more Palestinian land, and encircles Palestinian towns in a giant, 24-foot-high prison studded with armed watchtowers;
- Ongoing incarceration of over 7,000 political prisoners, including children and political leaders, often in horrendous conditions, and the ongoing practice of administrative detention, in which Palestinians may be held without trial for six months or more.

These conditions have taken a particular toll on Palestinian workers. Last April, fourteen trade unionists from seven European countries found that:

"The majority of workers in Israel's construction branch, including Palestinians, migrants and Israeli citizens (mostly Arabs), are still today subject to extreme forms of exploitation. The Israeli authorities lag behind legislation elsewhere in several ways: they refrain from ratifying recent labor conventions; they do not enforce their own labor laws; they exploit the excuse of 'security considerations' in a disproportional manner; they apply the law selectively; and they close their eyes to the criminality of the contractors and the personnel companies."

Like any oppressed people, the Palestinian people have courageously resisted. For example, Palestinian workers have organized unions and labor organizations throughout Palestinian society, some of which have been devastated by the massive unemployment caused by closure and economic entrapment. Palestinian workers have consistently used the general strike as a tool of protest and struggle against occupation and oppression; in fact, the longest general strike in the world was that organized by Palestinian workers in 1936 against British colonialism.

For decades, this wholesale denial of Palestinian rights has been condemned by trade unionists around the world. Seeing the close parallels between Israeli and South African apartheid, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), has called upon the trade union movement internationally to mobilize its support behind the people of Palestine. [ii]

In Britain, trade unionists have joined with Palestinian labor leaders and the Trade Unionists for Palestine to support Palestinian rights. [iii] Additionally, Irish trade union leaders, including those of SIPTU, a service and professional workers' union, have condemned the ongoing occupation of Palestinian land and the oppression of Palestinians. [iv]

Lastly, the World Federation of Trade Unions [v], an international body representing hundreds of millions of workers, has called for "immediate action to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate right to return and to self-determination and to establish their national and independent state with Jerusalem as capital."

In the U.S., however, government and private institutions—including many labor bodies—have actively contributed to this oppression:

- The U.S. government provides more aid to Israel than to any other nation in the world. This amounts to more than \$5 billion annually, or a daily average of \$15,139,178.
- This aid provides Israel with massive quantities of U.S.-made Apache helicopters, F-16 fighter jets and assault ri-

files—all of which is used to devastate Palestinian communities.

- Unlike the aid given to other nations, this aid is unrestricted by human rights conditions, and is paid in lump-sum format annually.

- In addition, many individual U.S. states invest workers' pension funds in the occupation of Palestine, an example of which is New Jersey's recent purchase of \$20 million in Israel Bonds.

- And shockingly, AFL-CIO affiliate pension funds have over \$300 million invested in Israeli bonds.[vi]

It is clearer now than ever that Israel's war on the Palestinian people reflects imperial domination throughout the Middle East. Indeed, it is virtually impossible to distinguish between scenes of occupation and resistance in Jenin, Falluja and Baghdad.

We, therefore, have a profound moral obligation to recognize and end the complicity of U.S. government and labor with Israeli apartheid.

For these reasons, the April 2004 convention of Al-Awda NY (the Palestine right to return coalition) unanimously adopted a proposal by New York City Labor Against the War to ask all labor bodies to:

1. Fully support Palestinian national, democratic and labor rights throughout historic Palestine, including the right of all Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and land.

2. Demand an end to U.S. military and economic support for Israeli Apartheid.

3. Divest all labor investments in Israeli Apartheid.

4. Affiliate with Labor For Palestine.

Sincerely,

The undersigned (list in formation):

Labor Organizational Endorsers: 1. New York City Labor Against the War (NYCLAW) • 2. Bay Area Labor Committee for Peace and Justice (LC4PJ), San Francisco, California • 3. CSC—Batiment et Industrie, Brussels, Belgium • 4. ESK -Basque Trade Union, Bilbao, Basque Country • 5. Filipino Workers' Association, Fremont, California • 6. Out Front Labor Coalition, Pride At Work, AFL-CIO, Seattle, Washington • 7. Solidariteit-A Critical Magazine for Union Members, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Individual, Office-holding Labor Endorsers:* 1. Emmi de Jesus, Secretary General of GABRIELA: Alliance of Women's Organizations in the Philippines • 2. Jerry Fillingim, Legislative Political Director for the SEIU Local 535, Oakland, California • 3. H. Steven Quester, Chapter leader of the United Federation of Teachers, New York, NY • 4. Claire Decoteau, Steward of the Graduate Employees Organization, AFT/MFT & SRP Local 3550, AFL-CIO, at the University of Michigan • 5. Wendy Thompson, President of Local 235 of the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW), Detroit, Michigan • 6. Jeff Klein, Retired president of the SEIU-NAGE Local RI-168, Boston, Massachusetts

Other Labor Individual Endorsers:* 1. William Bateman, Member, LIUNA Local 271 • 2. Andy Clarno, Member of the Graduate Employees Organization, AFT/MFT & SRP Local 3550, AFL-CIO, at the University of Michigan • 3. Joseph Catron, Member of the Virginia Public Service Workers Union, UE Local 160 • 4. Samuel Goldberger, Member of the Political Action Committee for SEIU Local 535—Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges • 5. Michael Gordy, Former president of the Tucson Education Association, Tucson, Arizona • 6. Alex Gould, Member of the United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 328 • 7. Ed Hunt, SEIU 925 delegate to King Co. Labor Council SEIU Local 925, Seattle, Washington • 8. Richard McKnight, Member of the Transport Workers Union, New York, NY • 9. Amos Paamon, Member of the Graduate Employee Organization UAW Local 2322 • 10. Francesca Rosa, Member; former steward for The Arc SF chapter of the SEIU Local 535, Oakland, California • 11. Polly Sylvia, Member of the PSC CUNY Labor Union, New York, NY • 12. Katie Unger, (Staff/Member of UNITE HERE and Federation of Union Representatives, New York, NY • 13. Zachary Wales, Member of the National Writers Union, New York • 14. Louis R Godena, Member of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners, Local 94, Warwick, Rhode Island • 15. Mike Eilenfeldt, Cooper Union staff and workers local of AFT/NYSUT, New York, NY • 16. Wayne D. Price, General member of the United Federation of Teachers (AFT), New York, NY • 17. Gabriel Camacho, Member of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement Massachusetts Chapter • 18. Howard B. Lenow, Union Side Labor Lawyer with Lenow & McCarthy Wayland, Massachusetts • * Union and organizations in this section are listed for informational purposes only; this does not denote an organizational endorsement.

In addition to the individuals and organizations representing the labor movement who have endorsed the Labor for Palestine campaign, the following organizations and individuals have also expressed their support:

Organizational Supporters: 1. Al-Awda, The Palestine Right to Return Coalition • 2. Palestine Solidarity Committee of South Africa • 3. Northern California International Solidarity Movement • 4. Working Class Queer People • 5. New Jersey Solidarity-Activists for the Liberation of Palestine • 6. Palestine Community Centre, Vancouver, Canada • 7. Ever Reviled Records • 8. Free Palestine Alliance—USA • 9. International Action Center, New York, NY • 10. New York Committee to Defend Palestine, New York, NY • 11. Justice in Palestine Coalition, San Francisco, California

Individual Supporters: 1. Arab Awni Abdel-Hadi, Coordinator of the Multi Lingual Translation and Interpretation center, Cairo, Egypt • 2. Shehira Mehrez, President of Mehrez & Partners, Dokki, Egypt • 3. Lora Gordon, Volunteer with the Pittsburgh Palestine Solidarity Committee • 4. Ahlam Muntaseb, Assistant Professor with California State University, San Bernardino • 5. Jeffrey Blankfort, Former Editor, Middle East Labor Bulletin • 6. Jordan Flaherty, Organizer with the Prewitt Organizing Fund, New Orleans, Louisiana • 7. Zahi Damuni, Coordinator of Al-Awda San Diego, California • 8. Steven Beikirch, Member of Freedom-For-Palestine • 9. Joseph Backus, Member of Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights, Kingston, Ontario • 10. Dr. Jess Ghannam, Justice in Palestine Coalition, San Francisco, California • 11. Caroline Schulz, Individual worker, Otisville, New York • 12. Rima I. Anabtawi, M.A., Chair, Refugee Support Committee of Al-Awda, PRRC; ROR Congress, National Council of Arab Americans • 13. Caroline Schulz, Member of Orange County Peace & Justice, Otisville, New York • 14. Chanda Asani, Student and member of the Indian Association of Women Studies, and Centre for Rural Development at SNDT Women's University, Mumbai, India • 15. Mary Nazzal-Batayneh, aActivist with the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, London, UK • 16. Suzanne Adely, Lead Organizer of Al-Awda Chicago / Arab American Action Network, Chicago, Illinois • 17. Scott Campbell, Member of the International Solidarity Movement, Northern California Support Group

Notes

1. http://www.aavw.org/special_features/speeches_speech_king03.html

2. http://www.iacenter.org/palest_cuba-sa.htm

3. http://www.palestinecampaign.org/trade_unions.asp

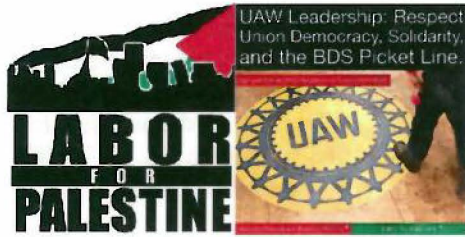
4. <http://student.cs.ucc.ie/cs!064/jabowen/IPSC/php/db.php?aid=4209>

5. <http://www.wftu.cz>

6. For all of the above, see:

<http://www.sonomacounty.freepress.com/palestine/union.html>; http://www.ifamericansknew.org/stats/cost_o_f_israel.html; and

<http://www.ifamericansknew.org/stats/usaid.html>



Open Letter to UAW Leadership: Respect Union Democracy, Solidarity, and the BDS Picket Line

Labor for Palestine (U.S.)

January 28, 2016

(Online version with citations at: <http://laborforpalestine.net>)

As workers, trade unionists, and anti-apartheid activists, we call on the United Auto Workers International Executive Board to rescind its undemocratic and arbitrary “nullification” of UAW 2865’s respect for the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divest, and Sanctions (BDS) picket line, which was overwhelmingly adopted by the 13,000 teaching assistants and student-workers at the University of California in 2014.

Unfounded Interference

The IEB concedes that it could “find no evidence that the local union engaged in any improper actions that may have prohibited a fair and democratic vote.”

Nonetheless, it sides with anti-labor corporate lawyers to defend the profits of military contractors who arm apartheid Israel. Enlisting in a well-funded witch-hunt designed to silence those who speak up for Palestinian rights, it falsely calls BDS “anti-Semitic.”

In doing so, the IEB disregards more than a century of colonialism, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, including Israel’s establishment through the dispossession of more than 750,000 Palestinians during the 1947-1948 Nakba (Catastrophe), a regime that veteran South African freedom fighters call “worse than apartheid.”

It turns a blind eye to \$3.1 billion a year in U.S. military aid, with which Israel massacred 2200 Palestinians (including 500 children) in Gaza in 2014, and inflicted a 10-year high in Palestinian casualties in the West Bank in 2015.

It refuses to acknowledge more than fifty laws that discriminate against Palestinians with Israeli citizenship.

It is deaf to urgent Palestinian trade union appeals for solidarity in the form of support for BDS.

It omits the stated goals of BDS, which demands an end to Israeli occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall; full equality for Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel; and implementation of the right of Palestinian refugees to return.

It ignores the endorsement of BDS by Black Lives Matter activists, Jewish members of UAW 2865, and trade unions around the world.

It fails to recognize that BDS is entirely consistent with past UAW support for boycotts organized by the Civil Rights Movement, United Farm Workers, and South African anti-apartheid movement.

Lacking any semblance of fairness, the IEB’s decision has been appealed to the UAW’s Public Review Board.

UAW Leaders’ Complicity with Apartheid

In contrast to UAW 2865’s highly-transparent support for BDS, the IEB’s biased ruling reflects UAW top leaders’ longstanding and unaccountable complicity with the racist ideology of Labor Zionism.

In the 1940s, UAW and other top U.S. labor leaders actively supported the Nakba. UAW president Walter Reuther was closely allied with future Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, who later infamously pronounced, “[t]here were no such things as Palestinians.”

In the 1950s, UAW conventions passed pro-Israel resolutions and raised funds for the Histadrut, the Zionist labor federation. Reuther’s brother, Victor, served as U.S. spokesperson for the Jewish National Fund, which remains at the forefront of seizing Palestinian lands. In subsequent years, “the UAW may have been the largest institutional purchaser of Israel Bonds,” which fund dispossession of the Palestinian people.

In 2007, International UAW leaders signed a statement drafted by the Jewish Labor Committee that attacked unions in the UK for endorsing BDS.

Now they seek to disenfranchise UAW 2865 members, muzzle free speech, and demonize the surging BDS movement.

Rank-and-File Resistance

Rank-and-file UAW members have a history of challenging this pro-apartheid stance.

In January 1969, the Detroit-based League of Revolutionary Black Workers publicly condemned Israel-

li colonialism. On October 14, 1973, three thousand Arab autoworkers in Detroit held a wildcat strike to protest UAW Local 600's purchase—without membership approval—of \$300,000 in Israel Bonds. On November 28, 1973, Arab, Black and other autoworkers struck to protest UAW International President Leonard Woodcock's acceptance of the B'nai B'rith's "Humanitarian Award."

UAW 2865's BDS resolution reclaims and revives this proud tradition of solidarity and social justice. When Palestinian trade unions, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, and Labor for Palestine issued renewed BDS calls in response to Israel's 2014 Gaza massacre, UAW 2865's Joint Council openly informed the entire membership:

"We intend to throw our weight behind the BDS movement to add to the international pressure against Israel to respect the human rights of the Palestinian people. As workers, students, and as a labor union, we stand in solidarity with Palestinians in their struggle for self-determination from a settler-colonial power."

On December 4, 2014, UAW 2865 members adopted this non-binding resolution by a landslide sixty-five percent, thereby becoming the first major U.S. union to endorse BDS.

Growing U.S. Labor Support for BDS

UAW 2865's courageous vote was paralleled by LFPILWU Local 10 members who refused to handle Israeli Zim Line cargo in 2014, and has been followed by adoption of BDS resolutions by the United Electrical Workers and Connecticut AFL-CIO in 2015.

Attempts to silence this growing solidarity movement are doomed to failure, as reflected in the National Labor Relations Board's recent dismissal of a challenge to the UE's BDS resolution.

As the 2865 BDS Caucus explains:

"No letter from the IEB can erase the educational and organizational work we have done over the past year, work we will continue to do, energized no doubt by the IEB's undemocratic, business-friendly attempt to nullify this vote. . . .

"We are part of a growing movement for union solidarity with the people of Palestine and for a democratic and visionary U.S. labor movement. As workers, educators, and students, we know together we can prevail over these forms of repression and continue striving for justice for all peoples."

Sharing that vision, we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with UAW 2865 in respecting the BDS picket line.

INITIAL SIGNERS (List in formation) (Affiliation shown for identification only/*Labor for Palestine co-conveners) *Suzanne Adely, Global Workers Solidarity Network; Former Staff, Global Organizing Institute, UAW (NYC) • *Michael Letwin, Former President, ALAA/UAW L. 2325 (NYC) • *Clarence Thomas, Co-Chair, Million Worker March; ILWU L. 10 (retired)(Oakland CA) • *Jaime Veve, Transport Workers Union L. 100 (retired)(NYC) • Rabab Abdulhadi, California Faculty Association-San Francisco State University • Judith Ackerman, 1199SEIU, AFT, UFT, AFTRA, SAG (NYC) • Larry Adams, Former President, NPMHU L. 300; People's Organization for Progress (NJ) • Bina Ahmad, ALAA/UAW L. 2325 (NYC) • Sameerah Ahmad, Former Diversity Coordinator, GEO/UAW L. 2322 (Chicago, IL) • Tanya Akel, Regional Director, IBT L. 2010 • Greg Albo, YUFA, York University (Toronto, ON) • Tania Aparicio, Organizing Committee, SENS-UAW (NYC) • Noha Arafat, ALAA/UAW L. 2325 (Brooklyn, NY) • B. Ross Ashley, Former Shop Steward and Executive Council member, SEIU L. 204, then L. 1 (Toronto, ON) • Shahr Azoulay, ALAA/UAW L. 2325 (NYC) • Leila Bajrami, 1199SEIU (Brooklyn, NY) • John Becker, IBT L. 814 (Detroit, MI) • Marie Bellavia, NEA/Portland Association of Teachers (OR) • Zarina Bhatia, GMB, TUC (retired) (Birmingham, UK) • Michael Billeaux, Recording Secretary, WITAA-AFT 3220 (Madison, WI) • Walter Birdwell, Retired Shop Steward, NALC Br. 283 (Laguna Vista, TX) • Dana Blanchard, Executive Board, Berkeley Federation of Teachers, AFT L. 1078 • Dave Bleakney, 2nd National VP, CUPW (Ottawa, ON) • Donna Blythe-McColgan, Staff Rep., USW (Boston, MA) • Deena Brazy, AFSCME L. 6000 (Madison, WI) • Richard Blum, ALAA/UAW L. 2325 (Brooklyn, NY) • Ray Bush, UCU Leeds Branch (UK) • Claudia Carrera, Shop Steward, GSOC-UAW L. 2110 (NYC) • Joshua Carrin, Delegate, ALAA/UAW L. 2325 (Brooklyn, NY) • Sara Catalinotto, Former Delegate, UFT/AFT L. 2 (NYC) • Joe Catron, NWU/UAW L. 1981 (NYC) • Nora Carroll, ALAA/UAW L. 2325 (Brooklyn, NY) • Jan Clausen, President, Goddard College Faculty Union, UAW L. 2322 • Frank Couger, NALC Br. 36 (NYC) • CUNY Law School Labor Coalition (NYC) • Amy Cross, ALAA/UAW L. 2325 (Brooklyn, NY) • Mike Cushman, Former Secretary, LSE Branch, UCU (London, UK) • Denise D'Anne, SEIU L. 1021 (San Francisco, CA) • Ziad Dallal, Steward, UAW L. 2110 (NYC) • Buzz Davis, Executive Board, AFT-W Retiree Council (Stoughton, WI) • Dominic DiStasia, IBEW L. 103 (Boston, MA) • John Dudley, SEIU-CT State Retirees Chapter • Lisa Edwards, Alternate Delegate, ALAA/UAW L. 2325 (NYC) • Arla S. Ertz, SEIU L. 1021 (San Francisco, CA) • John Estes, NALC (Birmingham, AL) • Shelley Ettinger, AFT L. 3882 (NYC) • Jessica Feldman, Shop Steward, UAW L. 2110 (NYC) • Sarah S. Fortk, NWU/UAW L. 1981 (Los Angeles, CA) • Josh Fraidstern, TWU L. 100 (Brooklyn, NY) • Cynthia Franklin, UHPA (Honolulu, HI) • Jeremy Fredericksen, Alternate VP and Delegate, ALAA/UAW L. 2325 (Brooklyn, NY) • Carol Gay, President, NJ State Industrial Union Council • Nick Giamone, Trustee, Boilermakers L. 29 (Weymouth, MA) • Steve Gillis, Financial Secretary, USWA L. 8751 (Boston School Bus Drivers' Union) • Mike Gimbel, Executive Board, AFSCME L. 375 AFSCME (retired)(NYC) • Brian Glennie, IUOC L. 82 (Parkville, BC) • Sherna Glick, Former VP, CFA/SEIU L. 1983 • Sam Granger, SENS-UAW (NYC) • Martha Grevatt, Civil and Human Rights Committee, UAW L. 869 (Ferndale, MI) • Im Grupper, Delegate (retired), Greater Louisville (KY) Central Labor Council, BCTGM L. 167 • Gabriel Haidan, Steward, CVA L. 9404 (Vancouver, CA) • Jesse Hagopian, Association Rep., Seattle Education Association/NEA • Frank Hammer, UAW-GM international Rep., CWA L. 909 (retired)(Detroit, MI) • Denise N. Hammond, Union 591g (Toronto, ON) • Lenora Hanson, Member, Executive Board, AFT L. 3220, Teaching Assistants' Association (Madison, WI) • Abdul-Basit Haq, Staff Rep., CWA L. 1037 (Piscataway, NJ) • Janet Harmon, Local Trustee, AFSCME DC 37 L. 436 (NYC) • Shafeka Hashash, Steward, GSOC-UAW L. 2110 (NYC) • David Heap, University of Western Ontario Faculty Association • Win Heimer, VP, Greater Hartford Central Labor Council; AFT L. 4200R and CSEA Council 400, L. 2001, SEIU, CTW • Lucy Herschel, Delegate, 1199SEIU (Queens, NY) • Monaded Herzallah, SEIU (San Francisco, CA) • Jack Heyman, ILWU L. 10 (retired), Chair, TWSC, Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal (Oakland, CA) • Molly Hogan, ILWU/IBU (retired)(CA) • Jey Iyadurai, Human Rights Rep., CUPW 626 (Toronto, ON) • Ruth Jennison, Departmental Rep., Massachusetts Society of Professors, MTA, NEA • Dan Kaplan, Executive Council, San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers-AFT L. 1493 • Daniel J. Kelly, Shop Steward and Albany Labor Council Delegate, CSEA L. 1000 and L. 690 • Ed Kinchley, SEIU L. 1021 Delegate, San Francisco Labor Council • John Kirkland, Carpenters L. 1462 (Bucks County, PA) • David Klein, California Faculty Association (Los Angeles, CA) • Jeff Klein, Retired President, NAGE/SEIU L. R1-168 (Boston, MA) • Cindy Klumb, Chief Shop Steward, OPEIU L. 153 (Brooklyn, NY) • Dennis Kortheuer, California Faculty Association • Daniela Korotzer, Former VP and former Health and Safety Officer, ALAA/UAW 2325 (Brooklyn, NY) • Dennis Kosuth, Steward, NNU (Chicago, IL) • Pooja Kothari, ALAA/UAW 2325 (Brooklyn, NY) • Rebecca Kurti, 1199SEIU (Queens, NY) • David Laibman, PSC-CUNY/AFT L. 2334 retirees' chapter (NYC) • Carol Lang, AFSCME DC 37 and PSC-CUNY/AFT L. 2334 (Bronx, NY) • Patrick Langheyer, ALAA/UAW L. 2325 (Queens, NY) • Angaza Laughinghouse, VP, NC Public Service Workers Union-UE L. 150 • Raymond Leduc, Boilermakers L. 29 (retired)(Orleans, MA) • David Letwin, AAUP (Brooklyn, NY) • Eli Lichtenstein, Organizing Committee, SENS-UAW (NYC) • Michael Louw, Organizer/Educator, Congress of South African Trade Unions • Eamon McMahon, Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA); UNISON; Secretary, Trade Union Friends of Palestine • Ying-Ying Ma, ALAA/UAW 2325 (Brooklyn, NY) • Mone Makkawi, GSOC-UAW L. 2110 (NYC) • Leah Martin, ALAA/UAW 2325 (Brooklyn, NY) • Riddhi Mehta-Neugebauer, UAW L. 4121 (Seattle, WA) • Mark S. Mendoza, Cincinnati Worker Center • Kevin Moloney, CUPE 3903 (ON) • Susan Morris, Former Alternate VP, ALAA/UAW 2325 (Brooklyn, NY) • Roslyn R. Morrison, ALAA/UAW 2325 (Brooklyn, NY) • Eli Nadeau, Organizing Committee, SENS-UAW (NYC) • Yasaman Naraghi, UAW L. 4121 (Seattle, WA) • Chris Nickell, Shop Steward and Unit Rep., GSOC-UAW L. 2110 (NYC) • Michelle O'Brien, Steward, GSOC/UAW L. 2110 (NYC) • Jose A. Ortega, IBEW L. 145 (Rock Island, IL) • Rod Palmquist, UAW L. 4121 (Seattle, WA) • Anne Pask, Steward, GSOC-UAW L. 2110 (NYC) • Joe Piette, NALC Br 157 (retired)(Philadelphia, PA) • Daniel Pines, CSEA L. 0828 (Rochester, NY) • Kristin Plys, GESO/Yale (Göttingen, Germany) • Andrew Pollack, Former Shop Steward, District 65-UAW (Brooklyn, NY) • Stephanie Pope, ALAA/UAW L. 2325 (Staten Island, NY) • Tom Potter, Labor Council • Nancy Welch, United Academics, VTAF/AAUP (Burlington, VT) • Paul Werner, Former member, ACT-UAW L. 7902 (Vienna, Austria) • Edwinia White, SEIU L. 1090 (retired)(Sacramento, CA) • Rand Wilson, SEIU L. 888 (Somerville, MA) • Ella Wind, Unit Rep., NYU GSOC-UAW L. 2110, Academic Workers for a Democratic Union • Sherry Wolf, Lead Organizer, Rutgers AAUP-AFT; CWA L. 1032 • Marc Wutschke, House of Reps., AFT L. 1021 (Los Angeles, CA) • Nantina Vgontzas, GSOC-UAW L. 2110 (NYC) • Sabina Viro, Past and Founding President, AFSCME L. 2620 (retired)(Los Angeles, CA) • John Yano, Delegate, UFT/AFT L. 2 (Brooklyn, NY) • **ADDITIONAL SIGNERS** • Mark Matthews, CAW (retired)(Vancouver, BC), Canada • Max Rosen-Long, Bldg. rep., PFT L. 3 (Philadelphia, PA), and a building representative • Chris Butters, Chapter Chair, L. 1070, DC 37, AFSCME (retired)(NYC) • Brooks Ballenger, Organizer/Representative, UAW L. 2322 (Amherst, MA) • Larry Hendel, CFA (Berkeley, CA) • Catherine Orozco, NOLSW/UAW (retired)(San Francisco, CA) • George McAnnamara, TWU L. 100 (retired)(Bronx, NY) • Russell Weiss-Irwin, SEIU L. 175 (NYC) • Robert Kosuth, MEA (retired)(Duluth, MN) • David Riehle, Chairman Emeritus, UTU L. 650 (St. Paul, MN) • Robert Pfefferman, DC 37, AFSCME retirees (NYC) • Vincent Calvetti, UAW L. 4121 (Seattle, WA) • Mercedes Martinez, President, FMPR (Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico) • Julia Wallace, SEIU L. 721 (Los Angeles, CA) • Aaron Amaral, Esq., DC 37, AFSCME (Jackson Heights, NY) • Michael Haire, 1199SEIU East (Saten Island, NY) • Adrienne Pine Washington, Former Recording Secretary and statewide bargaining team member, UAW 2865 (UC Berkeley) • Hannah Roditi, CWA (Bloomfield, CT) • Nathan Pensler, Unit Representative, GSOC-UAW L. 2110 (NYC) • Elisabeth Fiekowsky, former member UAW; Labor rep., IFTPE, ESC L. 20 (Sebastopol, CA) • Frances Agnew Crief, National Federation of Post Office and British Telecom Pensioners, (UK) • Peter King Churchill, UCU (Oxford, UK) • Blair Bertacini, AFSCME retirees Chapter 4; AFSCME Council 4 PEOPLE Committee (Waterbury, CT)



Labor for Palestine

Stop the War on Gaza:

No Arms for Apartheid Israel — Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions!

July 28, 2014

Online version at: <http://laborforpalestine.net>

"We call on the UN and governments across the world to take immediate steps to implement a comprehensive and legally binding military embargo on Israel, similar to that imposed on South Africa during apartheid." Palestinian Trade Unions and Civil Society, Stop Arming Israel, July 20, 2014

"For the sake of the hundreds of thousands trembling under our violence, I cannot be silent." Beyond Vietnam, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., April 4, 1967

As workers and trade unionists, we join with Palestinian trade unions, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, Unite (UK/Ireland), and labor organizations around the world to urgently condemn Israel's barbaric war on Gaza, which has taken thousands of lives since 2006, including many hundreds in recent weeks.

With them, we stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people against more than a century of Zionist colonialism, dispossession, ethnic cleaning, racism, apartheid and genocide — including Israel's very establishment through the uprooting and displacement of over 750,000 Palestinians during the 1947-1948 Nakba. Indeed, eighty percent of the 1.8 million people sealed into Gaza are refugees.

With them, we support Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), which demands an end to Israeli military occupation of the 1967 territories; full equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel; and the right of return for Palestinian refugees, as affirmed by UN resolution 194.

Therefore:

- We call on the US government and its allies to end all aid to Israel.
- We call on workers to emulate dockers in South Africa, India, Sweden, Norway, Turkey, the US west coast, and elsewhere, by refusing to handle military or any other cargo destined for Israel.
- We call on labor bodies to divest from Israel Bonds, and cut ties with the Histadrut, Israel's racist labor federation. (See model resolution, below.)

INITIAL SIGNERS (List in formation)

Labor Bodies: NC Public Service Workers Union-UE Local 150 • Unite Union NZ **Individuals (Affiliation shown for identification only // *Labor for Palestine co-conveners):** *Suzanne Adely, U.S.-MENA Global Labor Solidarity Network; Former Staff, Global Organizing Institute, UAW • *Monadel Herzallah, former member, Arab American Union Members Council, San Francisco, CA • *Michael Letwin, former President, Association of Legal Aid Attorneys/UAW L. 2325; co-founder, Jews for Palestinian Right of Return, NYC Labor Against the War; US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel • Prof. Rabab Abdulhadi, California Faculty Association SFSU • Judith Ackerman, I199SEIU, AFT, UFT, AFTRA, SAG, New York NY • Larry Adams, former President, NPMHU L. 300; co-founder, NYC Labor Against the War; People's Organization for Progress • Joseph Agonito, former President, L. 1845-NYSUT, AFT • Bina Ahmad, ALAA/UAW L. 2325, NYC Legal Aid Society • Sameerah Ahmad, Executive Director, Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center; former member, GEO/UAW L. 2322 • Faiz Ahmed, Chairperson/président Canadian Union of Public Employees L. 3903 • Tanya Akel, IBT L. 2010, AFT L. 1521 • Noha Arafat, ALAA/UAW L. 2325, NYC Legal Aid Society • Anthony Arnove, National Writers Union/UAW L. 1981, Brooklyn NY • B. Ross Ashley, SEIU L. 204 (retired), Toronto ON • John Bail, National Director, Pacific Region Canadian Union of Postal Workers • Harry Baker, Former Executive Board member, SEIU L. 1021, N. CA • Sarah Barker, Organizer, New Zealand Nurses Organisation • Julia Barnett, Steward, CUPS, L. 79 • Thomas F. Barton, L. 768, DC 37, AFSCME • Bill Bateman, Laborers L. 271; Coordinator, RI Unemployed Council, RI Campaign for Work & Wages • Richard Berg, Past President, IBT L. 743 • Michael Billeaux, Co-President, Teaching Assistants' Association/AFT L. 3220, Madison WI • Walter Birdwell, Retired Steward, National Association of Letter Carriers, Branch 283 • Richard Blake, IBT L. 512, Jacksonville FL • Dana Blanchard, Berkeley Federation of Teachers, AFT L. 1078 • Dave Bleakney, National Union Representative, CUPW, Ottawa ON • Rebecca Bor, Chicago Teachers Union, AFT L. 1 • Alexandra Bradbury, co-editor, Labor Notes • Larry Bradshaw, VP SEIU L. 1021, San Francisco • Gloria Brandman, UFT/NYC-MORE Caucus • Deena Brazy, Steward/VP, AFSCME L. 60, Madison WI • Tibby Brooks, National Writers Union/UAW L. 1981 • Gabriel Camacho, UNITE HERE L. 66L Cambridge MA • Chris Carlsson, Co-Director, Shaping San Francisco; SEIU L. 1021; adjunct faculty, San Francisco Art Institute • Nora Carroll, ALAA/UAW L. 2325, NYC Legal Aid Society • David Chavez, UAW L. 2865, UC Riverside • Edward Childs, Chief Steward, Unite-Here L. 26 • Jan Clausen, Goddard College faculty; UAW L. 2322 Liaison to U.S. Labor Against the War, NYC Chapter • Mary Clinton, Organizer, CWA District 1 • L. Antonia Codling, Alt. VP & Former Rep., Attorneys of Color of Legal Aid, ALAA/UAW L. 2325, NYC Legal Aid Society • Len Cooper, Victorian Secretary, Communication Workers Union, Australia • Krista L. Cortes, Unit Chair, UAW L. 2865, UC Berkeley • Heather Cottin, Professional Staff Congress, NYC • Mike Cushman, Membership Secretary, London School of Economics, University and College Union branch (UCU) • Denise D'Anne, SEIU L. 1021 • Joe Davies, Organizer, Southern Local Government Officers Union, Christchurch NZ • Warren Davis, Exec. VP (Retired), AFGE L. 2006, Philadelphia • Richard Deaton, Ph.D., J.L.B., Asst. Director of Research, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)(retired) • Francisco Martin del Campo, Head Steward, UAW L. 2685, UC Berkeley Unit • Jacob Denz, GSOC/UAW L. 2110; NYU; Brooklyn, NY • Roger Dittmann, PhD, Former Secretary, United Professors of California • Monique Dols, UFT, NYC • Greg Dropkin, Unison; Liverpool Friends of Palestine, UK • Tim Dubnau, Organizing Coordinator, CWA District One • Arla S. Ertz, SEIU L. 1021 San Francisco •

Shelley Ettinger, AFT L. 3882, NYC • Mark Evard, National Director, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Ottawa ON • Mikos Fabersunne, Professional Engineers in California Government (retired) • Jessica Feldman, UAW L. 2110, NYC • Chris Ferlazzo, Portland Jobs with Justice • Prof. Mary E. Finn, Ph. D., United University Professionals, State University of New York at Buffalo • Prof. Patrick J. Finn, Ph. D., United University Professionals, State University of New York at Buffalo • Gord Fischer, National Director, CUPW Prairie Region, Winnipeg MB • Jon Flanders, Past President, IAM 1145 • Prof. Manzar Foroohar, former Chapter President, California Faculty Association-Cal Poly • Sheena Foster, Global Labour University Alumni • Andre Francois, Recording Secretary, USW L. 8751 • Carol Gay, President, NJ State Industrial Union Council • Maxine Gay, Retail Finance & Commerce Secretary, FIRST Union New Zealand • Carl Gentile, National Representative, American Federation of Government Employees • Christine Geovanis National Writers Union/UAW L. 1981 • Alborz Ghandehari, Recording Secretary, San Diego Unit, UAW L. 2865 (UC Student-Worker Union) • Hadi Gharabaghi, GSOC-UAW L. 2110; Cinema Studies, NYU • Steve Gillis, VP USW L. 8751 (Boston School Bus Drivers' Union) • Mike Gimbel, Chairperson, Labor/Community Unity Committee, L. 375, AFSCME • Greg Giorgio, Delegate, Upstate NY Regional Branch, Industrial Workers of the World • Nathan Goldbaum, Member Communications Coordinator, Chicago Teachers Union, AFT L. 1 • Marty Goodman, former Executive Board member, Transport Workers Union L. 100 • Erik Green, UAW L. 2865, Financial Secretary, Santa Cruz CA • Ira Grupper, Delegate (retired), Greater Louisville (KY) Central Labor Council, BCTGM L. 16T • Maria Guillen, SEIU L. 1021 • Gabriel Healand, CWA L. 9404 • Jesse Hagopian, Seattle Education Association/NEA • Denise Hammond, Unifor 591 G • David Heap, University of Western Ontario Faculty Association • Jenny Heinz, 1199SEIU • Stanley Heller, 40-year AFT member, West Haven, CT, now AFT 933 (retired) • Lucy Herschel, Delegate, 1199SEIU, NYC • Fred Hirsch, VP, Plumbers and Fitters L. 393, San Jose CA • Michael Hirsch, National Writers Union/UAW L. 1981 • Bridgett Holloman, 1199SEIU, Legal Aid Society, Brooklyn NY • Alexandra Holmstrom-Smith, Chair, UCLA Unit, UAW L. 2865 (UC Student-Worker Union) • Jim Holstun, UUP Buffalo Center Chapter, NYSUT, AFT • Evert Hoogers, National Union Rep., CUPW (retired) • Cherrene Horazuk, President, AFSCME L. 3800 • Jonathan House, President (1979-1981), Executive Director (1982-1989), Committee of Interns and Residents, SEIU • Sean Howard, Shop Steward, IBT L. 559, Hartford CT • Janet Hudgins, CUPE (retired) • Ren-yo Hwang, S. VP, UAW 2865, Los Angeles • Joe Iosbaker, Executive Board, SEIU L. 73 • Malathi Iyenga, San Diego Unit Chair, UAW L. 2865 • Joe Jamison, TWU L. 100 (retired) • James Jordan, National Co-Coordinator, Alliance for Global Justice • Michael P. Kaehler, President, APWU L. 647, Saint Cloud MN Area • Marianne Kaletzky, Head Steward, UAW L. 2865 Berkeley CA • Dan Kaplan, Executive Secretary, AFT L. 1493, San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers • Jim Kaplan, former member, Somerville Teachers Association, MA • Wendy Kaufman, Executive Board, AFT L. 2121 (faculty union of City College of San Francisco) • Brian Kelly, UCU Belfast (formerly Carpenters L. 33 Boston and IUMSWA L. 25 East Boston) • Sue Kelly, OPEIU L. 334 (retired) • Russell Kilday-Hicks, VP, California State Employees Association • Ed Kinchley, San Francisco Committee on Political Education; Co-chair, SEIU L. 1021, San Francisco • John Kirkland, Carpenters L. 1462, Bucks County PA • Steve Kirschbaum, Grievance Committee Chair, USW L. 8751 • David Klein, California Faculty Association • Jeff Klein, Retired President, NAGE/SEIU L. R1-168 • Cindy Klumb, OPEIU L. 153 • Richard Koritz, Former President, NALC Branch 630, Greensboro NC • Dennis Korteuer, California Faculty Association • Bud Korotzer, Shop Steward, AFSCME District Council 37, L. 371 (retired) • Daniella Korotzer, Former VP & Health & Safety Rep., ALAA/UAW L. 2325, NYC Legal Aid Society • Francine Korotzer, Shop Steward, AFSCME District Council 37, L. 2054 (retired) • Dennis Kosuth, Shop Steward, Convention Delegate, National Nurses Organizing Committee, National Nurses United • Rebecca Kurti, 1199SEIU • Elizabeth Lalasz, Steward & Bargaining Team Rep., National Convention Delegate, District 13, National Nurses Organizing Committee/National Nurses Unites (NNOC/NNU) • Zoe Lawlor, Unit Teacher, University of Limerick, Ireland • Howard Lenow, American Jews For A Just Peace, trade union lawyer • Kristin Lew, 1199SEIU • Stephen Lewis, SEIU L. 509 • Joe Lombardo, CSEA L. 999, Troy Area Labor Council • Marsha Love, UALE, Chicago • Michael Lyon, AFT L. 2121 (retiree) • John McCollan, SENA 9158, United Steelworkers of America • Maureen McDermott, UFT, NYC • Henry Maar, Trustee, UAW L. 2865 • Amir M. Maasoumi, former member, Federation des travailleurs du Quebec (FTQ) • Shafeah M'Balia, National Assn. of Letter Carriers, Greenville, NC Branch 1729, Black Workers For Justice • Cindy McCallum Miller, President, Castlegar Local Canadian Union of Postal Workers, BC • Edward Miller, Strategic Adviser, FIRST Union, Auckland NZ • Gail Miller, UFT, NYC • Nathaniel Miller, Industrial Workers of the World • Susan Olivia Morris, Alternate VP, ALAA/UAW L. 2325, NYC Legal Aid Society • Irene Morrison, Recording Secretary, UAW 2865, UC Riverside • Hlokoza Motau, National Union of Metalworkers' Union (Numsa), Johannesburg, South Africa • Kenneth Myers, United Federation of Teachers, NYC • Ken Nash, AFSCME L. 1930, DC 37 • Lisa North, AFT L. 2, Brooklyn NY • Raquel Pacheco, UAW L. 2865, San Diego CA • Meredith Palmer, Head Steward, UAW L. 2865, UC Berkeley • Jackson Pitts, Head Steward, UAW L. 2865, UC Riverside • Maria Pizarro, AFSCME L. 2081 • Marion Pollack, retiree, Vancouver BC • Jay Poppa, VP, Bridgeport Education Association, Bridgeport, CT • Dr. Anna Potempka, PhD, PEF (retired), NY • Andre' Powell, AFSCME Delegate, Baltimore Central Labor Council • Peter Rachleff, Labor Educator, UALE • Natasha Raheja, Bargaining Committee, GSOC-UAW L. 2110, NYC • Melissa Rakestraw, Executive Board and Shop Steward, National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Branch 825, Oakbrook IL • Croft Randle, Retired Local Officer and Provincial Representative, Telecommunications Workers Union, BC Canada • Ben Ratliffe, Steward, AFSCME L. 60, WI • Dominic Renda, Chief Shop Steward, CWA L. 1105 • Eric Robson, Steward and Trustee, AFSCME L. 171, Madison WI • Marco Antonio Rosales, Unit Chair, UAW L. 2865, UC Davis • Mimi Rosenberg, ALAA/UAW L. 2325, NYC Legal Aid Society • Keith Rosenthal, AFSCME L. 3650, Somerville MA • Prof. Emerita Marguerite G. Rosenthal, Massachusetts State College Association/Mass. Education Assn./NEA • Andrew Ross, AAUP, NYU • Janice Rothstein, AFSCME L. 3299, San Francisco • Christina Rousseau, CUPE 3903, Toronto ON • David Russitano, Executive Board, United Educators of San Francisco, AFT/CFT L. 61 • Gillian Russom, Former Director of Directors, United Teachers Los Angeles, AFT L. 1021 • Carl Sack, AFT L. 3220, UW-Madison Teaching Assistants' Association • Keith Sadler, UAW L. 2, Toledo OH • Lauren Schaeffer, Head Steward, UAW L. 2865, Los Angeles CA • Charity Schmidt, Former Co-President, University of Wisconsin-Madison Teaching Assistants' Association (TAA) • Robert M. Schwartz, National Writers Union/UAW L. 1981, Boston MA • Helen Scott, United Academics AAUP/AFT L. 4996, Burlington VT • Mary Scully, IUE-CWA L. 201 (retired) • Snehal Shingavi, Texas State Employees Union/CWA L. 6186, Austin TX • Tyler Shipley, CUPE L. 3903, Toronto ON • Ahmad Shirazi, Former Board Member, IATSE L. 700, NYC • Sid Shniad, Former Research Director, Telecommunications Workers Union, Vancouver BC • Jerry Silberman, Senior Staff Rep., Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals • Lorrie Beth Slonsky, SEIU L. 1021; Paramedic (retired) • Larry Smallwood, former Telecommunications Workers Union of Canada, Volunteer President L. 7; human rights officer; union activist for equity rights • Nancy Snyder, Recording Secretary Emeritus, SEIU L. 1021 • David Sole, Past President, UAW L. 2334, Detroit • Peter Spitzform, AFT/AAUP, University of Vermont • Brenda Stokely, former President, AFSCME DC 1707, co-founder, NYC Labor Against the War; Co-Chair, Million Worker March Movement • Alan Stolzer, Bakers L. 3 (retired) • Susan Stout, Unifor 2002, Canada (retired) • Dante Strobino, UE L. 150, North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, Durham • Brian J. Sullivan, LSSA/UAW L. 2320, NYC • Rick Sullivan, BC Retired Teachers' Association, Parksville BC • Lee Sustar, NWU/UAW L. 1981, Chicago IL • Alice Sturm Sutter, NYSNA (retired), NYC • Team Solidarity – the Voice of United School Bus Workers • Steve Terry, ALAA/UAW L. 2325, NYC Legal Aid Society • Clarence Thomas, Co-Chair, Million Worker March; Executive Board, ILWU L. 10 • Elizabeth Thornton, Head Steward, UCLA Unit, UAW L. 2865 (UC Student-Workers Union) • Joanne Tien, Head Steward, UAW L. 2865, Oakland CA • Azalia Torres, Former Executive Board Member, ALAA/UAW L. 2325, NYC Legal Aid Society • Mike Treen, National Director, Unite Union NZ • Corey Uhl, IBT L. 79, Tampa FL • Jaime Veve, Transport Workers Union L. 100, NYC (retired) • Nantina Vgontzas, GSOC/UAW L. 2110, NYU • Sabina Virgo, Founding and Past President, AFSCME L. 2620 • Kay L. Walker, SEIU L. 1021, San Francisco (retired) • Peter Waterman, Researcher/writer on labour internationalisms: ABVA-KABO, The Hague, Netherlands • Dave Welsh, Delegate, San Francisco Labor Council • Nancy Welch, Delegate, UVM United Academics AFT/AAUP • Bruce Wolf, Social Justice Committee, OPEIU L. 2 • Sherry Wolf, CWA L. 1032 • Cynthia Wright, CUPE 3903 • Garrett Wright, National Organization of Legal Services Workers, UAW L. 2320, NYC • Eddie Yood, CWA L. 1180 Liaison to US Labor Against the War • Carol F. Yost, Organization of Staff Analysts, NYC (retired) • Steve Zeltzer, CWA L. 39521, Pacific Media Workers, KPFA WorkWeek Radio **Additional Signers (As of August 4, 2014):** Susan E. Davis, National Contract Advisor, National Writers Union/UAW L. 1981, NYC • Saladin Muhammad, Co-Coordinator, Southern Workers Assembly, Black Workers For Justice; International Rep., UE (retired) • Paul Bigman, Executive Board, Martin Luther King Jr. County Labor Council (Seattle, WA); Organizer, AFM L. 76-493 • Rami Elamine, CWA-TNG L. 32035 • Ajamu Dillahunt, Former President, Raleigh Area Local APWU; Black Workers for Justice • Lyn Meza, Former VP, IUE-CWA L. 201, Lynn MA • Noor Ahmad, ALAA/UAW L. 2325, NYC Legal Aid Society • Christine Williams, Former Executive Board member, TWU L. 100; Million Worker March Movement • Aileen Sander, SAG-AFTRA • Robert Caldwell, TSEU/ CWA L. 6186 • Josephine Perry, SAG-AFTRA • Win Heimer, Secretary, AFT L. 4200R • Jonathon Bakan, CUPE 3903, York University, Toronto ON • Royce Adams, Former VP, ILA L. 1291, Philadelphia • Felix Bunke, IWW (Madison GMB), IU 620 • Joshua Morey, Northwest United Educators-Rice Lake/WEAC/NEA; Blue Hills Solidarity Network • Deni Asnis, UESF/AFT L. 61 • Anna E. Waltman, M.A., GEO-UAW L. 2322, Amherst MA • Jamie Partridge, NALC Branch 82, Delegate, NW Oregon Labor Council • Joe Piette, NALC Branch 157, Philadelphia; Organizer, Community-Labor United for Postal Jobs & Services • Logan Sellathurai, Former CUPE Ontario International Solidarity Committee Member; Former Executive Board Member, CUPE L. 1 • Brian Tierney, OPEIU L. 2; IBT • Chelsea Harris, Delegate, IWW, Portland OR • Madeline Davidson Lees, NUJ Book Branch, UK • Jay Gilman, Operative Plasterers and Cement Masons International Association, L. 124 • Linda Sneed, Los Rios College Federation of Teachers/AFT L. 2279, CFT • Elizabeth McDonnell, LIUNA L. 483 • Porfirio Quintano, Steward & Executive Board Member, NUHW • Burnis E. Tuck, AFGE L. 3172 (retired), IWW • Nancy Wright, Hillsborough Classroom Teacher's Association/FEA/NEA, Tampa FL • Linda Ray, SEIU L. 1021; Delegate, San Francisco Labor Council; Co-Chair, Peace and Solidarity Committee • Kaushalya Bannerji, CUPE L. 3903 • Ann Fawcett Ambia, Former attorney, DC 37 Municipal Employees Legal Services, AFSCME • Perry Bellow-Handelman, Site Rep., Oakland Education Association • Alicia Deiana Arnold, Oakland Education Association/CTA/NEA • Rebecca Burns, Unit Chair, Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild, L. 32035, CWA • Michael Shane, Oakland Education Association • Gregory A. Butler, Shop Steward, Carpenters L. 157 • Buzz Davis Stoughton, Executive Board, AFT-W Retiree Council • Tim Goulet, IBT L. 810 • Adam Sanchez, Portland Association of Teachers, OR • Marian Feinberg, 1199SEIU; NWU/UAW L. 1981 • Sean Collins, Organizer, SEIU L. 200; Trustee, Troy (NY) Area Labor Council • Alex Read, AFGE, Toledo OH • Francesca Rosa, SEIU L. 1021; Delegate, San Francisco Labor Council • Philip Smith, UFCW L. 540, Portland OR • Kim Scipes, Chair, Chicago Chapter, NWU/UAW L. 1981 • Sharon Maldonado, CTA/CFT (retired), Berkeley CA • Ben Speight, Organizing Director, Teamsters L. 728, Atlanta GA • David McNally, Steward, York University Faculty Association, Toronto ON • Charles Post, PSC-CUNY/AFT L. 2334 • Kaushalya Bannerji, CUPE L. 3903, Toronto ON • Tyler Mitchell, Intern, UFCW International, Washington DC • Larry Goldbetter, President, National Writers Union/UAW L. 1981 • Bill Burgess, L. 5, Federation of Post-Secondary Educators, Vancouver BC • Linda Gomaa, MENA Regional Organizer, International Union League for Brand Responsibility; Former Member, IPTE L. 70 • Christine Karatynsky, Former Executive Board Member, AFSCME L. 1930, New York Public Library Guild; founding member NYC Labor Against the War • Michael Haire, 1199SEIU EAST • Joe Catron, Gaza Palestinian Territory; Al-Awda NY; International Solidarity Movement; NWU/UAW L. 1981 • Duane Wright Davis, Officer, UAW L. 2865 • Stephen Aberle, Union of BC Professionals, Vancouver BC Canada • Malcolm Povey, University and College Union, University of Leeds UK • Nadje Al-Ali, Chair, SOAS UCU, London UK • Richard Blum, ALAA/UAW L. 2322 • Sam Weinstein, IJAN-Labor; Former President, Utility Workers L. 132, Retired Assistant to National President, UWUA • IJAN-Labor • Kimberly Goldbaum, Chicago Teachers Union/AFT L. 1 • Larry Hendel, SEIU • Isham Christie, Organizer, WGA East • Sherna Berger Gluck, Former VP, CFA/SEIU L. 1983 • Joe Cariello, Steward, Trustee & Executive Board Member, UAW L. 2322 • Leslie Cunningham, Texas State Employees Union/CWA L. 6186; Delegate, Austin Central Labor Council • Michelle Flores, Campaign Researcher, NNYJ Regional Joint Board, Workers United • Dianne Feeley, UAW L. 22 • Linda Tucker, East Baton Rouge Federation of Teachers/AFT • Howard Pflanzner, PSC-CUNY



Palestinian Trade Union Coalition for BDS (PTUC-BDS) Statement of Principles & Call for International Trade Union Support for BDS

Occupied Palestine, 4 May 2011—In commemoration of the first of May—a day of workers struggle and international solidarity—the first Palestinian trade union conference for boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israel (BDS) was held in Ramallah on 30 April 2011, organized by almost the entirety of the Palestinian trade union movement, including federations, professional unions, and trade union blocks representing the entire spectrum of Palestinian political parties. **The conference marked a historic event: the formation of the Palestinian Trade Union Coalition for BDS (PTUC-BDS)** as the largest coalition of the Palestinian trade union movement. PTUC-BDS will provide the most representative Palestinian reference for international trade unions, promoting their support for and endorsement of the BDS Call, launched by Palestinian civil society in 2005, guided by the guidelines and principles adopted by the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC), of which PTUC-BDS has become a key component.

The global trade union movement has always played a key and inspiring role in its courageous commitment to human rights and adoption of concrete, ground-breaking, labor-led sanctions against oppressive regimes in a show of solidarity with oppressed peoples around the world. The trade union boycott of apartheid South Africa stands out as a bright example of this tradition of effective solidarity. Trade unions today are taking the lead in defending the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, justice, freedom, equality and the right of return of our refugees as stipulated in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194. Many of them have heeded the call from Palestinian civil society, and its labor movement in particular, to adopt BDS as the most effective form of solidarity with the Palestinians in our struggle to end Israeli occupation and apartheid.

Ending Israel's multi-tiered system of oppression against the Palestinian people—comprising occupation, colonialism and apartheid—has become a test for humanity. For decades, Israel has enjoyed impunity while continuing its gradual eth-

nic cleansing of Palestinians, particularly in occupied East Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley and the Naqab (Negev) desert; its 44-year-old occupation; its theft of land and natural resources; its colonization and construction of illegal colonial settlements and walls, its siege of Gaza; its relentless denial of refugee rights; its endless wars of aggressions and incarceration of political prisoners; and its wanton killings of civilians and demolition of infrastructure. Israel's systematic destruction of the Palestinian economy, expropriation of the most fertile agricultural land, as well as humiliation of and racist discrimination against Palestinian workers have all become part of its apartheid reality that should never be tolerated by the world today.

Given the complete failure and unwillingness of hegemonic powers to hold Israel accountable to international law, it is up to people of conscience and international civil society, especially the trade union movement, to take concrete action to end international collusion with decades of violations of international law and human rights by Israel, its institutions and international corporations.

The support of the entirety of the Palestinian trade union movement for a full boycott of Israel,[1] as the most effective form of solidarity with the Palestinian people, was the overarching message of this historic gathering.

The Conference was honored to welcome João Felício, International Relations Secretary of CUT, the Brazilian trade union representing more than 20 million workers, who expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people and their legitimate rights, and reiterated CUT's endorsement of BDS. The conference received numerous messages of solidarity from a large number of trade union federations, including the International Federation of Arab Trade Unions, COSATU (South Africa), ICTU (Ireland), and a large number of individual trade unions in Canada, Scotland, Italy, France, Spain, Turkey, Australia, USA and other countries. All major Palestinian political parties also enthusiastically supported the conference and the formation of PTUC-BDS.

The Conference decisively condemned the Histadrut and called on international trade unions to sever all links with it due to its historic and current complicity in Israel's violations of international law and Palestinian rights. The Histadrut has always played a key role in perpetuating Israel's occupation, colonization and system of racial discrimination by:

- Publicly supporting Israel's violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention and other tenets of international law

- Maintaining active commercial interests in Israel's illegal settlement enterprise[2]

- Allowing Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank to join the organization[3]

- Supporting Israel's war of aggression on besieged Gaza in 2008/9;[4] it has later justified Israel's massacre of humanitarian relief workers and activists aboard the Freedom Flotilla on 31 May 2010[5]

- Illegally withholding over NIS 8.3 billion (approximately \$2.43bn) over decades of occupation from wages earned by Palestinian workers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory,[6] deducted for 'social and other trade union benefits' that Palestinian laborers from the OPT have never received.

Recalling the trade union maxim "an injury to one is an injury to all", and given the global trade union movement's historic role in effective international solidarity with oppressed peoples around the world, **PTUC-BDS:**

- Cordially salutes all global trade unions for their solidarity with the Palestinian people, especially those that have endorsed BDS against Israel,

- Calls on trade unions around the world to actively show solidarity with the Palestinian people by implementing creative and context-sensitive BDS campaigns as the most effective way to end Israeli impunity. For example by:

- boycotting Israeli and international companies (such as Elbit, Agrexco, Veolia, Alstom, Caterpillar, Northrop Grumman, etc.) and institutions that are complicit with Israel's occupation and violations of international law,

- reviewing pension fund investments with the purpose of divesting from Israel Bonds and all Israeli and international companies and institutions complicit in Israel's occupation, colonization and apartheid,

- pressuring governments to suspend Free Trade Agreements, end arms trade and military relations with Israel with the intention of eventually cutting all diplomatic ties with it,

- Calls on port workers around the world to boycott loading/offloading Israeli ships, similar to the heroic step taken by port workers around the world in suspending maritime trade with South Africa in protest against the apartheid regime, and

- Calls on trade unions around the world to review and sever all ties with the Histadrut.

Such non-violent measures of accountability must continue until Israel fulfils its obligations under international law in acknowledging the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination, and fully complies with international law by:

- Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands occupied since 1967 (including East Jerusalem), as well as dismantling of the illegal wall and colonies,

- Recognizing the fundamental right of the Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equity, as well as ending the system of racial discrimination against them, and

- Respecting, protecting and supporting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UNGA Resolution 194.

* The Palestinian Trade Union Coalition for BDS (PTUC-BDS) is the broadest and most representative body of the Palestinian trade union movement and includes the following organisations: General Union of Palestinian Workers, Federation of Independent Trade Unions (IFU), General Union of Palestinian Women, Union of Palestinian Professional Associations (comprising the professional syndicates of Engineers, Physicians, Pharmacists, Agricultural Engineers, Lawyers, Dentists and Veterinarians), General Union of Palestinian Teachers, General Union of Palestinian Peasants and Co-ops, General Union of Palestinian Writers, Union of Palestinian Farmers, Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees (PFUPE), Union of Public Employees in Palestine-Civil Sector; and all of the trade union blocks that make up the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU): Central Office for the Workers Movement, Progressive Labor Union Front, Workers Unity block, Progressive Workers Block, Workers solidarity organization, Workers Struggle Block, workers resistance block, Workers Liberation Front, Union of Palestinian Workers Struggle Committees, National Initiative (al-Mubadara) Block.

-Palestinian Trade Union Coalition for BDS (PTUC-BDS)

ptuc-bds@bdsmovement.net

UNION LABOR DONATED March 31, 2016



Briefing: The Jewish Labor Committee and Apartheid Israel

Labor for Palestine (U.S.)

April 13, 2010

Online version with footnote references at: <http://laborforpalestine.net>

[In April 2010, Michael Letwin presented the following briefing paper to a conference of the Irish Confederation of Trade Unions.]

Israel was left with no choice but to defend itself and dismantle Hamas' s ability to launch more missiles. . . . Israel is continuing to supply humanitarian aid of food, water and medicine into Gaza, and to allow relief agencies to supply material to the suffering people of Gaza.—“Jewish Labor Committee Statement on Gaza,” January 9, 2009[1]

The JLC put together a delegation of Irish-American trade union leaders last November (including one of our honorees tonight) to go to Ireland and to stand up for the State of Israel when Irish trade unionists were considering positions with which we disagreed.—“Stuart Appelbaum’s Remarks at October 2009 JLC Dinner”[2]

•**Overview.** The Jewish Labor Committee (JLC) presents itself as a model of progressive, socially conscious trade unionism. But as a U.S. mouthpiece for the Histadrut, this false image has been a smokescreen to disguise and promote Apartheid Israel, “AFL-CIA” support war and empire, and racism in the labor movement.

•**1940s: The Nakba.** The JLC was founded in 1934 to fight fascism and help Jewish refugees from Europe.[3] But in the late- 1940s, the JLC joins with Labor Zionist union officials who help persuade both Truman and Stalin to support partition and establishment of the Zionist state.[4]

•**1950s: McCarthyism.** Under the banner, “Jewish Labor Fights Communism,”[5] the JLC supports McCarthyite purges of government and labor,[6] and undermines the campaign to defend the Rosenbergs from execution.[7]

The JLC also supports overall U.S. Cold War foreign policy,[8] urges the U.S. to arm Israel against “Communist and Arab designs,”[9] and declares that conflict in the Middle East, “is not simply between Egypt and Israel, but between democracy and expansionist dictatorship, between the free world and Nasserism backed by Moscow. . . . Events also have demonstrated the basic identity of interest of Israel and the free world.”[10]

•**1960: Trade Union Racism.** Speaking to a JLC conference, AFL-CIO chief George Meany attacks the NAACP for exposing racism in U.S. labor bodies. Historian Philip S. Foner observes, “Meany’s choice of the Jewish Labor Committee conference to unleash the official AFL-CIO response to the NAACP report was not accidental. The JLC had been one of the shrillest critics of the report,”[11] which—like today’s Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israeli apartheid—it brands as anti-Semitic.[12]

•**1962: Attack on the Student Movement.** The JLC joins “an all-out attack on the Port Huron convention” of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) for allowing Communists to participate and opposing U.S. imperialism.[13]

•**1964: Censorship at the World’s Fair.** The JLC demands removal of a World’s Fair mural it calls “anti-Semitic” for depicting Palestinian refugees.[14]

•**1967: Witch Hunting the Black Power Movement.** The JLC accuses the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) of being “an apostle of racism,” for having called Israel racist and imperialist.[15]

•**1967-1968: Vietnam War.** In 1967—the same year that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. publicly spoke out against the Vietnam War, the JLC hosts a dinner at which President Lyndon Johnson links support of Vietnam and Israel’s 1967 War, claiming that U.S. “commitment to a small and distant country in Southeast Asia is being tested. . . . [and that] [t]he same kind of issues are at stake in the Middle East.”[16] In 1968, the JLC honors Hubert

Humphrey, Johnson's pro-war vice-president and Democratic Party presidential nominee.[17]

•**1968: Community Control of the Schools.** The JLC joins with the United Federation of Teachers to oppose African American demands for community control of the schools in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville section of Brooklyn.[18]

•**1970s: Racist Hiring Practices.** The JLC, Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and other Zionist organizations help roll back affirmative action policies designed to boost African American employment.[19]

•**1973: War.** During the 1973 Mideast War, the JLC is part of a coalition that spends more than \$1 million to mobilize support for Israel.[20]

•**1979: Andrew Young and the PLO.** The JLC, Anti-Defamation League and other organizations help oust Andrew Young, chief U.S. delegate to the U.N., for meeting with a PLO representative.[21]

•**1991: Settlements.** The JLC criticizes the Bush Sr. administration for threatening to condition U.S. loan guarantees on ending Israel's aggressive settlement policy.[22]

•**1998: War Against Iraq.** JLC Executive Director Avram Lyon criticizes an 1199 SEIU resolution that calls for an end to U.S. sanctions against Iraq.[23]

•**2001: Boosting Labor Support for Apartheid Israel.** JLC head Stuart Appelbaum boasts that "[t]he labor movement, and the AFL-CIO in particular, has been among the most stalwart defenders of Israel," and that the JLC itself had blocked "Israel-bashing resolutions at various Democratic Party gatherings" in the 1980s.[24]

•**2002: Jenin Massacre.** In April, as Israel butchers Palestinian refugees at Jenin in the West Bank, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney—introduced by JLC chief Stuart Appelbaum—is a featured speaker at a belligerent "National Solidarity Rally for Israel." [25]

•**2003: Palestine Student Solidarity at Rutgers University.** In July, the JLC joins the attack on a student Palestine solidarity conference at Rutgers University.[26]

•**2004: Somerville BDS Resolution.** On November 8, the JLC opposes a BDS resolution under consideration in Somerville, MA as "one-sided." [27]

•**2004: Nakba Denial.** On December 5, the JLC cosponsors a conference in Philadelphia organized by AIPAC (the main Zionist lobbying agency in the U.S.) to discredit such "Arab myths" as Israel's responsibility for Mideast wars; "the so-called Palestinian 'right of return'; and facts about Palestinian Arab suicide bombers." [28]

•**2006: War on Lebanon.** In July, the JLC participates in a Philadelphia rally supporting Israel's war on Lebanon "and its fight against the terrorist organizations Hezbollah and Hamas." [29]

•**2006: Palestine Solidarity in Los Angeles.** Under pressure from the JLC, the ADL and Simon Wiesenthal Center, the United Teachers of Los Angeles cancel an October 5 forum on Palestine sponsored by the union's own human rights committee.[30]

•**2007: Equating Anti-Zionism with Anti-Semitism.** In January, the JLC, AIPAC and other Zionist organizations co-sponsor conference in San Francisco against alleged "anti-Semitism on the left." [31] The JLC's session is entitled "An Imperfect Union: Keeping Anti-Semitism Out of the Labor Movement." [32]

•**2007: Trade Union BDS in the UK.** In June, AFL-CIO and Change to Win leaders sign a JLC statement denouncing British trade union support for BDS. JLC head Stuart Appelbaum later boasts that, "American leadership is fundamental to challenging Israel bashing within the labor movement globally—and there can be no effective campaign to build support for Israel on the left internationally absent labor support." [33]

•**2008: Solidarity Conference in Boston.** Under pressure from the JLC and UNITE-HERE leadership, a Boston community center cancels a March 8 conference on "Zionism and the Repression of Anti-Colonial Movements." [34]

•**2008: Australian Trade Unions.** Also in March, JLC head Stuart Appelbaum accuses two Australian unions of "anti-Semitism cloaked under the veil of anti-Zionism," for having accused Israel of "excessive use of force" against the people of Gaza.[35]

•**2009: Gaza Massacres.** On January 9, the JLC endorses Israel's brutal war on Gaza, falsely claiming that "Israel was left with no choice but to defend itself and dismantle Hamas's ability to launch more missiles," and that "Israel is continuing to supply humanitarian aid of food, water and medicine into Gaza, and to allow relief agencies to supply material to the suffering people of Gaza." [36]

•**2009: "TULIP" and Escalating Sabotage of International Trade Union BDS.** In April, the JLC and Eric Lee (Labourstart) are primary cofounders of "Trade Unions Linking Israel and Palestine" (TULIP), the purpose of which is to oppose labor support for the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment and Sanction (BDS) campaign against Apartheid Israel.[37]

UNION LABOR DONATED March 31, 2016



The Histadrut: Its History and Role in Occupation, Colonisation and Apartheid

Trade Union Friends of Palestine

Campaigning in solidarity with the Palestinian People

(Online version with citations and images at: <http://laborforpalestine.net>)

The Histadrut: The General Confederation of Labour in the Land of Israel

Executive Summary

The Histadrut was founded in December 1920 in British Mandate Palestine. From its inception its aims were neither to build workers' solidarity nor represent or campaign for workers' rights; instead it was founded as an exclusively Jewish organisation to facilitate the colonisation of Palestine. As such it worked in tandem with the Jewish Agency to promote the exclusion of Palestinian labour and produce and was at the forefront of the movement to turn Palestine from an Arab country into a Zionist one. Today it continues to work hand in hand with the Israeli government and promotes and defends policies that violate the basic civil, political and human rights of Palestinians.

The Early History of the Histadrut

The Histadrut's main role during the British Mandate period (1920-1948) was to bring the Jewish work force under its control in order to ensure no solidarity or integration occurred between Palestinian and Jewish workers – a policy it called 'Labour Zionism.' Led by David Ben Gurion, the future Israeli Prime Minister and the man responsible for the expulsion of Palestinians in 1948-49, it actively promoted racial discrimination and boycotts. As an organisation it refused to countenance having Palestinians and Jews together in the same union with Ben Gurion railing against "the evil of mixed labour[1]." To this end it actively broke up unions like the Union of Railway, Postal and Telegraph Workers which had a mixed Jewish and Arab Palestinian membership[2] and likewise, as it established its own companies, eventually becoming the second largest employer in the country, it refused to employ non-Jews. Similarly it lobbied the British authorities for separate pay rates for Jews and Arabs[3] and despite excluding Palestinians itself, it did what it could to undermine Palestinian trade unions, ironically lobbying against them on the grounds that they were separatist, exclusionary and against the spirit of workers' solidarity[4].

Similarly when Palestinian workers took industrial action in support of representative national government the Jewish Agency and the Histadrut used the opportunity to fill their places, most famously during the 1936 Jaffa Dockers' strike when they established Tel Aviv as an alternative port to Jaffa.

Indeed a planned and structured discrimination, similar to that of Apartheid, was all pervasive in the actions of the Histadrut. Leading Labour Zionist, Haim Aslosoroff, suggesting in 1927 that Zionism should emulate South Africa's colour bar which excluded Black workers from skilled, unionised employment[5].

In addition, coupled with a boycott of Palestinian labour was a boycott of Palestinian produce; David HaCohen, former managing director of the Histadrut construction company Solel Boneh described what this meant:

"I had to fight my friends on the issue of Jewish Socialism, to defend the fact that I would not accept Arabs in my trade union, the Histadrut; to defend preaching to housewives that they should not buy at Arab stores; to defend the fact that we stood guard at orchards to prevent Arab workers from getting jobs there... to pour kerosene on Arab tomatoes; to attack Jewish housewives in the market and smash Arab eggs they had bought... to buy dozens of dunums [of land] from an Arab is permitted but to sell God forbid one Jewish dunum to an Arab is prohibited; to take Rothschild, the incarnation of capitalism as a socialist and to name him 'benefactor' – to do all that was not easy"[6].

Likewise French historian Nathan Weinstock records that a "mere rumour that a café in the exclusively Jewish town of Tel Aviv had taken on a few Arab workers provoked an angry gathering of thousands of demonstrators." Also "Every member of the Histadrut had to pay two compulsory levies: (1) 'For Jewish

Labour' – funds for organising pickets, etc. against the employment of Arab workers, and (2) 'For Jewish Produce' – for organising the boycott of Arab produce[7]."

All this activity was aimed at creating an exclusively Jewish state and the Histadrut always closely aligned itself with the Jewish Agency, the Jewish National Fund and the Jewish Colonial Agency. It was through the Histadrut that Mapai, the Israeli Labour Party led by Ben Gurion was founded, and indeed also the Haganah, the Jewish paramilitary organisation that became the Israeli Army. Indeed throughout the Mandate era the Histadrut in collaboration with the Jewish Agency actively colluded with Britain to deny Palestinians their right to self-determination, its construction company Solel Boneh building many of the forts and border fences that cemented British colonial rule[8].

That all these Zionist organisations envisioned the ethnic cleansing of Palestine as a solution to their 'Arab problem' is not in doubt; both in their practice and their statements, their aim was always a Palestine with as few Palestinians as possible, as Joseph Weitz, friend of Ben Gurion and head of the Jewish Colonial Agency outlined in 1940:

"Among ourselves, it must be clear that there is no place in the country for both peoples together... there is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries. Transfer all of them, not one village or tribe should remain"[9].

Little wonder then that speaking years later Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir remarked that when she joined the Histadrut Executive Committee in 1928 it "wasn't just a trade union organisation. It was a great colonising enterprise[10]." Similarly, Ben Gurion paid tribute to its importance when he stated that without the Histadrut, "I doubt whether we would have a state[11]." What this meant for the Palestinians was expulsion, dispossession and exile, something the Histadrut has still to acknowledge any responsibility for.

The Histadrut after 1948

Once Israel became independent the Histadrut became extremely powerful. Owning some of the biggest companies in Israel it became the country's largest employer and by 1983 some 85% of Israel's wage earners were members[13]. Despite this success discrimination against Israel's Arab citizens remained endemic both within the Histadrut and within the government. Israel's Arabs, although promised full equality by the Israeli Declaration of Independence, were placed under martial law until 1966 and were only permitted to join the Histadrut in 1959.

However, even following the admission of Arab Israelis the Histadrut has frequently shown an unwillingness to campaign for equal rights in the workplace; a 2009 Knesset parliamentary committee on fair employment, for example, found that although Arab Israelis make up over 20% of the population, only 6% of public sector employees are Arab, and that those who are employed invariably occupy menial positions. What this means for governance and democracy is neatly summarised by Israeli politician Ahmed Tibi: "The absence of Arabs in [senior] roles means they have no say in [government] ministries decision-making processes[14]." Indeed, according to the Association of Civil Rights in Israel, Arab citizens of Israel "have suffered entrenched discrimination since the establishment of the State[15]," a fact that even former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert acknowledged in December 2008: "It is terrible that there is not even one Arab employee [out of 900] at the Bank of Israel[16]."

Sadly this is a discrimination that the Histadrut has not only failed to challenge but has in many cases encouraged. A 1989 report found that Histadrut companies had the worst record of systematically excluding Arab workers[17].

Despite extensive restructuring in the 1990s leading to the Histadrut selling off many of its companies and renaming itself the New Histadrut, there has been no change in its attitude towards defending Arab workers. Recently the Histadrut has failed to speak out when an Arab hotel manager was fired when he refused to forbid his Arab co-workers from speaking Arabic (2003); or intervene when McDonald's Israel banned its employees from speaking Arabic (2004), or when Arab employees at a building site had their helmets marked with a red X to facilitate assassination in case of emergency (2004)[18]. Indeed, in 2009 when Israeli Railways sacked 150 Arab workers because they had not served in the army the Histadrut was again silent, leaving Wahbe Badarne, director of Labourer's Voice to comment: "Unusually for a trade union, poor workers, and that means, overwhelmingly, Arab workers, are simply not on the Histadrut's agenda. It is there

to protect the jobs and good salaries of workers in the large state corporations and government offices[19].”

Unsurprisingly then whilst the Israeli NGO, the Adva Centre for Information on Equality and Social Justice in Israel, lists 14 organisations that advocate for Israeli Arab employment rights, the list does not include the Histadrut[20].

Significantly however, the Histadrut’s discrimination against Arab citizens of Israel extends beyond the economic sphere and has also been evident in colluding with the state to deny them their political rights. For example, in 1976 when Palestinian citizens for the first time protested the confiscation of their lands by calling a strike (Land Day), a day incidentally during which the Israeli police force shot dead six protestors, the Histadrut actively campaigned against the strike. The local media reported it planned to take reprisal measures and dismiss workers who participated in the strike, whilst a leaflet distributed amongst Arab workers warned them against absence on the day of the strike, stating absent workers would not be given trade union protection by the Histadrut[21]. Similarly, despite a spate of new racist legislation discriminating against Israel’s Arab citizens being passed in the Knesset (The Reception Committee Law, The Citizenship Law and the Nakba Law, all 2011), the Histadrut has been conspicuous by its silence; though, given the Histadrut’s record both with regard to Palestinian rights, and its earlier sustained support for South Africa’s Apartheid regime, this is only to be expected[22].

The Histadrut and the Occupied Palestinian Territories

Since June 1967 Israel has occupied the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. Throughout that time hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have worked for Israeli employers both inside Israel and in industrial zones and settlements in the Territories. Many have been employed in appalling conditions with no security of tenure, a lack of health and safety protection and no minimum wage[23]; emblematic of their status in Israeli society is that the places where Palestinian day labourers gather to be hired are openly referred to as “slave markets.[24]”

Palestinian workers inside Israel are denied the right to be represented by Palestinian unions and have never enjoyed the protection of the Histadrut, membership being denied to them[25] even though a condition of their employment has been the payment of 1% of their wages to the Histadrut as “an organising fee[26].” Describing the situation, Manawel Issa Abdellal of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions stated, “The Histadrut has failed to represent any Palestinian workers inside Israel and the PGFTU is forbidden from defending Arab workers in such areas. It is very painful. We can see, witness, and hear of Israeli brutal exploitation of Arab workers, but we cannot do anything... It can only remind us of the Cantons of the Apartheid State of South Africa[27].”

Nevertheless, in 2008, most likely in an attempt to blunt the growing Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Campaign, the Histadrut did agree to return a percentage of the money it had illegally taken as organising fees to the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU). Something which is today trumpeted by the Histadrut and Trade Union Friends of Israel as a landmark agreement but which leaves around \$30 million unaccounted for[28].

In addition since the 1990s the Israeli government has imposed a further 2% levy on construction workers to promote the training of recent Russian Jewish immigrants; a situation that Jerusalem based economist Shir Hever has stated means in effect that Palestinian labourers are required to “subsidise the training of workers meant to replace them[29].” Sadly, Hever further comments that the Histadrut has not only failed to challenge this discrimination but has in fact endorsed it[30].

Worse still Hever’s 2009 report, “State Robbery,” found the Histadrut to be complicit in the Israeli government policy of deducting approximately a fifth of Palestinian workers’ wages supposedly as contributions towards welfare benefits, benefits which are for the most part denied to Palestinian workers. The report finding that only around 8% of the money deducted was actually used to benefit Palestinian workers, whilst around 90% was passed to the Israeli Finance Ministry where it has been used to fund infrastructure projects, including illegal West Bank settlements[31]. As Shir Hever states, “This is a clear-cut case of theft from Palestinian workers on a grand scale... There are no reasons for Israel to delay in returning this money either to the workers or to their beneficiaries.[32]” However, it is a theft the Histadrut choose to be complicit with.

Politically and practically the Histadrut has always supported the occupation. Its former construction company, Solel Boneh, built many of the early settlements[33]; the Yashav Bank, which it owns a 25% stake in, operates in occupied East Jerusalem[34]; and Israelis living in the illegal settlements are entitled to Histadrut membership whilst of course their Palestinian neighbours are not.

Politically Histadrut claims to be in favour of a two state solution yet it recognises Israel’s illegal annexation of the occupied Golan Heights and East Jerusalem, and despite the growing international consensus that Israel is fully to blame for the collapse of the peace process, the Histadrut chooses instead to place the blame on the Palestinians. In all respects then the Histadrut merely trumpets the views and positions of the Israeli government, which is only natural given its

close ties to Israel’s political parties and the Israeli Labour Party in particular[35]. Indeed Histadrut Chairman Ofer Eini stated as recently as March 2011, “I will never attack our prime minister when I’m in another country. That’s my rule. I can only support him[36].”

The Histadrut also supported Israel’s illegal war on Gaza in 2008-2009[37], a war in which 1,385 Palestinians were killed, including 318 children[38], and which saw the large scale commission of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity[39]. Likewise the Histadrut supports the illegal blockade of Gaza, viewing only humanitarian assistance as appropriate[40], and yet this is a blockade that according to the Palestinian Medical Relief Society has caused a malnutrition rate of 52% amongst Palestinian children[41], and which the International Committee of the Red Cross has condemned as an illegal collective punishment[42]. Similarly a Histadrut statement on the Israeli attack on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla makes no mention of the fact that Israel initiated the illegal attack but rather blames the human rights activists on board for their own killings: “the conduct of the flotilla organizers, through the rejection of the Israeli proposal, was to attain provocation to strengthen Hamas, agitate the real peace efforts in the region and create an incident which now threatens to unravel the delicate diplomacy...[43]”

Finally, the Histadrut is at the forefront of trying to blunt the growing Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. Whilst the Histadrut attempts to present itself as a supporter of the peace process, co-existence and cooperation, it continually fails to acknowledge that there can be no respect or reconciliation whilst one people dominates, rules over and exploits another people. Unfortunately the Histadrut is not only part of this process of domination but has utilised its supposedly left wing credentials to pose as the acceptable face of the Israeli occupation. To this end it has misrepresented the position of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, claiming it does not support the Boycott movement[44] when in fact it has continually reiterated its call for a boycott of Israel until it abides by international law and human rights standards[45]. The PGFTU was in fact particularly scathing of the Histadrut’s attempt to use its name to whitewash Israel’s crimes, stating clearly as regards the blockade of Gaza and the killings of the Freedom Flotilla activists:

“Instead of denouncing the killing of the civilians on the Flotilla, and demanding an end to the military blockade imposed for more than three years on Gaza, the Histadrut exploits a union to union cooperation [agreement] to handle industrial complaints for Palestinian workers as a cover to escape from the ethical responsibility as free, independent trade unions, to condemn the crime which was strongly denounced by all freedom lovers around the world.”[46]

Conclusion

In 2009 the Director General of the International Labour Organisation, Juan Somavia stated:

“In the face of economic and social hardship, Palestinians nurture noble aspirations, as my representatives have again found. The large majority want to get on, in peace, with plans for their own future, their children and their statehood. These aspirations are constantly challenged by today’s grim prospects, which leave little room for hope. Yet hope is vital to counter extreme alternatives that hold no future”[47].

The issue then for trade unionists is whether continued engagement with the Histadrut can be considered as a positive dialogue that contributes to the achievement of legitimate Palestinian aspirations, or whether in actual fact such a dialogue merely reinforces Israel’s colonial occupation.

One answer was perhaps suggested by UNISON Scottish Regional Delegate, Mike Kirby, who in 2009 reluctantly felt the need to call for a review of his union’s relationship with the Histadrut:

“Conference, I believe in dialogue with all parties. History in Northern Ireland illustrates the necessity. The potential for capacity building and joint vocational training with PGFTU and Histadrut is inspiring. However, when Histadrut condones the excess of ‘Operation Cast Lead’ in Gaza, when Histadrut is accused of organising in the illegal settlements, we must review our relations and contracts”[48].

Given the history of Histadrut’s collusion in and profit from the occupation of Palestinian territory, including its support for racial discrimination and colonization, its refusal to defend the rights of Palestinian workers and to oppose the ongoing daily repression of the Palestinian people, it is not surprising that sections of the international trade union movement, including the British TUC and the Scottish TUC, are either severing or reviewing their relationship with this organisation. In the words of a 2007 Palestinian Labour Coalition:

“Since its inception, the Histadrut has supported the occupation and enacted racist policies against our workers, denying them their rights. It has kept silent in front of Israel’s crimes against our people throughout the decades of occupation. We are thus asking the international trade unions to boycott the Histadrut to pressure it to guarantee rights for our workers and to pressure the government to end the occupation and to recognise the full rights of the Palestinian people”[49].

Briefing paper written by Richard Irvine



Briefing: Labor Zionism and the Histadrut

Labor for Palestine (U.S.)

April 13, 2010 (Rev. September 1, 2011)

Online version with footnote references at: <http://laborforpalestine.net>

[In April 2010, Michael Letwin presented the following briefing paper to a conference of the Irish Confederation of Trade Unions.]

We are thus asking the international trade unions to boycott the Histadrut to pressure it to guarantee rights for our workers and to pressure the government to end the occupation and to recognize the full rights of the Palestinian people.

—Palestinian Unions call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions,” February 11, 2007.[1]

We must call for the isolation of Histadrut, Israel’s racist trade union, which supports unconditionally the occupation of Palestine and the inhumane treatment of the Arab workers in Israel.

—COSATU, June 24-26, 2009.[2]

•**Overview.** In their call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Apartheid Israel, all Palestinian trade union bodies have specifically targeted the Histadrut, the Zionist labor federation. As discussed below, this is because the Histadrut has used its image as a “progressive” institution to spearhead—and whitewash—racism, apartheid, dispossession and ethnic cleansing against the Palestinians since the 1920s. In this, it has been the cornerstone of Labor Zionism, which began in the early 1900s.

•**Colonial Project.** From its inception in the late 1800s, Zionism was designed as an openly colonial project. It promised prospective imperial sponsors to remove Jews en masse from Europe;[3] in the words of Theodor Herzl, to “form... an outpost of civilization against barbarism”[4] in a key strategic region; and to undermine Jewish working class support for radical socialism in Europe and the United States. As Herzl recounted, “I explained that we were taking the Jews away from the revolutionary parties.”[5]

•**Little Working Class Support.** At a time when most Jews were still working class, Labor Zionism had a key role to play in delivering on these promises. In the short term, however, none of these promises was fulfilled, since “Labour Zionism was never able to win over any significant section of the Jewish working class in any country of the Diaspora.”[6]

The socialist movement in Russia, where most Jews lived, was implacably opposed to Zionism, which pandered to the very Tsarist officials who sponsored anti-Semitic pogroms. Similarly, in the United States, “[p]overty pushed [Jewish] workers into unions organized by the revolutionary minority,” and “[a]t its prime, the Jewish labor movement loathed Zionism,”[7] which conspicuously abstained from fighting for immigrant workers’ rights.

•**Anti-Bolshevism.** It was partly to reverse this Jewish working class hostility to Zionism that, on 2 November 1917, Britain issued the Balfour Declaration, which promised a “Jewish National Home” in Palestine.

The British government was particularly anxious to weaken Jewish support for the Bolsheviks, who vowed to take Russia, a key British ally, out of the war. When the revolution took place just five days later, Britain enlisted Zionists to undermine the radical Jews it blamed for Bolshevism.

As then-War Secretary Winston Churchill declared in February 1920, “Trotsky[’s]... schemes of a world-wide communistic state under Jewish domination” would be “directly thwarted and hindered by this new ideal [Zionism].... The struggle which is now beginning between the Zionist and Bolshevik Jews is little less than a struggle for the soul of the Jewish people.”[8]

•**Colonial “State-in-Waiting.”** It was in this context that the Histadrut was founded in 1920. Advertising itself as a trade union, but actually a Jewish “state-in-waiting,” it stood in for a weak Jewish bourgeoisie[9] by “controlling the mainstream of Zionist colonization efforts, economic production and marketing, labor employment and defense (the Haganah).”[10] In 1930, the Histadrut founded the Mapai, which later became the Israeli Labor Party.

As a result, “support for the Histadrut represented more than assisting a fellow labor movement in another country. It explicitly translated into open support for the colonizing efforts of Jewish laborers in Palestine.”[11] Indeed, “the central thrust of Zionist discourse and practice, especially of the increasingly influential Labor Zionist movement, was to deny the existence of a distinct Palestinian Arab people with a legitimate claim to the country.”[12]

•**Colonial Color Bar.** Over the next three decades, this premise would consistently subordinate, and ultimately destroy, early efforts by groups of Palestinian and Jewish workers for joint trade unionism based on true equality.[13]

The Histadrut’s role was immediately apparent. In 1921, Labor Zionist leader Yitzhak Ben-Tzvi declared that Palestinian Arabs were not oppressed by British colonialism, and actually benefited from Jewish immigration and settlement. Arab nationalism, he claimed, had no popular roots, but was foisted on ignorant Palestinians by reactionary Arab landlords and “outside agitators”—including Jewish communists.[14]

Another Histadrut leader was David Ben-Gurion, who during the Nakba of 1947/48 would implement the systematic ethnic cleansing of a majority of Palestine’s indigenous population, and who subsequently become Israel’s first prime minister.

Ben-Gurion called for the Histadrut to organize Arab workers into separate unions, so that, “the conscious and cultured Jewish worker, whose historic mission is the building of a free community of labor in Eretz Yisra’el” could “educate the Arab worker to live an orderly and cooperative life of labor, discipline, and mutual responsibility.”[15]

In 1927, Haim Arlosoroff, another leading Labor Zionist, argued that Zionism should emulate South Africa’s color bar, which excluded Black workers from skilled, unionized, employment.[16] In 1932, to control the unionization of Arab workers, the Histadrut set up the Palestine Labor League (PLL).[17]

•**“Conquest of Land and Labor.”** But the primary Labor Zionist focus was the dual “conquest of land” and “conquest of labor” campaigns to evict Arab peasants from the land and to boycott Arab labor and products.[18]

Almost immediately, these Histadrut campaigns generated Arab working class resistance. In 1925, railway workers in Haifa established the Palestinian Arab Workers’ Society (PAWS). In 1934, Palestinian dockworkers in Jaffa founded the Arab Workers’ Society (AWS).[19]

In 1936, British facilitation of Zionist settlement and land seizure provoked a six-month Palestinian general strike, one of the longest ever held anywhere. The Histadrut took the opportunity to supply Jewish labor to replace striking Palestinian railway and port workers.[20]

This, in turn, sparked an armed anti-colonial revolt, to which the British responded with its largest military campaign of the interwar years, complete with aerial and artillery bombardment of Arab villages. When even this was not enough, the British armed the Labor Zionist Haganah and other Jewish militias to terrorize the Arab population. The revolt was crushed in 1939, but only after 20,000 Palestinian casualties and many others jailed or deported.[21]

•**Plans for Ethnic Cleansing.** This tenacious Palestinian resistance convinced Histadrut leaders to launch a more ambitious campaign to fulfill the goal of making Palestine “a land without a people.” As Yosef Weitz, director of Jewish National Fund’s Land Department, explained in 1940:

“Among ourselves, it must be clear that there is no place in the country for both peoples together.... [T]here is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries. Transfer all of them, not one village or tribe should remain.”[22]

Israeli historian Benny Morris later observed that Ben-Gurion “understood that there could be no Jewish state with a large and hostile Arab minority in its midst.”[23]

•**Collaboration with the Nazis.** To achieve this demographic balance, Labor Zionists needed to simultaneously increase the supply of Jewish settlers. Toward that end, they negotiated the “Ha’avara” of August 25, 1933,[24] a transfer agreement under which the Nazis permitted wealthy Jews to emigrate from Germany, along with their capital, to Palestine. In exchange, Labor Zionists actively sabotaged an international boycott and other anti-Nazi resistance.[25]

Seeking further Nazi support for the colonization of Palestine, Labor Zionists in October 1937 hosted SS representative Adolf Eichmann, who later was in charge of getting the Jews to concentration and extermination camps, at a kibbutz in Palestine; offered to spy for the Nazis; and—even after Kristallnacht in 1938—adamantly sought to prevent German Jewish refugees from finding refuge in countries other than Palestine.[26]

As late as 1944, Labor Zionist Reszo Kasztner agreed with Eichmann to save prominent Zionists, in exchange for which Zionists concealed from 750,000 Hungarian Jews their imminent deportation to Auschwitz.[27]

Although largely unknown today, this Zionist-Nazi collaboration was no secret at the time. Ben-Gurion openly explained in 1938:

"If I knew that it would be possible to save all the children in Germany by bringing them over to England, and only half of them by transporting them to Eretz Yisrael [Palestine], then I would opt for the second alternative. For we must weigh not only the life of these children, but also the history of the People of Israel." [28]

•**Overseeing the Nakba.** By the 1940s, the Histadrut leadership dominated the international Zionist movement, and was directly responsible for winning both U.S. and Soviet support for partition and recognition of a "Jewish state." [29] During the resulting Nakba of 1947-1948, it carried out Plan Dalet, a set of detailed dossiers with which it terrorized and eliminated at least eighty percent of the indigenous Palestinian population. [30]

Directed by Ben-Gurion, [31] this cleansing was largely camouflaged by the Histadrut's "progressive" reputation and Soviet backing. As Jonathan Cook explains:

"In physically expelling the Palestinian population, Ben-Gurion responded to the political opportunities of the day and recalibrated the Labor Zionism of Herzl. In particular, he achieved the goal of displacement desired by Herzl while also largely persuading the world through a campaign of propaganda that the exodus of the refugees was mostly voluntary." [32]

•**The Histadrut State.** The Labor Zionist forces who carried out the above events seamlessly took command of the new Israeli state, with Ben-Gurion as its first prime minister. Labor Zionist armies, the Haganah and Palmach, became the new "Israeli Defense Force." [33]

The Histadrut itself was incorporated into the state, in which capacity it has played a key role in continuing—and legitimizing—ethnic cleansing and apartheid against the Palestinians. Although presenting itself to world labor as a trade union, in fact, it dominated through Labor Party governments that ruled Israel from 1948-1977, during which time it also became Israel's second largest employer. [34]

Indeed, the largest growth of Israeli settlements has taken place under Labor Party governments.

•**CIA Front.** In the early 1960s, the Histadrut was a conduit for CIA and Mossad operations in Africa. [35] It later cooperated with the AFL-CIO's AIFLD program and the CIA to undermine rural cooperatives in El Salvador. [36]

•**Partnership with Apartheid South Africa.** The Histadrut had a "near monopoly" over Israeli trade with Apartheid South Africa, [37] and eagerly collaborated its Bantustan policies. [38] Iskoor, a joint South African-Histadrut company, produced tank armor. [39] Companies wholly or partly owned by the Histadrut helped build an electronic wall to obstruct anti-apartheid guerrillas. [40]

•**War on Lebanon and Gaza.** Regardless of which party was in office, the Histadrut has supported each and every Israeli war and occupation.

In 2006, for example, Histadrut general secretary Amir Peretz became Labor Party defense minister, and carried out the brutal 2006 war on Lebanon. [41] As part of the Sharon government, he helped expand West Bank settlements and build the Apartheid Wall—about which the Histadrut has remained silent. [42]

Ehud Barak, another Labor Party defense minister, conducted the infamous 2008/2009 war on Gaza, which killed at least 1400 people, 400 of them children; he retains that position in the explicitly racist Netanyahu regime.

The Histadrut itself endorsed the war on Gaza, stating that it "recognizes the urgent need for the State of Israel to operate against the command and control centers of the organizational terror network." [43]

•**Mistreatment of Palestinian Workers.** For Palestinians, meanwhile, the Histadrut never been a genuine trade union. Rather, as Jonathan Cook observes:

"Enforcing this segregated employment structure are official public institutions, state monopolies, and the government itself. The most important is the Histadrut, the trade union federation and, peculiarly, also one of the country's biggest employers. In the tradition of 'Hebrew labor,' it has worked relentlessly to exclude the Palestinian minority from a voice in workers' issues over many decades." [44]

•**Workers in the 1948 Areas.** After the Nakba, Palestinian workers who managed to remain in the 1948 areas were subject to military rule until 1966; [45] excluded from supposedly "socialist" Kibbutzes; ineligible (until 1959) for Histadrut membership; [46] and subject to a lower wage tier engineered by the Histadrut. [47]

In 1976, the Histadrut collaborated with employers to take reprisals against Palestinian workers in Israel who participated in Land Day, when the Labor Zionist government shot and killed six Palestinian strikers. [48]

A 1989 report found that Histadrut-owned companies had the worst record of systematically excluding Palestinian workers. [49] Today, reports Yonatan Pre-minger, "[m]igrant workers are legally subject to the collective agreements negotiated by the Histadrut, but law enforcement is minimal, and the state's representatives almost invariably take the employers' side in any dispute." [50]

The Histadrut has endorsed the Wisconsin Plan in Nazareth, launched in August 2005, which transferred the treatment of 17,000 workers and unemployed to profit-making Israeli and foreign companies. [51]

Economists recently reported that, since 1970, Israel had defrauded Palestinian workers of \$2 billion in welfare benefits. Most of these deductions were used to fund Israeli colonies in the OPT, while others were paid to the Histadrut—from which the workers were excluded. Despite promises of restitution, the Histadrut has retained more than 80 percent (\$30 million) of these funds. [52]

Moreover, in 1990, the Histadrut signed off on construction industry demands that Palestinian workers pay an additional two percent tax to train Jewish immigrants, most of them from the former Soviet Union, thereby forcing them to "subsidise the training of workers meant to replace them." Even worse, some of these funds were diverted to buy portable stoves for Israeli troops who attacked Gaza in 2008/2009. [53]

•**The 1967 Occupied Palestinian Territories.** Even worse is the Histadrut's treatment of Palestinian workers in the OPT. Following the Labor government's 1967 war, it played a central role in cementing the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza. As Dani Ben Simhon observes:

"Instead of acting like a labor union in the workers' defense, the Histadrut accepted the army's criteria for distributing work permits. The availability of Palestinians assured profits to its own manufacturing and agricultural concerns, while as a labor union it could pocket Palestinian payments to its pension funds, the health fund, and its administrative apparatus." [54]

In 1968, the Histadrut reaffirmed its role of instilling Labor Zionism throughout the population. [55] In the 1970s, it collaborated in the widespread repression, interrogation and torture of Palestinian labor activists, and "used its prestige abroad to keep the Palestinian unions from gaining international recognition." [56] In June 2001, Histadrut Chair Amir Peretz condemned a special ILO meeting on "The Situation of Workers in the Occupied Arab Territories." [57]

Today, some 50,000 Palestinian workers receiving low pay for hazardous work in "industrial zones" attached to Israeli colonies in the West Bank must pay dues to the Histadrut, in they cannot be members, and which does not represent them. [58]

It also refuses to pay disability and pension payments due to workers in Gaza. [59]

In all, according to South Africa's Democracy and Governance Programme Middle East Project of the Human Rights Research Council:

"Palestinian trade unions exist but are not recognised by the Israeli government or by the Histadrut (the main Israeli trade union) and cannot effectively represent Palestinians working for Israeli employers and businesses. Although these workers are required to pay dues to the Histadrut, it does not represent their interests and concerns, and Palestinians have no voice in formulating Histadrut policies. Palestinian unions are also prohibited from functioning in Israeli settlements in the OPT where Palestinians work in construction and other sectors." [60]

•**Sabotaging Trade Union BDS.** Abroad, notwithstanding this shameful record, the Histadrut has masqueraded as a progressive trade union body to deny the existence of Israeli apartheid and sabotage attempts to end it.

On June 1, 2007, Histadrut Chairman Ofer Eini attacked the University and College Union (UCU) in the UK, for having adopted a Boycott, Divestment and Sanction (BDS) resolution. According to Eini, "[d]espite the end of the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip, the Palestinians have decided to continue the path of bloodshed and violence." [61]

In November 2007, Irish Confederation of Trade Unions delegates reported that the Histadrut, along with Israeli business and government, had falsely denied "the conditions being endured by Palestinians under armed occupation," the pervasive "discrimination against Arabs and Palestinians" in the 1948 areas, and the PGFTU's support for BDS. [62]

In February 2009, when South African dockers responded to the Gaza massacres by refusing to handle Israeli cargo, the Histadrut disingenuously declared: "It's unacceptable that trades unions should intervene in a political matter, especially when those Israeli businesses suffering from the boycott employ Palestinian workers too." [63]

In June 2009, it secured support of from the German trade union federation DGB for "TULIP," whose express purpose is to derail growing international trade union support for BDS. [64] Yet, when the Turkish government subsequently criticized the Gaza war, the Histadrut retaliated with a boycott of Turkey by vacationing Israeli union members. [65]

In August 2009, a Scottish TUC delegation to Palestine reported: "At no time did Histadrut acknowledge that the West Bank is occupied." [66] In 2009, as part of their endorsement of BDS, the Scottish [67] and British [68] TUCs have specifically vowed to review their relationship with the Histadrut.

In late 2009, the Reut Institute, a leading Zionist think-tank, urged the Histadrut to step up its opposition to growing international trade union support for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel. [69]

UNION LABOR DONATED March 31, 2016

Ma'an News Agency

Palestinian teachers' strike marks major rift between public and PA

MARCH 11, 2016 9:54 A.M. (UPDATED: MARCH 13, 2016 11:40 A.M.)

By: Emily Mulder

BETHLEHEM (Ma'an) — Now entering its fourth week, a strike launched by Palestinian teachers has morphed into a major crisis for the Palestinian Authority as frustrations towards the political body continue to mount.

The number of Palestinian teachers on strike has risen to at least 35,000, leaving over one million Palestinian students in the occupied West Bank out of school.

Teachers have slammed the PA's failure to deliver on promises made following a 2013 strike, and head of the PLO teachers' union Ahmad Suhweil submitted his resignation by popular demand as teachers called for new representation in negotiations.

The PA has said it is legally bound to negotiate solely with the union, and criticisms initially made by teachers in February have since mushroomed in reaction to the PA's harsh response to strikers, with some informally calling for Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah's resignation.

While Hamdallah said this week that "people have the right to express their opinion" as part of the democratic process, the PM threatened administrative and legal procedures against teachers if they did not resume work, and PA security forces have prevented teachers from demonstrating.

Rights organizations have denounced the PA and security forces for their efforts to prevent strikers from protesting, as well as for its detention of teachers.

The strike and subsequent fallout marks one of the largest challenges to the PA in recent years, and is exposing longstanding internal rifts between the PA and the public.

'We only want to live in dignity'

Ayed al-Azzeh, a resident of the Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem, has taught in Palestinian schools for 10 years and now teaches mathematics in the Bedouin community of Raween. He joined the strike when it kicked off in February.

Al-Azzeh told Ma'an that the primary goal of teachers on strike was to receive wages that didn't force them into poverty.

"We are not looking for a life of luxury, we only want to live in dignity," al-Azzeh said.

Al-Azzeh said teachers have shown mounting dissatisfaction with the structure of the teachers' union



itself, which he said has failed to address their demands with the PA.

Teachers have appointed leaders in each occupied West Bank district to act as new representatives, but PA officials have refused to negotiate with these representatives on legal grounds.

PA Minister of Education Sabri Saidam did not respond to a request for comment on the issue.

While official statements by PM Hamdallah and other PA leaders have extended gratitude towards teachers for their role in Palestinian society, al-Azzeh said the political body has neglected teachers' demand for rights.

This perceived neglect has meanwhile been worsened by the use of Palestinian security forces to stifle the strike.

Palestinian security forces stand in front of the Palestinian cabinet headquarters in Ramallah in anticipation of a teacher protest. (MaanImages)

PA security forces stop strikers

A Ramallah resident who wished to remain anonymous for security reasons told Ma'an he believed PA leadership misstepped from day one.

"From the beginning, when over 4,000 teachers came on the first Monday of the strike to the prime minister's office, he refused to talk to them. Why?" the resident asked. "Then you [Hamdallah] put security forces in the face of the teachers, how can you do this?"

When on Feb. 23, 20,000 were expected to turn out for a protest in the center of Ramallah city, outrage set in after strikers were met with armed members of the Palestinian security forces.

PA checkpoints were set up at the entrances to towns and cities across the occupied West Bank prior to demonstrations which forced teachers attempting to reach the protests in private vehicles to turn around or be held for questioning.

Palestinian rights organization Al-Haq told Ma'an they have been collecting affidavits from Palestinian teachers who have been detained or mistreated by PA forces, in addition to documenting closures preceding demonstrations.

Ibrahim Mohammed Azam Asafrah, who has taught history for some 18 years in the Hebron area, told Al-Haq he was taken from his home in the middle of the night by Palestinian security forces two days after he joined the strike.

Asafrah said the forces searched his home and confiscated his computer without a warrant before detaining him overnight in a nearby jail, where he was interrogated by a number of officers on his involvement in the strike.

Other testimonies gathered by Al-Haq reported similar accounts of detention, searches without warrant, and prevention of movement throughout the occupied West Bank.

Double-edged sword

When asked why it appeared that the PA has taken active steps to prevent teachers from organizing and carrying out the strike, al-Azzeh told Ma'an: "I think it's fear. Teachers are like a marker for the public satisfaction with the performance of the government."

"The worry for them [the PA] is the mounting anger and frustration with the performance of the PA. Since this current 'uprising,' the PA has been silent, and has not publicly said that Palestinians have a right to defend themselves against the Israeli occupation."

He went on: "The government has detached itself from the people...and this intensifies the already existing feelings of frustrations among teachers."

While criticism of the PA has risen since violence increased in the occupied Palestinian territory in October, such remarks have taken form only on social media or in the private sphere, and have yet to find footing in public discourse.

For Palestinians, criticizing the PA is holding a double-edged sword, and corruption within the governing body is self-enforced. For many — the PA is the largest employer in the occupied West Bank — such criticism means losing employment or facing economic repercussions, consequences most choose

not to risk amid an economy crushed by the ongoing Israeli occupation.

Al-Azzeh told Ma'an he thinks mounting frustration with PA performance since violence increased six months ago has contributed to the snowballing growth of support for the teachers' strike.

An 'opportunity' to listen to the public

When asked about rising public criticism of PA security forces in general, PA security spokesman Adnan Dmeiri told Ma'an late last month: "In every country in the world, people in that country love to say 'F*** the police.'"

Dmeiri said above all, the main challenge facing the PA was the Israeli occupation, which hinders the PA and its security forces from carrying out their responsibilities as the governing body.

Al-Azzeh agreed that the decades-long Israeli military occupation and the creation of the PA in efforts to end the conflict is a major factor in determining the limited reach of the PA. Al-Azzeh also said this reasoning only goes so far, and is oft-used by the PA to sidestep accountability for mis-governance that takes place.

"They [PA] say: 'We don't have enough resources, we are under occupation.' If living under occupation is a high price to pay, we should all pay that price equally, not only the teachers," al-Azzeh told Ma'an, alluding to the large percentage of the PA budget allocated to the security sector.

Al-Azzeh also pointed to statements made by PA officials who he said were trying end the strike by "scaring people into thinking the teachers' strike is a coup against the government," spurred on by Hamas or rival Fatah leaders vouching to take over Mahmoud Abbas' presidency.

Al-Azzeh sees the strike as an opportunity for the PA to put politics aside and to win back respect from the Palestinian public.

"If Hamdallah came out from his ministry office onto the balcony where we were protesting, and said 'Okay, can anyone representing you come and give your demands, let's sit and talk,' this would break the tension."

"They've neglected us. We want our dignity. Our dignity is not equal to 20 or 100 or 1,000 shekels. We just need to be addressed. To be told 'we value you' as having a significant role and responsibility in society, and 'we want to listen to your demands,' this would solve things."



UAW 2865 Letter of Solidarity with Teachers in Palestine

March 14, 2016

Whereas we believe that all teachers deserve a living wage and merit pay increases, as well as to have a democratic union whose leadership is elected by its members, and

Whereas teachers' labor has been historically undervalued and current global trends around the privatization of education have only further devalued this labor, and whereas the UAW 2865 is committed to the defense of quality public education in the United States but also all over the world, and

Whereas the BDS Caucus of UAW 2865 affirms and stands in solidarity with the rights and wellbeing of Palestinian workers, including Palestinian teachers, and

Whereas thousands of Palestinian teachers have entered their 4th week of a heroic and exemplary strike initiated on February 10th 2016, with the demands of a) Granting an occupational allowance of 2.5%; b) Granting a 5% increase of wages, which should be implemented retroactively from 1/1/2014 until 31/12/2015; c) Enabling teachers to progress on the salary scale as is the case for other categories of governmental workers; d) Paying a cost of living allowance for 2014 and 2015; and e) the Organization of free and democratic elections in the Palestinian Teachers' Union and accountable leadership that represents rank-and file interests, and

Whereas the striking teachers, which provide primary and secondary instruction to 700,000 students in the West Bank, have managed to organize an overwhelming support of students, principals, parents and other fellow workers for their strike and demands, and

Whereas the crucial frontline educational work of these primary and secondary teachers is grossly undervalued, given that their demands for a living wage go ignored while other unions representing university teachers, engineers, and doctors have all won pay increases, and

Whereas the Palestinian Authority is interrupting and obstructing the right to strike in multiple ways and has begun to attack the striking teachers as "anti-government agents," thereby intensifying repression for Palestinian teachers who already are denied basic rights and freedom because of Israeli occupation, and

Whereas Palestinian labor unions, including teachers, have initiated calls for international labor solidarity against Israel's historic and ongoing colonial dispossession and occupation of all Palestinians, most recently witnessed during the July 2014 massacre in Gaza;

Let it be resolved that, we, UAW Local 2865, the UC Student-Workers Union representing 14,000 teaching assistants, readers and tutors of 9 campuses of the University of California in the United States, stand in full solidarity with the striking teachers until their demands are met, and demand the Palestinian Authority to respect labor rights and accept all the demands of the union.

Finally, we recognize that demands of dignity through social justice reforms can only be achieved so long as all Palestinians attain universal freedom including an end to occupation, dispossession and life as second-class citizens

In Solidarity,

UAW 2865 Joint Council

