



Mondoweiss

News & Opinion About Palestine, Israel & the United States

ACTIVISM

UAW members push their union to divest from Israeli genocide

Rank-and-file members of the UAW are demanding that union leadership immediately divest from Israel Bonds.

BY [DAWNYA FERDINANDSEN](#) - NOVEMBER 4, 2024 - 0



UAW PRESIDENT SHAWN FAIN POSES FOR A PHOTO WITH MEMBERS OF UAWL4P SHORTLY AFTER SAYING HE WILL VOTE FOR DIVESTMENT, OCTOBER 7, 2024.

On the morning of October 7, 2024, members of the International Executive Board (IEB) of the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) found their inboxes flooded with hundreds of emails from union members around the country. The messages all demanded the same thing: that the UAW immediately divest from a relentless U.S.-backed Israeli genocide responsible for the death of an [estimated 186,000 Palestinians in Gaza](#).

The UAW—which represents about 370,000 auto, academic, legal, and weapons industry workers—maintains somewhere between \$400,000 and \$1,000,000 in investments in [Israel Bonds](#), which directly fund the ongoing and spreading violence in occupied Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen, and beyond. The company’s own website highlights “the crucial role of Israel Bonds during this time of conflict and war.”

Echoing demands by Arab, Black, and other UAW members in [1973](#), UAW members today are demanding to know why the IEB is investing their dues money to support an expanding U.S.-backed genocide.

The same day as the mass email campaign, members of UAW Labor for Palestine, a rank-and-file led initiative building solidarity with Palestinian workers as part of the [Labor for Palestine National Network](#), confronted UAW President Shawn Fain at Black Lake Lodge, the union's conference retreat center. Referencing a failed decision this past summer wherein the IEB voted against divesting from its Israel Bond holdings, union members asked Fain, "The next time the UAW IEB holds a vote to divest, will you vote 'Yes'?" Fain assured rank-and-file members that he in fact will vote for divestment.

Days later, on October 13, Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD), the reform caucus whose members currently hold a majority of the seats on the IEB, voted overwhelmingly in its first ever convention to endorse rank-and-file UAW members' [resolution](#) calling for the IEB to divest from Israel Bonds. This critical step reveals broad support for divestment from across the UAW.

The [UAWD platform](#) states, "UAWD supports the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, called for by Palestinian unions and workers, and seeks to end all UAW investments in corporations perpetuating human rights violations." As the majority of the UAW's IEB are members of UAWD, rank-and-file members believe they must be held accountable to this position and vote in favor of immediate divestment.

The mushrooming divestment movement began to swell on college campuses last spring and is now taking root once again within the labor movement. Like the parallel student movement calling on higher education institutions to divest from Israeli genocide and apartheid, UAW members argue that the labor movement must do no less. The demand is national in scope with proponents across every unionized sector in the UAW.

The urgency of the situation is increasingly compelling U.S. union members to answer the Palestinian Trade Union [call](#) to end all complicity and stop arming Israel. Under

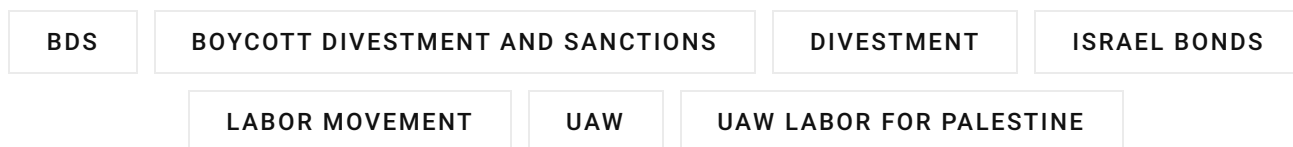
growing rank-and-file pressure, the UAW has called for a [permanent ceasefire](#) and a [weapons embargo](#) against Israel’s expanding genocide.

However, union leadership must take the next logical step and divest member dues from Israel Bonds. While some IEB members argue that divestment is simply “too expensive,” rank-and-file UAW members refuse to put a price on honoring the Palestinian trade union picket line against genocide.

Such a vote, if passed at the IEB level, would not only be historic, with the UAW becoming the first major U.S. institution of any kind to divest from Israel’s genocide, but it would also be in alignment with the values of a majority of rank-and-file union members from across the country, ranging from manufacturing workers, academic, legal and research workers, and other sectors. Moreover, [polls](#) show that a majority of people in the U.S.—7 out of 10 regardless of political affiliation—oppose Israeli genocide in Palestine. The UAW taking this logical step to divest would send a powerful message to all labor unions and universities that they too can join this movement and divest from genocide now.

Silence and unconscionable fear are the allies of corruption and injustice. We are losing innocent lives every single day in Gaza and beyond. How can we in good conscience continue to contribute to this senseless and horrific violence and destruction? We must stand up, show up, and speak up for our siblings. The UAW must divest from genocide.

UAW Labor for Palestine will continue mobilizing rank-and-file members to demand that the IEB divest immediately. We join the student movement in chanting “Disclose! Divest! We will not stop, we will not rest!”



Related Posts



Thousands of authors and publishers are calling for a boycott of complicit Israeli publishing institutions

OCTOBER 30, 2024



An international civil society movement for Palestine is needed today more than ever

OCTOBER 27, 2024

Please login to comment.

0 COMMENTS

Dawnya Ferdinandsen

Dawnya Ferdinandsen is an assembly-line worker at a General Motors factory in Toledo, OH and a rank-and-file member of UAW Local 14. She serves as the vice president of Pride At Work's Ohio chapter as an activist who advocates equity and justice for all workers.

Latest Articles



Is Israel using depleted uranium to bomb Lebanon?

NOVEMBER 4, 2024



Israel's Genocide Day 395: Palestinians say Israel is using hunger as a weapon of war as it blocks 3,800 aid trucks from entering Gaza

NOVEMBER 4, 2024



Fake document scandal reveals Israeli efforts to undermine ceasefire talks

NOVEMBER 4, 2024