



April 24, 2008

## CUPW delegates take firm stand to support Palestinian workers

The majority of delegates at CUPW's national convention voted to support a resolution calling for a boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel last week. CUPW is the first national union in North America to take this stance. The resolution also called on CUPW to "actively work towards an end to the suicide bombings, military assaults and other acts of violence that take the lives of innocent people and demand that the Israeli-West Bank barrier be immediately torn down".

### What else does the resolution say?

The resolution demands that the Israeli government immediately withdraw from the occupied territories in accordance with United Nations resolution 242. CUPW will also call on the Canadian government to increase humanitarian aid to Palestinians.

The resolution commits CUPW to work with Palestinian solidarity and human rights organizations in developing an education campaign about the apartheid nature of the state of Israel and Canada's political and economic support for these practices.

CUPW resolution 338/339 calls for the boycott, divestment and sanctions to continue until the Israeli government:

- Recognizes the right of Palestinian people to self-determination; and
- Fully complies with international law including the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties.

### What are the effects of the occupation of Palestine?

There are around 235 Israeli settlements in the West Bank in violation of international law and in defiance of UN resolutions. Checkpoints, roadblocks, military bases, and by-pass roads that connect illegal settlements are found throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In 2003, the Israeli government began building a 700 km long and six-metre-high Separation Wall inside the West Bank. More than 10 % of Palestinian land will lie behind the wall. The International Court of Justice, the world's highest court, ruled the wall illegal in 2004.

The Israeli occupation of Palestine has had a serious impact on workers. Unemployment has risen from 5% before 1993 to around 50% in 2006, leaving approximately 350,000 workers unemployed.

Approximately 50% of families in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are living under the poverty line of \$2 per day.

### Why does CUPW support a boycott, divestment and sanctions?

Over 170 Palestinian organizations - including the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions - issued a call in July 2005 for a global campaign of boycott and divestment against Israel. These organizations are proposing a non-violent tactic similar to that used by the African National Congress in their struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

This campaign means unions, like CUPW, will ensure contracts and business do not go to Israeli companies and companies that financially support Israel. CUPW will lobby other unions to do the same.

### Have other unions endorsed boycott, divestment and sanctions?

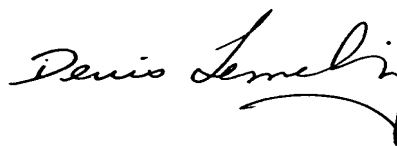
A number of unions outside Palestine have adopted resolutions endorsing the boycott, divestment, and sanctions campaign including:

- Unison – British Public Sector Union,
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU),
- Norwegian Electrician and IT Workers Union,
- British University and College Union, and
- CUPE Ontario Division.

Several Jewish organizations including Not in Our Name have also endorsed this call.

It is time to push for a fair and just settlement in Palestine. We will be sending out more information about this resolution. Please keep an open mind and engage in respectful debate around these issues.

Solidarity,



Denis Lemelin  
National President

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