

# Israel and Jewish supporters of CUPE Ontario Resolution 50

## Israeli Seekers of Peace and Justice

[July 4, 2006 01:25 PM]

Israeli letter of support for CUPE

Wednesday, 21 June 2006, 8:10 pm

Press Release: The Other Israel

Dear Friends,

On May 27, 2006 CUPE Ontario (Ontario's largest Canadian labor union) decided to "Support the international campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law, including the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194."

This followed in the wake of other CUPE Ontario actions in recent years, as, for instance, calling for the end of Israeli military action and withdrawal from the occupied territories. The executive of the Canadian Labour Congress, in a 2002 resolution, compared Palestinians in the occupied territories to blacks living under apartheid rule in South Africa.

Sid Ryan, the Canadian Union of Public Employees' Ontario president, said 896 members voted unanimously at its convention in Ottawa on Saturday, to support the campaign, and declared that the boycott "is not an attack on Jewish people. It's (an objection to) the State of Israel's policies on Palestinians."

Ryan's statement notwithstanding, CUPE is being accused of anti-Semitism

and massively attacked by Jewish and other groups.

Israeli support for CUPE Ontario's act can aid the union to ward off the attacks and encourage the National union to adopt the Ontario policy. The following petition expresses Israeli support for CUPE's act and also furnishes the union with concrete material to counter condemnations of anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism.

For the present we ask individual Israelis to sign the petition. Organizations are also welcome, and will be added later. Please inform me if your organization is willing to sign.

---

### **Letter of support from Israelis to CUPE**

As Israelis we express our support of the CUPE boycott of Israel, honor your courageous initiative, and fervently hope that it will set an example for many others to follow.

We assure CUPE that it is no more anti-Semitic to criticize and oppose Israeli government policies than it was anti-American to oppose the Vietnam war or is anti-Canadian to oppose the present war in Iraq. It is never anti-Semitic to oppose injustice, destruction, gross inequity, and inequality. We also assure CUPE that Israel, having the 4th most powerful military in the world, is in no existential danger.

As citizens devoted to the promotion of peace and democracy in the region, we denounce the international community's continued economic investments in our country, which directly and indirectly support Israel's daily violations of international law and accelerated colonization of the occupied territories. We fear the potentially irreversible damage created by Israeli occupation, by Israel's unilateral plans, and by the international community's impotence in ending Israel's occupation. We realize that Israel's Occupation of Palestinians and their lands will very likely not end without international sanctions.

Israelis, as well as Palestinians, will benefit from ending the Occupation. Symmetry does not exist between occupier and occupied, oppressor and oppressed. Yet Israelis suffer from loss of

life, increase in militarism, and a steady devaluation of human life. This latter is particularly evident from the socio-economic sphere and the affliction of post-traumatic distress.

Successive Israeli governments have spent enormous amounts of money on expansion, to the detriment of social benefits for the Israeli population. While it is true that had there been no Occupation, Israeli governments might not have spent the money on social benefits, the fact that expansion continues apace reveals Israel's intention to rid the West Bank of as many Palestinians as possible and to prevent the emergence of a Palestinian state.

To this end, money is spent on maintaining a large military presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, on erecting the apartheid wall at 4 million dollars a mile, with 400 miles planned (twice the length had it been built on the 'green line'), and constructing 6,000 more units in highly subsidized settlements (this past year alone, some 12,000 new settlers moved into the West Bank, 4,000 more than were evicted from the Gaza Strip). Much money goes also for constructing super-highways for Israelis-only in the Occupied Territories, as well as for new lookout towers (that can double as sniper towers), and checkpoints galore (mainly separating Palestinian communities).

While all this is taking place at considerable economic cost, poverty in Israel has increased sharply. Israel now has the dubious notoriety of having the worst poverty level in the Western world. Over ¼ of Israelis now live under the poverty line. 1 of every 3 children goes to bed hungry. And every 4th elderly person is poor. No wonder, then, that Israel's elderly are "Suicidal," as Yedioth Ahronot revealed in a report showing that over 50 percent of suicides in Israel every year are committed by people aged 65 and over. There are additional worrying trends. Not only are the few rich getting richer and the numerous poor getting poorer, but also many in the middle class who have jobs are sliding into poverty due to low wages.

One result of the increased poverty is that now 25% of Israelis forego medical care because they cannot afford it. 75% of the poor cannot afford medication. But of all the sad statistics, one of the more shocking is that 40% of Holocaust survivors—170,000 aged individuals--now live in desperate straits. It is shameful that of all places in the world, in Israel, Holocaust survivors live in dire poverty and misery.

The worsening economic conditions contribute, in turn, to escalation of violence. Thus, for instance, one of every five elderly Israelis is subject to abuse, mainly by spouses or children. And the Israeli police recorded a 24% increase in violence among youth the first months of 2006.

A direct cost of Occupation and a threat to Israel's welfare is post-traumatic stress, which can result in addiction to drugs and alcohol, and can also contribute to violence.

A counselor at a rehabilitation center terms the malady "a ticking bomb," Help, he relates, is unavailable for many soldiers who have gone "into terrible distress of drugs, beatings, violence, impatience, ... soldiers who clashed with a civilian population, and when they were discharged understood that they had been wrong." Hundreds, he reveals, "are roaming about with the feeling that there is no point to living, and the path to suicide and drugs is very easy. We are afraid that former soldiers will commit criminal acts as a result of their distress."

On the Palestinian end of the Occupation, the situation is far worse both economically and security-wise. For Palestinians, Occupation means a loudspeaker in the middle of the night ordering residents out of their homes, regardless of winter or summer, hot or cold, wet or dry. Occupation means long waits at checkpoints, even in emergencies. Occupation means that one needs permits to go to one's fields, permits that are often not given, and even when given, the Palestinian farmer often finds that the military gates that control accessing his fields are closed and fail to open, and, for that matter, fail to open also for children on their way to school. Occupation means land theft and the uprooting of olive trees, some of which are 100s of years old, all of which are means of sustenance, some now the only means. Occupation means curfews, during which sick people can and do die. Occupation means that one's home can turn into rubble in minutes, as bulldozers or explosives demolish it, along with its furnishings, toys, family photograph albums, computers, and all else. Occupation means imprisonment. In January 2006 as many as 9,000 Palestinians were incarcerated in Israeli facilities. Israeli Occupation means apartheid. Four instances of this are water, roads, home construction, and checkpoints. Of 960 million cubic meters of water that is generated in the West Bank, Palestinians are allowed to use only one-tenth of it. The rest goes to Israelis. On average, a Palestinian citizen in the West Bank is allowed to use no more than 36 cubic meters of water per year, while Israeli settlers in the West Bank can use up to 2,400 cubic meters. Palestinians are not allowed to use 'settler' roads, which are highly superior to Palestinian ones in the Occupied territories, are not allowed to build houses or even to add rooms, while Jewish settlement building continues uninhibited. Checkpoints have also recently become separated. Israelis, tourists, and Jews from abroad can go from the Territories to Israel via many checkpoints, but Palestinians having permits are allowed to enter Israel through but 11 of them, forcing Palestinians fortunate enough to have a permit to enter Israel to travel far out of the way on their way to work or to medical care.

For the above reasons, we Israeli Seekers of Peace and Justice express our sincere gratitude to CUPE's boycott initiative. Boycott and divestment are non-violent means of pressuring governments to change their policies-- means now sorely needed to compel the Israeli government to end its occupation of Palestinians and their lands.

For signatures:

*Click below to see the signatories to the Letter of support from Israelis to CUPE (last update: July 3, 2006, 19.15)*

**[http://www.geocities.com/liveletlive2001/signatories\\_so\\_far.htm](http://www.geocities.com/liveletlive2001/signatories_so_far.htm)**

The letter appears also at:

**[http://www.geocities.com/liveletlive2001/letter\\_to\\_CUPE.htm](http://www.geocities.com/liveletlive2001/letter_to_CUPE.htm)**

Hebrew can be read at:

**[http://www.geocities.com/liveletlive2001/hebrew\\_translation.htm](http://www.geocities.com/liveletlive2001/hebrew_translation.htm)**



## **National Canadian Jewish Organization Supports CUPE Ontario and Resolution 50**

[June 15, 2006 02:04 PM]

Alliance of Concerned Jewish Canadians

The Alliance of Concerned Jewish Canadians welcomes the resolution passed May 27 by the Ontario branch of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) as a sincere attempt to bring peaceful means to bear on the increasingly intolerable and explosive situation between Israel and the Palestinians.

We regret to say that Israel's refusal to abide by international humanitarian law standards for the treatment of Palestinians over 39 years of occupation has brought considerable shame on the Jewish people and isolation to Israel. The policies of the current government of Israel have in no way mitigated the situation, and in some senses have exacerbated it.

We think it perfectly appropriate for a Canadian union to seek some means of counteracting the Canadian government's reckless support for Israeli government intransigence -- for example, by trying to destabilize the elected government of the Palestinian authority. This is the opposite of Canada's legal obligations under both international and Canadian law, which require it to oppose such practices as targeted assassinations, land annexation, and the building of settlements and a "security" wall on Palestinian land.

We disagree with the denunciation of the CUPE resolution by the Israeli Ambassador and the Canadian Jewish Congress. We find unacceptable this continued demonization of legitimate criticism and, above all, of the advocacy of peaceful and lawful means for a just resolution to a tragic situation that should not be tolerated by the international community.

The Alliance of Concerned Jewish Canadians is a coalition founded this year of Jewish anti-occupation committees from various Canadian cities across

the country, together with individual academics and activists. As a voice of Jewish dissident opinion the 114 members of the ACJC represent the concerns of a majority of Jewish Canadians who have not had their views carried by the leading bodies of the Jewish community on the lack of a peaceful resolution in the Israel Palestinian conflict. We invite those interested in the media, the Jewish community and the general public who are interested in further communication to contact the ACJC at the address **[ACJC2006@yahoo.ca](mailto:ACJC2006@yahoo.ca)** .



**Letter from Bruce Katz, Jewish co-president of Palestinian and Jewish Unity(PAJU) Montreal**

[June 13, 2006 03:27 PM]

Dear Sid Ryan,

My name is Bruce Katz. I am the Jewish co-president of Palestinian and Jewish Unity(PAJU) here in Montreal. I wish to congratulate you and CUPE Ontario for your valiant support for the cause of Palestinian human rights in supporting a universal boycott and divestment against the apartheid regime in Israel. Four members of PAJU have just returned from a visit to the Occupied territories and may I tell you that the details of the Occupation paint a picture of a systematic campaign of starvation and ethnic cleansing inflicted upon the Palestinian population.

I hereby pledge to you and CUPE Ontario PAJU's unconditional support for your efforts ( a resolution to that effect was passed at our annual General assembly yesterday) and there will be a proposal made at the Coalition meeting tomorrow evening to support CUPE Ontario.

The battle lines have been drawn and now it is time to put on the armour and defend civil liberties and human rights.

In solidarity,

Bruce Katz

P.S. Please feel free to circulate and/or publish this letter to you.

## **Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions - ICAHD First Israeli Peace Group to Call for Sanctions**

[June 13, 2006 03:01 PM]

Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions

<http://www.icahd.org/eng/>

ICAHD First Israeli Peace Group to Call for Sanctions

Thursday, January 27, 2005

### **SANCTIONS AGAINST THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION: IT'S TIME**

"If apartheid ended, so can the occupation. But the moral force and international pressure will have to be just as determined. The current divestment effort is the first, though certainly not the only, necessary move in that direction." — Bishop Desmond Tutu

You can't have it both ways. You can't complain about violence on the part of the Palestinians and yet reject effective non-violent measures against the Occupation that support their right to self-determination, such as economic sanctions. You can't condemn the victims of Occupation for employing terrorism while, by opposing divestment, thereby sheltering the Occupying Power that employs State Terror. You can't end the isolation and suffering of people living under Occupation while permitting the Occupying Power to carry on its life among the nations unencumbered and normally, by withholding a boycott of its economic and cultural products.

### **The Case For Sanctions**

Sanctions, divestment and boycotts are absolutely legitimate means at everyone's disposal for effectively opposing injustice. As penalties, protest, pressure and resistance to policies that violate fundamental human rights, international law and UN resolutions, they are directed at ending a

situation of intolerable conflict, suffering and moral wrong-doing, not against a particular people or country. When the injustice ends, the sanctions end.

Sanctions, divestment and boycotts represent powerful international responses that arise not only from opposition to an intolerable situation, but also to the complicity of every person in the international civil society that does nothing to resolve it. Because they are rooted in human rights, international law and the will of the international community, and because they are supremely non-violent responses to injustice, sanctions carry a potent moral force. A campaign of sanctions, even if it proves impossible to actually implement them, mobilizes what has been called "the politics of shame." No country wants to be cast as a major violator of human rights. Precisely because it is so difficult to enforce international humanitarian law, holding up its oppressive policy for all to see is often the only way of pressuring it to cease its oppressive policies. The moral and political condemnation conveyed by a campaign for sanctions and the international isolation it threatens sends a powerful, unmistakable message to the perpetrator: cease your unjust policies or suffer the consequences.

Rather than punishment, a campaign of sanctions rests upon the notion of accountability. A country threatened by sanctions stands in violation of the very principles underlying the international community as articulated in human rights covenants, international humanitarian law and UN resolutions. If we go by Amnesty's annual report, virtually every country could be "called on the carpet" for their human rights violations. A campaign of sanctions constitutes an extraordinary step, however. It is invoked when injustice and suffering have become so routinized, so institutionalized, so pervasive, so resistant to normal international diplomacy or pressures, that their very continuation compromises the very validity of the international system and the moral standing of its members, countries, corporations and citizens alike. And it targets the strong parties. The very basis of a call for sanctions is that the targeted country has the ability to end the intolerable situation. A campaign of sanctions embodies a fundamental

principle of the international system: that each country must be held accountable for its policies and actions in light of accepted international norms. The message to all countries must be: Participation in the international community depends upon conformity to the "rules of the game."

Campaigns of sanctions are in essence educative, and that is part of their power. Since the reasons for taking such drastic action must be explicit, weighty and compelling, it forces those calling for sanctions to make a strong case for them. The very act of initiating such a campaign, then, raises awareness not only of the injustice itself, but of the principles it violates, thus strengthening the understanding of the international system itself. And since a campaign of sanctions must be accepted by the international community in order to succeed, it necessitates discussion and dialogue. The considerations behind the demand for sanctions are made transparent, and the targeted country given an opportunity to present its case. The likelihood, then, is that a campaign of sanctions initiated by civil society will express broad-based international consensus if it is to take hold.

Again, at issue is a serious violation of international law and norms. Just as in a case of an individual caught breaking the law, what is in question is what acts have been done, not who the country or the individual is. To paraphrase Jefferson, who spoke of "a government of laws, not men," here we are speaking of "an international system of laws and not only countries that do whatever they want." Thus, when the violations end, the sanctions cease and the country in question rejoins the international community.

### The Case for Sanctions Against Israel

In line with the principles just discussed, economic sanctions against Israel are not invoked against Israel per se, but against Israel until the Occupation ends. With this proviso it is Israel's policy of occupation that is targeted, its status as an Occupying Power, not Israel itself. When South

Africa ended its system of apartheid, sanctions ceased and it fully rejoined the international community. When apartheid ended, so did the boycott of its sports teams, one of the most potent measures employed to impress on the South African government its international isolation. The divestment campaign currently directed against Caterpillar has gained considerable momentum among the international public, effectively educating people about Israel's policy of demolishing Palestinian homes. It has generated calls for other sanctions, such as the Presbyterian Church's initiative to divest from companies profiting from the Occupation. The European Parliament has also called for trade sanctions on Israel given Israel's violation of the "Association Agreements" that prohibit the sale of settlement products under the "Made in Israel" label. The American Congress should take similar steps, since Israel's use of American weapons against civilian populations violates the human rights provisions of the Arms Control Exports Act. The boycott of California grapes in the 1960s played a key role in gaining employment rights for migrant workers. The current boycott of settlement products is intended to express moral opposition to the very presence of settlements while making it economically and politically difficult for Israel to maintain them.

Once it builds momentum, there is probably no more effective means for civil society to effectively pursue justice than a campaign of sanctions. Its power derives less from its economic impact although, with time, that too can be decisive than from the moral outrage that impels it. Sanctions themselves seriously affected the South African economy. Following massive protests inside South Africa and escalating international pressure in 60 British ones withdrew from the country and international lenders cut off Pretoria's access to foreign capital. US Congressional pressure played a crucial role as well, an element totally lacking vis-à-vis the Israel-Palestine conflict, which makes the possibility of actually imposing sanctions on Israel that more difficult. In 1986 Congress with a Republican-controlled Senate passed the

Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act over the Reagan's veto. The Act banned new US investment in South Africa, sales to the police and military and new bank loans.

Although the Act was not strictly enforced by the Reagan and Bush Administrations, although European governments found ways of quietly doing business with Pretoria (while Israel, by the way, was helping South African businesses by-pass sanctions by peddling their products in the US and Europe

under a "Made in Israel" label, as well as by continued involvement in military development in South Africa, including nuclear; Hunter 1986), it did generate a climate moral and economic that made it increasingly difficult to maintain business-as-usual with the apartheid regime. The moral dimension led to a delegitimization of the very apartheid system that left no room for "reform." Carried over to Israel's Occupation, the moral element in a larger political condemnation of Israel's policies could delegitimize the Occupation to the point where only its complete end is acceptable. A campaign of sanctions which highlights the moral unacceptability of Israel's Occupation could have a great impact, eventually impelling governments to impose economic sanctions while creating a climate difficult for businesses (beginning with Caterpillar) to continue function.

It is not only the political unacceptability of Israel's Occupation which makes the call for sanction urgent and obligatory, it is the massive violations of Palestinian human rights, of international law and of numerous UN resolutions that the Occupation entails. If Israel as the Occupying Power is not held accountable for the intolerable situation within its ability, indeed, within its responsibility to end, the entire international system of justice is rendered meaningless and empty. And that is what makes the Occupation an international issue. If Israel succeeds in defying the Fourth Geneva Convention and making its Occupation permanent, if an entire population is literally locked behind walls and its right of self-determination trampled, then the ability of human rights to win out over an international

order founded on power politics and militarism is jeopardized. We all have a stake in ending the Occupation; the implications of occupation actually prevailing and a new apartheid regime emerging are hilling. Since the Palestinians do not have the power to shake off the occupation on their own and the Israelis will not, only international ressure will effectively achieve a just peace. A campaign of sanctions represents one of the most efficacious measures.

### ICAHD'S Position on Sanctions

In principle ICAHD supports the use of sanctions against countries engaged in egregious violations of human rights and international law, including these of moral and economic pressures to end Israel's Occupation. An effective approach to sanctions operates on different levels, however, and requires a number of strategic considerations as to its scope and focus.

First, the generic term "sanctions" actually includes three main types of economic and moral pressure:

(1) Sanctions, defined overall as "penalties, specified or in the form of moral pressure, applied against a country guilty of egregious violations of human rights, international law and UN resolutions, intended to bring that country back into compliance with international norms." Since they must be imposed by governments, regional associations (such as the EU or SEAC) or the UN, the power to actually apply sanctions falls outside of civil society. Nevertheless, governments can be prodded in that direction and the "prodding" itself constitutes an important form of conscious-raising and moral pressure.

(2) Divestment, the withdrawal of investments in companies doing business with the offending country or directly involved in violating human rights and international law;

(3) Boycott, the voluntary refraining from purchasing the products of the offending country or allowing its companies, institutions, representatives or even professionals from participating in international intercourse.

Now sanctions, divestment and boycott can be applied either totally or selectively, the decision involving a strategic mix of efficacy and moral stance. In the most successful case of sanctions, apartheid South Africa, the call was for total sanctions, since the entire system was considered illegitimate. In the case of Israel and the Occupation, it is the Occupation which is considered illegitimate, illegal and immoral, not Israel per se. Although there are those who would argue that a Zionist Israel whose ongoing policy is to displace Palestinians from the country or confine them to reservations is, indeed, as illegitimate as apartheid, this is a position from which it would be difficult to generate mass support. Most advocates of a just peace including the Israeli peace movement, ICAHD included support Israel's right as a recognized member state in the UN to rejoin the international community when the Occupation truly ends and a just peace is attained. Since governments must be induced to impose sanctions, on a purely pragmatic level it is difficult to imagine the international community, with the US at its head, actually agreeing to blanket sanctions.

More do-able would be a campaign for selective sanctions. This could be no less principled and focused than a call for total sanctions, but it targets Israel's Occupation rather than Israel itself. A campaign of selective sanctions can be effective if the choice of targets is strategic: refusing to sell arms to Israel that would be used to perpetuate the Occupation, especially in attacks on civilian populations, for example, or banning Israeli sports teams from competing in international tournaments, especially potent in the South African case. (Israel is currently the European basketball champion and is scheduled to play in the World Cup of football/soccer). These and other selected measures could have a great impact upon Israel, as well as the ability to mobilize international opposition



to the Occupation. Yet, with strong civil society advocacy, they also have a reasonable chance, over time, of being adopted.

ICAHD, then, supports in principle a multi-tiered campaign of sanctions against Israel until the occupation ends. We believe that a selective campaign is most effective and we would incorporate into that campaigns that other organizations have already launched. At this stage, ICAHD supports:

Sanctions: Sales or transfer of arms to Israel conditional upon their use in ways that do not perpetuate the Occupation or violate human rights and international humanitarian law, violations that would end if governments enforced existing laws and regulations regarding the use of weapons in contravention of human rights. Rather than adopting new policies of sanctions, ICAHD calls on the governments of North America, Europe and Asia to stop selling arms to Israel that are used in perpetuating the Occupation in accordance with their own laws prohibiting sales of weapons to countries engaged in serious human rights violations. No new policy of sanctions has to be adopted; the existing laws prohibiting such sales must simply be enforced. In addition existing international law must be applied against Israel for using its weapons illegally: against civilian populations, for example, or in campaigns of extra-judicial executions, to name but two. Sanctions that comprise implementation of international and domestic laws should include a ban on purchasing Israeli weapons as well.

ICAHD is currently investigating Israel's involvement in the world's arms trade, including weapons development, joint production and coordinated sales with other countries. We believe this is a hidden element that underlies the broad support Israeli receives from governments, including those outwardly critical of its occupation policies. We hope that advocates for a just peace will use our information to expose their own country's complicity in policies that perpetuate the Occupation. We also call on activist groups to investigate

and publicize the forms of aid their country and especially the US is giving Israel. Components of that aid that support occupation or settlement, whether military, technological or economic, should be opposed.

We also call on Jewish communities to oppose the use of their donations to Israel to the Jewish National Fund, for instance, or to the United Jewish Appeal, Israel Bonds and other channels of funding in the Occupied Territories.

Trade sanctions on Israel due to its violation of the "Association Agreements" it has signed with the European Union that prohibit the sale of settlement products under the "Made in Israel" label, as well as for violations of their human rights provisions. Divestment in companies that profit from involvement in the Occupation. Here ICAHD supports the initiative of the Presbyterian Church of the US to divest in "multinational corporations that provide products or services to the Israeli police or military to support and maintain the occupation, that have established facilities or operations on occupied land, that provide services or products for the establishment, expansion or maintenance of Israeli settlements, that provide products or services to Israeli or Palestinian organizations/groups that support or facilitate violent acts against innocent civilians, that provide products or services that support or facilitate the construction of the Separation Barrier." We certainly support the campaign against Caterpillar whose bulldozers demolish thousands of Palestinian homes.

We join with the Jewish Voice for Peace in the US whose statement in support of the Presbyterians says in part: