



NEWS RELEASE/COMMUNIQUE

COMMUNITY ACTION ALERT

*** LATE BREAKING NEWS ***

B'nai Brith has just learned that the motion initially scheduled for Thursday, December 14, 2006 has been removed from the OSSTF-D12 meeting agenda. This motion can well reappear on the January agenda. Voicing your opposition and concerns remains key!

This Thursday, December 14, 2006, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation – District 12 had been scheduled to vote on a resolution whether or not to support CUPE-Ontario's boycott of Israel. Clearly, the vocal opposition expressed to date has made a difference.

What can you do to oppose this motion, which does not advance union interests, but instead seeks to delegitimize the Jewish State of Israel, should it be tabled at a future date?

FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE ISSUES.

The proposed resolution is in step with the anti-Israel propaganda that has increasingly been advanced at the union level, often at times not reflecting the point of view of individuals belonging to these unions and in whose name the vicious anti-Israel falsehoods are being spread.

It follows on the Canadian Union of Public Employee's Ontario (CUPE-Ontario) Resolution 50 which was passed this summer. B'nai Brith Canada charged that the resolution was inherently biased and discriminatory, betraying a politically-charged agenda, which did nothing to advance the cause of Middle East peace. At the time, B'nai Brith Canada circulated a Manifesto denouncing the CUPE-Ontario boycott and reaffirming support for democratic Israel, which was signed by more than ten thousand Canadians. The Manifesto exposed the boycott for what it was: a thinly veiled attempt to delegitimize the Jewish State of Israel. This document can be accessed by clicking on the following link: <http://www.bnaibrith.ca/CUPEPetition.html>.

The OSSTF-D12 in its newsletter ("*The D12 Voice*", Volume 8, No. 2, November 2006) published articles in support of the CUPE-Ontario boycott. The CUPE article in D12 Voice refers to Israel as the "racist, violent system". This is in the face of relentless terrorist activities against Israeli civilians and

the brutal killing of young children by Palestinian “militants” just in the news. Individuals wanting to consult this material for background purposes can click on the following link: http://www.osstfd12.com/artman/documents/D12_voice/2006_2007/November_06.pdf

The resolution also follows on CUPE’s Educators for Peace and Justice “education tour” launched last month which furthers the anti-Israel campaign.

Clearly this one-sided campaign that furthers untruth and propaganda must be stopped. Israel is not an apartheid state. This issue directly affects members of the OSSTF-D12 union, but resonates far beyond – impacting on the Ontarian and Canadian community as a whole.

INFORM YOURSELF OF THE FACTS.

Israel is not an apartheid regime. *Apartheid* is a false descriptor frequently used by enemies of Israel to spread their propaganda and lies.

*The Israeli regime is not apartheid. It is a unique case of democracy.”
— South African Interior Minister Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi*

MYTH

“Israel’s treatment of Palestinians is similar to the treatment of blacks in apartheid South Africa.”

FACT

Even before the State of Israel was established, Jewish leaders consciously sought to avoid the situation that prevailed in South Africa. As David Ben-Gurion told Palestinian nationalist Musa Alami in 1934:

We do not want to create a situation like that which exists in South Africa, where the whites are the owners and rulers, and the blacks are the workers. If we do not do all kinds of work, easy and hard, skilled and unskilled, if we become merely landlords, then this will not be our homeland.

Today, within Israel, Jews are a majority, but the Arab minority are full citizens who enjoy equal rights and are represented in all the branches of government. Arabs are represented in the Knesset, and have served in the Cabinet, high-level foreign ministry posts (e.g., Ambassador to Finland) and on the Supreme Court. Under apartheid, black South Africans could not vote and were not citizens of the country in which they formed the overwhelming majority of the population. Laws dictated where they could live, work and travel. And, in South Africa, the government killed blacks who protested against its policies. By contrast, Israel allows freedom of movement, assembly and speech. Some of the government’s harshest critics are Israeli Arabs who are members of the Knesset.

The situation of Palestinians in the territories is different. The security requirements of the nation, and a violent insurrection in the territories, forced Israel to impose restrictions on Arab residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip that are not necessary inside Israel’s pre-1967 borders. The Palestinians in the territories, typically, dispute Israel’s right to exist whereas blacks did not seek the destruction of South Africa, only the apartheid regime.

If Israel were to give Palestinians full citizenship, it would mean the territories had been annexed. No Israeli government has been prepared to take that step. Instead, through negotiations, Israel agreed to give the Palestinians increasing authority over their own affairs. It is likely that a final settlement will

allow most Palestinians to become citizens of their own state. The principal impediment to Palestinian independence is not Israeli policy, it is the unwillingness of the Palestinian leadership to give up terrorism and agree to live in peace beside Israel.

Despite all their criticism, when asked what governments they admire most, more than 80 percent of Palestinians consistently choose Israel because they can see up close the thriving democracy in Israel, and the rights the Arab citizens enjoy there. By contrast, Palestinians place Arab regimes far down the list, and their own Palestinian Authority at the bottom, with only 20 percent saying they admired the corrupt Arafat regime in 2003.

Source: Bard, Mitchell G., "Myths & Facts Online - Human Rights in Israel and the Territories":
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/myths/mf18.html#i>

TAKE ACTION. MAKE YOUR VOICE COUNT.

IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE OSSTF:

- i) Make sure you and your colleagues monitor closely upcoming meetings and their related agenda so that advance notice can be sent out should this issue re-emerge.
- ii) Contact your local union representatives and the executive of OSSTF (District 12) to object to this motion. The contact information for the OSSTF executive is available by clicking on the following link:

http://www.osstfd12.com/artman/publish/article_89.shtml

IF YOU ARE A CONCERNED COMMUNITY MEMBER:

- iii) Share the information provided here as widely as you can: via email, phone or fax. Call the OSSTF-D12 office to protest the motion. Write letters so that the immediate impact of these letters will be felt.

Phone 416-393 8900

Fax 416-393-8912

Email the District 12 president Doug Jolliffe at djolliffe@osstfd12.com.

*Further Contact info for executive officers is available by clicking on the following link:

http://www.osstfd12.com/artman/publish/article_22.shtml.

- iv) Write letters to the editor of the d12 Voice voicing your opposition: d12voice@onebox.com OR send via fax 1-877-302-3681. Don't stop there. This is a wider community issue. Write letters to your local newspapers as well.

*For more information, please contact
Anita Bromberg at B'nai Brith Canada 416-633-6224 X 130*

abromberg@bnaibrith.ca

For more info visit our website www.bnaibrith.ca

