

August 19, 2009

The Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism
440-C Centre Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Members of Parliament:

On behalf of the 56,000 members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, I want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to make a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism.

The definition of Antisemitism is a crucial aspect of our submission. Antisemitism is hostility toward or prejudice against Jewish people as a religious, ethnic, or racial group, which can range from individual hatred to institutionalized, violent persecution.

Antisemitism is not the same and cannot be equated with criticism of Israel and support for campaigns of boycott divestment and sanctions. There is a fundamental difference between hostility and/or prejudice to Jewish people and criticizing the policies and actions of the Government of Israel. It is not Antisemitic to oppose Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the building of the so-called Separation wall, or the sharp differences between the ways in which Israel treats its Israeli and Palestinian citizens.

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers strongly opposes Antisemitism as it is contrary to the Union's principles of solidarity and equality. We believe that all forms of harassment, including sexism, racism, homophobia, and Antisemitism create tension and division.

Criticizing the policies and actions of Israel is a democratic right and to attempt to criminalize this dissent by labeling it as Antisemitism is an unwarranted attack on our civil liberties.

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In April 2008, the delegates to the CUPW National Convention passed a resolution which includes the following:

" CUPW will:

- Continue to demand that Israel immediately end all military assaults and abide completely by the most recent and unanimous Security Council resolution calling on them to do so.
- Call for and 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.
- Demand that the Israeli Government immediately withdraw from the occupied territories and abide by UN resolution 242.
- 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. "

The CUPW delegates were clear when they voted for this resolution. They understood this resolution was about opposing the unjust and often illegal acts of the Israeli government, and disagreeing with acts of violence that take the lives of innocent people. CUPW members understood they were not supporting Antisemitism in any manner. Delegates understood there is a difference between challenging and criticizing the actions of the state of Israel and Antisemitism. We urge the Parliamentary Inquiry to adopt this perspective.

Thank you for allowing CUPW to make this submission.

Yours truly,



Denis Lemelin
National President

cc National Executive Board

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