



May 19, 2006

John Wilkin  
President  
National Association of Teachers in Further  
and Higher Education  
27 Britannia Street  
London WC1X 9JP  
United Kingdom

Fax: 011 44 20 7837 4403

Dear Mr. Wilkins:

I am writing on behalf of the 1.3 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, to express our concern regarding a resolution that is to be considered at your upcoming annual conference. The AFT represents more college and university faculty than any other union in the United States, with more than 150,000 members in our Higher Education division.

We understand that NATFHE will consider a resolution calling for a boycott of Israeli lecturers who do not publicly disagree with what the resolution calls Israel's "apartheid policies." The AFT strongly opposes boycotts of universities and faculty. We see such boycotts as a grave threat to the democratic values of academic freedom and free expression.

Moreover, coming at a particularly sensitive time in the Middle East, a one-sided resolution of this nature and any ensuing boycotts could be counterproductive to the cause of peace and security in the region.

Last year, following the passage of a similar resolution by the Association of University Teachers, the AFT executive council called on the union to reverse their vote in favor of a boycott. We were very pleased that they did so. Now, we are troubled to learn that little more than a year later, a similar resolution is again being considered by your union.

I hope the delegates to your conference will reflect on the importance of academic freedom and the right of free expression and reject this unwise and counterproductive proposal.

In Solidarity,

Edward J. McElroy  
President

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American Federation  
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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AFT Teachers  
AFT PSRP  
AFT Higher Education  
AFT Public Employees  
AFT Healthcare

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555 New Jersey Ave. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001  
202/879-4400  
www.aft.org

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