

Postal workers union president opposes Israeli genocide of Gaza at AFL-CIO meeting

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At a recent meeting of the executive council of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), American Postal Workers Union (APWU) President Mark Dimondstein gave a 30-minute speech denouncing Israel's genocidal attack on the Gaza Strip, called for the formation of a single state in the southern Levant with equal rights for Jews and Palestinians and urged the AFL-CIO to call for an immediate ceasefire.

The APWU includes around 200,000 postal workers, primarily working in post offices and distribution facilities.

The full text of Dimondstein's speech to the Executive Council, which met in private, has not been published, and the WSWs has not received a reply to its request for copies of the speech from either the APWU or from Dimondstein. The only report of the speech was carried in the *New York Times*, which referenced it briefly in an article last week, "Democrats Splinter Over Israel as the Young, Diverse Left Rages at Biden." That article nervously acknowledged the massive opposition, particularly among youth, to the Israeli military's slaughter of civilians in the Gaza Strip, in spite of attempts by the media and political establishment to censor it and falsely equate opposition to Zionism with antisemitism.

The speech by Dimondstein, an anti-Zionist Jew, exposes this as a foul slander. In fact, the worldwide protests in support of the Palestinians has included countless Jewish people, and there are signs that opposition to the attack is growing within Israel itself, in spite of intense political repression. Dimondstein's speech is an indirect reflection of this massive popular outrage.

However, workers cannot pressure the union apparatus to organize a fight against Zionism.

Dimondstein's speech is the exception that proves the rule. His position runs counter to the official position of the AFL-CIO and virtually every trade union in the United States and every other Western country. His position found no support from any other member in the AFL-CIO Executive Council. The pro-corporate bureaucrats who control these organizations have nearly unanimously lined up with the massive military escalation of the US and NATO around the world, and are working hand in glove with imperialist governments to secure the "home front" from opposition in the working class.

They have totally ignored the appeal by the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) and 31 other Palestinian unions and professional associations to their counterparts around the world, "An Urgent Call from Palestinian Trade Unions: End All Complicity, Stop Arming Israel."

In that statement, the PGFTU declared: "This urgent, genocidal situation can only be prevented by a mass increase of global solidarity with the people of Palestine that can restrain the Israeli war machine. ... We need you to take immediate action—wherever you are in the world—to prevent the arming of the Israeli state and the companies involved in the infrastructure of the blockade."

Instead, the American unions are doing the opposite. In an October 11 statement, the AFL-CIO declared, with mealy-mouthed hypocrisy, "The labor movement condemns and stands resolute against all terrorism, and we are concerned about the emerging humanitarian crisis that is affecting Palestinians in Gaza and throughout the region. We call for a swift resolution to the current conflict to end the bloodshed of innocent civilians, and to promote a just and long-lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians." In other words, the

Zionist government has a free hand to take whatever measures it deems necessary to achieve “a swift resolution to the current conflict,” including the annihilation of the population of Gaza.

Dimondstein’s speech in the Executive Council sparked a significant exchange with Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). She countered Dimondstein, claiming that Israel has the right to defend itself and advocated the completely bankrupt “two-state solution,” which means the creation of an unviable Palestinian statelet divided into multiple parts by Israel and territories occupied by Israel, saying that it has been the longtime position of the Democratic Party. Dimondstein reportedly responded that he is “not part of the Democratic Party.”

Weingarten expresses most clearly the bureaucracy’s alignment with US imperialism. A highly connected Democratic Party operative, she has spent years crisscrossing the world to drum up support for the wars of US imperialism, including several trips to Eastern Europe in support of the NATO proxy war against Russia. While Weingarten, who is also Jewish, defends Israel’s supposed “right to defend itself” by slaughtering unarmed Palestinian civilians, she has helped to cover up the role of Ukrainian neo-Nazis in the Holocaust.

Support for imperialism abroad is connected with support for capitalist exploitation at home. The trade union bureaucracy has responded to the biggest strike wave in generations by struggling against it, seeking to prevent strikes where possible, limit or neuter strikes that do take place and enforce contracts that fall far below workers’ demands. Its attempt to disrupt the growing movement of the international working class objectively contributes to undermining the most powerful and basic social force which must be brought to bear against war.

Indeed, Dimondstein himself, together with the bureaucrats in the other postal unions, are playing critical roles in enforcing Delivering for America, a vast restructuring program for the United States Postal Service (USPS) that will cut tens of thousands of jobs and close thousands of post offices. The APWU has called only occasional token protests against job cuts, while concealing from its membership the scale of the attacks on jobs being carried out around the country.

Moreover, while Dimondstein has made a speech

about Gaza in private to a mostly hostile audience in the AFL-CIO Executive Council, he has made no statements to the APWU membership to alert them to the crimes that are taking place, nor has he appealed to the working class to take action to oppose the ongoing genocide.

The working class must be mobilized to stop the genocide, but it cannot wait for actions to be organized by the union leadership which will never take place. Instead, workers must organize themselves independently. On October 27, the WSWs International Editorial Board issued a powerful statement, “A call to the working class and youth: Stop the imperialist-Zionist genocide in Gaza!” In it, the WSWs called for strikes and other protest actions by the working class in every country. It urges the organization of mass demonstrations in cities and emergency solidarity protests by college and high school students.

Millions of people all over the world have already voiced their opposition to the genocide being perpetrated in Gaza by Israel. But in order to succeed, this movement requires political direction.

The Editorial Board statement concluded, “The strength and success of the anti-war movement depends upon its development throughout the world as a working class and socialist movement. This is the perspective for which the International Committee of the Fourth International and its affiliated Socialist Equality Parties are fighting.”



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