

Educators denounce American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten's support to Gaza genocide

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31 October 2023

Millions continue to take to the streets in protest across the US and internationally, registering their opposition to the US-NATO-Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. However, the reactionary and corrupt bureaucrats who sit atop American unions, fully tied to US imperialism, have either given silent consent to the blatant imperialist war crimes or openly endorsed them.

On October 11, the AFL-CIO Executive Council issued a statement lining up with Biden-Israeli war of annihilation against Gaza, "There can be no justification for the unspeakable atrocities and carnage carried out by Hamas against Israelis over the past several days. The labor movement condemns and stands resolute against all terrorism..." Their subsequent addition of saccharine phrases decrying the "blood of innocents" cannot conceal the political endorsement of ongoing genocide.

Continuing her role of warmonger for increasingly predatory US military operations, Randi Weingarten, president of the 1.7 million-member American Federation of Teachers and member of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), has taken the latter position, solidarizing herself with the ongoing US-NATO-Israeli genocide in Gaza.

This was made particularly clear at a recent meeting of the AFL-CIO executive committee, when Weingarten opposed a call for a ceasefire in Gaza. Reporting on the meeting, the *New York Times* said the discussion was "raw," including a "30-minute anti-Israel monologue from the president of the American Postal Workers Union, who described himself as an 'anti-Zionist Jew'." Mark Dimondstein proposed that the AFL-CIO call for a ceasefire, which received no support from any other bureaucrats in attendance.

Weingarten spoke to oppose the demand. She asserted "Israel's right to defend itself," a blanket endorsement of the mass killing. As a mouthpiece for the Biden administration and the DNC, she then cited the Democratic platform calling for an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. "That has been part of the Democratic platform for as long as I can remember," she said. These statements followed a series of Weingarten's tweets also green-lighting Zionist war crimes.

Weingarten does not speak for educators, but for #GenocideJoe, Zionism and US imperialism. Weingarten has long functioned as a US State Department operative in her capacity as leader of Education International, a CIA labor front operation spanning

countries across the globe. She played a criminal role in supporting the US-instigated coup in Ukraine in 2014 alongside far-right neo-Nazis, and continues to support the intensifying US-NATO war against Russia which has already taken more than a half million lives.

As for her faux tears for innocent Israelis caught in the conflict, Weingarten showed her true colors last October during her public relations campaign for war against Russia. At that time, she met with the mayor of Lviv, an outspoken admirer of the fascist Stepan Bandera. Historians put the overall number of those murdered in anti-Jewish pogroms spearheaded by Bandera's OUN-B in the first months after the Nazi invasion of West Ukraine at 39,000.

In 2017, Weingarten also met secretly with Trump chief strategist and well-known fascist sympathizer and anti-Semite Stephen Bannon.

The mass movement sweeping the world, horrified at the ongoing attempts to impose a "final solution" on the Palestinian people in Gaza must, therefore, also reckon with these pro-imperialist labor bureaucracies which seek to stanch the rising opposition of workers and youth.

The *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Committee for the Fourth International call for the mobilization of the working class, the expansion of international protests, strikes, and a political general strike in solidarity with the Palestinian people to stop the war.

It is also critical that the working class rally to the defense of artists, educators and students being witchhunted for their stand against imperialist genocide. In New York, Rep. Anthony D'Esposito (R-NY) is attempting to silence teachers who oppose the war and has gone so far as to threaten Department of Education investigations against educators on false charges of "antisemitism."

One such educator courageously denounced the pro-Zionist resolution of the United Federation of Teachers, the New York branch of the AFT. Their statement says, in part, 'It pains me to see the NYC Schools Chancellor and UFT making recent public statements denouncing Oct 7th's actions of Palestinian militants, but not the last 75 years of genocidal, illegal Israeli colonialist occupation, which created the horrific, inhumane conditions that led to last weekend's kidnappings and Hamas' incursions.'

'Last weekend's events didn't start this conflict. The conflict started long ago, in 1917 and in 1948, when Palestinian homes were taken by force. Every year, \$3,800,000,000 US taxpayer dollars goes to fund an illegal occupation and settler colonialist state. Until the US stops its support for Israel, unless the UN develops greater enforcement powers, and unless we as peace-loving people begin to have honest conversations with each other about anti-Arab Zionist colonialism, innocent Palestinian men, women, children, and elders will continue to be displaced, evicted, and erased from the map. Literally.'

The statement continues: "The median age of Palestinians is 19.6. They are a country of children—facing thousand-ton Israeli bombs—paid for by U.S. taxpayer dollars. Let's ask ourselves why the voices of the occupied and oppressed Palestinian people are not being aired. Why standing up for Palestine gets met with accusations of anti-Semitism. Why such history of the last 100 years is not included in Social Studies curricula?"

This viewpoint is widely held. In New York specifically, it was evidenced by the Jewish Voice for Peace rally, which took over Grand Central Station, and the march of 50,000-100,000 people across the Brooklyn Bridge in support of the Palestinian people.

The WWSWS discussed the war and Weingarten's political support to the US-NATO onslaught on Gaza with educators, circulating the WWSWS call for the mobilization of the working class including a political general strike.

The sentiment that Weingarten did not act "in my name" was strongly expressed. Some educators were well aware that fully half of the residents of Gaza are children, and schools and hospitals have become deliberate targets for the Zionists. Others had questions on the history of Palestine and the role of US imperialism but nonetheless condemned the US-funded onslaught on Palestinians and agreed to read the WWSWS statements.

Rochelle, a member of the Michigan Educators Rank and File Safety Committee, said, "I saw clips of Gaza on social media that really make me sick. It is truly horrifying. Why is the mainstream media trying to cover all this up?"

"I think that Weingarten being on the DNC, by that alone, she is supporting what the Democratic Party is doing. Her actions directly in support of the Biden administration push towards preventing us from having factual information.

"She has visited Ukraine twice. Twice! What business does she have going over there to promote war? As to teachers and others whose money is being used by her to go over there, I wonder how many of them know this is happening. She did that in Ukraine, so what is she doing now in this war?"

"The Democrats are supporting Israel in this war. They were always claiming that the Republicans were warmongers, and look at them now. In addition to this, the US has now sent two aircraft carriers into the area, inflaming the situation. They are clearly taking sides again with Israel and against the Palestinians, egging them on!"

Rochelle watched the lecture by David North, "Socialist internationalism and the struggle against Zionism and

imperialism." She said she learned how the imperialist powers now supporting Israel's butchery of the Palestinians refused to provide assistance to Jews fleeing the Holocaust.

"The part where David North talked about the British setting up internment camps for Jews during World War II was incredible. I don't think I've heard of that anywhere else. And then he explained that Jews that came here [to the US] to escape Hitler and were refused entry. It was eye-opening about the sheer numbers that were interned and that tried to escape and were turned away."

She concluded, "Hitler tried to eradicate the Jews because of those who were against capitalism and pushing for socialism."

A member of the Alabama Educators Rank and File Committee said, "Can you imagine what children are going through, with bombs falling all the time? Soldiers are supposed to fight soldiers, not civilians. Isn't this against the Geneva Convention, international law? Isn't it illegal to bomb medical facilities?"

"Biden is the face of those who run the capitalist system, whatever serves their business interests. The media is only informing people of what they want us to know. They are rewriting history. The working class has no say in the way the powers-that-be execute their vision. Israel is now carrying out genocide in the name of the nation state, doing the same that faced the Jews earlier."

She concluded, "Nationalism comes with capitalism; they are pitting Jews and Palestinians against each other when both are oppressed. And they preparing more war."

A Virginia educator told the WWSWS, "I am deeply saddened by the actions of the Israeli government and also disappointed by the responses of the US and Western democracies. It is quite simply a massacre that is being allowed to happen. The people of Palestine have historically suffered loss after loss. There are many lay people on both sides that oppose the fighting. But, I believe it is a much larger power struggle on the world stage than it appears to be at first glance."

A Michigan educator in the Detroit enclave of Hamtramck said, "I definitely do not support Israel. I see Israel as a perpetrator of cruelty and lies in the Middle East. I feel supporting them undermines all of our potential relationships in the region. My students will be marching next Friday."



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