

“We are seeing the Democratic Party for exactly what it is”

US teachers denounce Biden, demand to end Israel’s genocide in Gaza

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The Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee (US) and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (US) will be hosting an online meeting December 16 at 3 pm ET to mobilize educators and students in opposition to the genocide against Gaza. We urge all teachers, school workers, parents and students who want to join this fight to register today and attend. Register here.

Teachers across the United States have joined with millions of students, young people and workers throughout the world to protest and condemn the US-backed genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza by the Israeli regime.

In the last two months, Israeli forces have killed at least 15,500 civilians, 70 percent of whom are children and women. Over 1.8 million people, 80 percent of the population, have been displaced while being systematically starved under Israel’s blockade of the Gaza strip. Hospitals, schools, refugee camps and journalists are deliberately targeted by the Israeli military.

The mass opposition that exists among educators and the broader working class finds no expression in the official statements and actions of the pro-imperialist trade union bureaucracy. Neither the American Federation of Teachers nor the National Education Association has issued a resolution denouncing the genocide, demanded a ceasefire or come to the defense of the thousands of American students and educators who are being intimidated, disciplined and even violently attacked for protesting the genocide.

Randi Weingarten, AFT president and longtime Democratic Party operative, has spent the last two months covering for the Biden administration and its open participation in Israel’s war crimes. At an AFL-CIO conference in October, she rejected a proposal for a ceasefire on the basis of Israel’s “right to defend itself.” Last month, as millions protested in the streets to demand an end to the genocide, she travelled to Israel to provide political cover to the Biden administration and its “humanitarian” motives.

The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to educators throughout the US about the genocide. Their statements underscore the unbridgeable chasm that exists between rank-and-file teachers and bureaucrats which claim to speak for them.

Tynisa, a former Montgomery Public Schools teacher in Alabama and a founding member of the Alabama Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee, sent the following statement:

Just as in the 20th century, with two world wars, the dropping of nuclear bombs, and the Holocaust, capitalism is again confronting humanity with genocide and world war.

Despite the current financial crisis our country is in, despite the increasing hardship that inflation is causing our citizens who can barely afford rent and groceries, the current Democratic administration, with the support of the Republicans, is throwing billions of dollars to pay for war. It is high time that we, the working class, put a stop to this injustice.

As an American teacher, I support the call to mobilize the working class in a political general strike to stop the war against Gaza. In 2020-2021, I was part of the struggle by Montgomery teachers to stop the deadly return to school amid the pandemic, which killed 8 coworkers, and I helped launch a rank and file committee to link with educators across the world, because the trade union bureaucracy betrayed our struggle for safety. Over 26 million lives across the world have been lost during the pandemic, which is still going on today because of the government’s refusal to put human life before profit. The same profit motive is behind the US’s instigation of war throughout the world.

The character of the war by Israel against Gaza is that of genocide. The media and governments are trying to portray opposition to Israel’s policies as “antisemitic”, but Jewish people across the world are horrified and fighting against the crime that is being committed in their name. After the Holocaust, the world said “never again”, and yet there is mass bloodshed and the intentional killing of civilians, including bombing hospitals, schools and apartment buildings, while starving the entire 2.2 million population of Gaza, half of whom are children.

The Biden administration and Democratic Party are directly involved in this genocide. The blood of 15,000 civilians, mainly children and women, is on their hands. The money they are using to carry out this war should be used to meet human needs: public education, infrastructure, healthcare, and a secure retirement for all. This war affects us all. When resources are used for war, it’s the working

class that pays the price literally and figuratively.

But there is an answer. We have the power to stop this crime. This isn't just a fight against Israel's war against Gaza, nor even just against the Biden administration. This is a fight against the entire capitalist system that can only offer disease, poverty and war. We, the working class, must come together and end this war. Millions of people across the world have protested in recent weeks, even protests in Israel have begun to demand a ceasefire. These protests must be expanded but also grow to include mass industrial action and strikes to prevent the shipment of arms and military equipment to Israel. Never again means never again. This is how to stop it.

A fourth-grade teacher in Detroit Public Schools spoke in defense of students who have faced retaliation for protesting. She said, "We have to tell the truth about what's happening in Gaza and it's terrifying to me that people who are telling the truth, young people who are telling the truth, students who are telling the truth are being victimized and being targeted. Brutally targeted. Half of the people in Palestine are children 15 and under. It's crazy, it's horrific."

She emphasized the genocidal character of Israel's onslaught in Gaza. "There is no war. There is an annihilation of a group of people whose only crime is that they lived there before the occupation and who are paying an incredible price for that."

She condemned the role of the Biden administration and the Democratic Party. "We still have kids in cages on the border. If anything, the border situation is worse than it was under Trump. We still have all the same social issues with no attempts to really address them or dismantle any of them and in addition to that, Biden is financing genocide... Remember it was Obama who made the decision to use drones to drop bombs, and he also gave 38 billion dollars to Israel over 10 years, the highest they've ever received."

Another Detroit Public Schools Community District teacher said, "It is heart-breaking to see what is happening in the Middle East."

Referring to the revelation that the Zionist regime in Israel had full knowledge of the Hamas outbreak and stood down in order to facilitate the attack, she said, "They sacrificed their own people to be able to kill in Gaza. And the US is always behind these things."

"Rabbis have been on the news saying that they never wanted this war. Those people would have, and did earlier, get along. But the Israelis created an apartheid state and exploited religion to do so. It's divide-and-conquer, the oldest trick in the book, and it is used against the working class."

She rejected the slanderous lie that has been used to denounce the mass protests in defense of the Palestinians. "How are these protesters 'antisemitic'? Many of them are Jewish. These lies fall flat on their face."

"We are seeing the Democratic Party for exactly what it is. It is a two-party right-wing dictatorship. They don't care about us [the American working class] or anyone else."

A teacher in Hayward, California showed support for her

students at a protest they organized at Impact Academy.

"This is not school-sponsored. It's all students just trying to do the right thing and wanting to fight back. I'm just here to support my students in their organizing efforts. As a teacher it's my duty to teach my kids about these things. We have so many problems here in the US. We have so many people dealing with homelessness, inflation, rent prices going up, but our tax money is going to fund a genocide. I urge you all to take a stand for justice. People who have been blocking ships with weapons that are going to Israel are amazing."

A teacher in Virginia sent the WSWWS the following statement:

I am a teacher at a public high school in Virginia. I oppose the aggression and outright genocide happening in Gaza and I am deeply saddened by these incomprehensible actions of the Israeli government and also extremely disappointed by the responses of the United States government. This is nothing short of a massacre that is being allowed to happen.

With everything happening today, I think there has never been a better time for the working people of the world to unite against the reign of terror and oppression weighing on us all by the wealth and power hungry tyrants of the world. Collectively, we can bring companies, governments, and countries to a stand still. I believe that it's our responsibility to figure out which actions we can take as individuals to make our world a better place.

Like the 1,200 dock workers in Barcelona who refused to service any ships carrying war material to Israel, we must find ways that each of us can contribute to protecting human rights and protecting the worldwide working class.



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