



Salute students who fight genocide

Editorial
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The mass revulsion at Israeli terror in Gaza has unleashed a conflict on U.S. college campuses, where student activists confront not only pro-Israel students, but also college administrations and wealthy donor alumni who have targeted student groups that oppose Israel's genocidal attack.

Confrontations have disrupted many campuses, including at public colleges, where nearly all the students come from the working class, and those considered elite, such as Ivy League colleges and some California universities.

Since a greater percentage of their students come from ruling-class backgrounds, most media coverage goes to the "elite" schools: Stanford, University of California Los Angeles, University of Pennsylvania, Yale, Harvard and Columbia. Those who run U.S. capitalist society expect many students at these schools to continue running the economy and the state.

When students at these universities rebel, it's big news. And they have rebelled. It also involves big money. And the billionaires have demanded the students be punished. In some cases they even demand the students be identified so they can be denied jobs or harassed where they live.

This reached a turning point at Columbia University in New York City. Columbia's administration banned the two main Palestine solidarity organizations, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP).

While the administration gave the usual phony pretext — some rule being broken, you can always find one — it was miles from the real reason they were banned: They refused to swallow the official lies about Palestine and/or they refused to be complicit with Israeli genocide, which they can watch every night in news reports and on social media.

Although the reactionary donors parrot the false claim of the Israeli government and



Columbia Univ. students rally for Palestine, NYC, Oct. 12, 2023.

U.S. imperialism that the activist students are "antisemitic," the truth is much different. Neither SJP nor JVP ideology identifies being Jewish with supporting a Zionist state that settles people of one religion while expelling people of other religions.

Working-class organizations admire these and similar student groups' courage, just as we do the organizations at the public universities, such as those in the City University of New York. They are confronting not only the U.S.-armed Israeli genocide but also the rulers of all Western imperialist countries, whose elites consider the Israeli state an extension of their own exploitation of West Asia.

Palestine Writes Festival

Since the pro-Israeli alumni donors at UPenn mobilized weeks before Oct. 7, more has been revealed about them. They tried to stop the Palestine Writes Literature Festival, held in late September, in an attempt to repress Palestinian culture with the usual pretext that this was

"antisemitic." They failed.

Simply because the university allowed the Festival to proceed, a big donor from the Estée Lauder corporation and a private equity billionaire have tried to use their money's power to punish the university and determine its policy, even about which professors are hired. Estée Lauder, by the way, has been on the list of companies to boycott for their ties to the Israeli state.

The conflict over events in Gaza has exposed the perverse role of big money in the university system intrinsic to U.S. capitalism. Now students, activists and sympathizers, face another choice: Do they bow to the threats to their financial future or do they continue to fight against the U.S./Israeli genocide?

Many have already made the choice to continue the struggle. Perhaps the attempt at repression will boomerang against the rulers, just as it did during another criminal U.S. war in 1968. We in Workers World salute the students from CUNY to UCLA who are fighting U.S.-Israeli terror. □