



TEACHERS FOR A  
JUST CONTRACT  
*Not just an opposition, an alternative.*

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## The UFT Must Mobilize to Protect New Teachers!

New teachers are the future of the UFT. And right now, they are learning from bitter experience that the union can be useless just when it is needed the most.

Though many of us have become aware of the attacks on veterans, Klein and Bloomberg have also declared war on teachers who are up for tenure. They want to change tenure from a right into a “privilege.” The result is that teachers all over the city with completely clean, satisfactory records were suddenly told last June that their probation was being extended, or even that they were “discontinued,” which is just a euphemism for fired! They were told such insulting things as “you didn’t pass enough students,” or even “too many students were absent from your classes.” Although the UFT claims that the law banning the use of data in tenure decisions was in effect in 2010, the UFT did nothing to use this law to protect these new teachers.

The plight of these colleagues is truly terrible. Some are asked to sign a waiver to allow their tenure to be extended. They may feel a glimmer of hope when the Chapter Leader tells them to call a union lawyer! But all the lawyer says is, “Sign the extension, or they can discontinue you.” They are also told by union reps, “They can deny you tenure for any reason, or for no reason.”



For our colleagues who are “discontinued,” the outlook is even worse. Although there is an appeal procedure, the panel that hears the case issues a recommendation and not a binding decision for the Department of Education. And the Department of Education never overturns the principal’s decision to discontinue. The union has done nothing to expose or challenge this mockery of due process.

Who can blame new teachers, when this happens to them or their colleagues, from giving up on the union? And it's easy to see what that will mean for the future of the UFT. As these teachers progress through their careers, they will continue to live by the lessons they learned early: unquestioning obedience, disregard of contractual rights, and "kissing up" are the only paths to stability and security, and that the union is basically irrelevant. Unless we nip this trend in the bud, the UFT will be a hollow shell of a union.



These new teachers can't be expected to stick their necks out under today's conditions. The whole UFT must fight on their behalf. There must be legal challenges where possible, and mobilizations on the district, borough and citywide level. The leadership has to take us out in public, into the streets, and expose this unfairness. It has to be made clear that these are professionals with unblemished records that the Department of Education is targeting for the worst

reasons: to create a scapegoat for the failures of public education, to create a climate of intimidation and blind subservience in the workplace, to bust the union and to downsize the workforce to cut costs.

If you agree with these ideas, or for more information, contact Teachers for a Just Contract. We are a caucus in the UFT. Since 1992, we have been fighting for better contracts, and a more militant, democratic union. You can find more information on our website, [www.TeachersforaJustContract.org](http://www.TeachersforaJustContract.org). Email us at [JustContract@yahoo.com](mailto:JustContract@yahoo.com), call us at 212 831 3408, or mail the coupon below to Teachers for a Just Contract, P.O.B. 545, New York, N.Y. 10028

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