

## Submitted by the PSC International Committee

The PSC Delegate Assembly must oppose the covering or whitewashing of the 1936 Life of Washington Murals by Victor Arnautoff.

Whereas, after the San Francisco Board of Education unanimously supported the painting over of a Depression-era mural at George Washington HS in SF depicting George Washington as a slaveholder and perpetrator of genocide against Native Americans, 139 academics, artists, and activists signed a petition decrying the board's decision as a "display of contempt for history" and urging it to reverse course.

Whereas, the SF Board of Ed voted to spend \$800,000 to cover or whitewash these murals instead of using that money to educate the students about the history of America and its beginnings;

Whereas, the school board has never attempted to explain the pictures by putting a plaque on the wall nor has it offered classes that would explain precisely what the students are seeing;

Whereas, Richard Walker, a professor emeritus of geography and director of the "Living New Deal" project at the University of California, Berkeley, explained that Arnautoff's mural was specifically conceived and painted to show the "uncomfortable facts" about Washington's life and legacy;

Whereas, not only are our students woefully ignorant of history, even their own, this is an opportunity to inform and educate them;

Whereas, wiping out an historical document such as the murals, only serves to miseducate students since without documentation there is no evidence;

Whereas, it is with the express backing of the Eli Broad Foundation which has been mandated by billionaires such as the Gates Foundation and the Walton Foundation to undermine public education by putting the public schools into the hands of the charters, syphoning off needed money for strapped schools in order to set up charters, which are expressly designed to privatize education, getting rid of or weakening unions so that administrators can eliminate teacher union contracts which will exacerbate an already terrible financial crisis in the school

system allowing the shutting down of more than ½ the schools in Oakland while reopening them as charters;

Whereas, teachers and supporters of public education opposed the destruction of the San Francisco Malcolm X Academy in Hunters Point Bayview by putting a unionbusting racist KIPP Charter School into the same school under co-location. They also spoke up against the anti-labor Partner Assault Response (PAR) program which ostensibly is designed to help failing teachers but is in reality being used to target senior teachers, African American teachers and Latinx teachers in the district;

Whereas parents in the school district such as Diane Gray, a Bayview resident and Founder of 100% College Prep, a 20-year-old after-school program that helps neighborhoods youth get ready for college, said: “the proposed school didn’t arise from the community. Rather, she said, Innovate (an organization formed to undermine public schools) developed the idea and began ‘pounding the pavement’ to win support from Bayview parents whose children attend local public schools. Innovate and folks who want to open charter schools are targeting our schools and families of color, who believe that by enrolling in charter schools, they’re getting a private school education.” Gray told the Public Press.

Whereas, Superintendent Matthews’ allegiance is with the charters and not with the public schools and therefore hopes to undermine them by choosing this specious argument that the painting is racist and supports white supremacy and hurts the feelings of Black and Latinx students because the painting depicts Washington as a slave owner and therefore must be destroyed;

Be it resolved that the DA of the PSC should pass a resolution denouncing this impending tragedy and should try to enlist the leadership of the AFT to oppose it as well.

Be it resolved that the PSC organize, and urge the AFT and the NEA, to organize a letter-writing campaign to the Superintendent, the Mayor and the BD of Education to reverse this practice of covering or whitewashing murals—in order to cover or whitewash history.