

Anti-Kissinger protest at New York University

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On Tuesday October 16, over 100 protesters gathered in Gould Plaza outside of New York University's business school in lower Manhattan to protest against the appearance of former secretary of state and notorious war criminal Henry Kissinger as a guest speaker.

Kissinger, now 95 years old, is a rightly despised figure internationally for his central role in developing the policies of US imperialism. He served as national security adviser and secretary of state from 1969 to 1976 during which time he was partially responsible for the slaughter of millions in Vietnam, the CIA-backed coup in Chile, in which tens of thousands were murdered, and the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, that resulted in 200,000 deaths, among other crimes. After leaving office he founded a foreign policy think tank, Kissinger Associates, and has remained active in drafting US foreign policy.

Kissinger was invited to speak at New York University (NYU) Stern School of Business as part of an "In Conversation with Lord Mervyn King," the former head of the Bank of England, now a professor at NYU. The talk with Kissinger, like many in the series, was by invitation only, and the press was barred from attending the event.

Prior to the talk, a variety of activist groups across the city issued an open letter asking the university to cancel the event. John Beckman, an NYU spokesperson, attempted to justify the administration's actions, telling the Washington Square News that the "free exchange of diverse ideas and viewpoints is a fundamental value at NYU." He argued that "an invited speaker should be able to be heard without disruption." He failed to explain how these ideas would be exchanged given that only a select few would be allowed to hear the speaker.

The protest, which was endorsed by over a dozen

student groups at NYU, expressed the desire of many students to voice their opposition to Kissinger being invited to speak at one of the largest private research universities in the country, and the continued intervention of US imperialism around the world. Many demonstrators in the plaza chanted "Whose streets? Our streets! Whose war? Their war!" "Hey Kissinger what do you say? How many kids did you kill today?" and "No justice, no peace, US out of Middle East!"

Kissinger's talk was also interrupted multiple times by audience members, who denounced the speaker as a war criminal guilty of genocide before being escorted out by campus security. Campus security also helped the New York City Police Department escort Kissinger, who had to be moved in a wheelchair, both to and from the event.

The turnout of over 100 students was despite the failure of its pseudo-left organizers to publicize the event beyond their own members. The organizers, including the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and International Socialist Organization (ISO), attempted to limit the perspective of the protest by failing to mention the role of the Democratic Party in Washington's imperialist war crimes or NYU's extensive military and intelligence agency ties.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at NYU were able to distribute roughly 300 leaflets reprinting the recent article, "NYU's Washington DC campus: Academia aligns with the Department of Defense" and speak with a number of protesters about the militarization of higher education.

"What's really offensive to me is that in the last few years high-level supposed liberals, Hillary Clinton for example, was bragging about her relationship, her ties to national security experts like Henry Kissinger,"

Todd, a veteran of the Iraq war, told the IYSSE.

He continued by noting NYU's ties to the Department of Defense. "I think it's consistent with a lot of trends you see," he said. "I look around and see New York police officers that have military equipment. You see this in the way that social media platforms are being folded into the security state. It's interesting that there's an increasing militarization of these institutions in society that filters down to the way we think about the concept of the nation and our identity as citizens."

His friend Jamila added, "It's like Kissinger's legacy has carried on forward for decades and decades and it has resulted in these sorts of issues with military contractors. There's been militarization of the police, militarization of ICE and the border patrol."

The fact that a criminal figure like Kissinger could be invited to speak at an ostensibly liberal institution such as NYU should be taken as a serious warning about the militarization of higher education in general. The IYSSE nationally has exposed the impact of this process, which has included recruitment programs for the NSA at NYU; CIA partnership programs at City University of New York (CUNY) Baruch College and University of Illinois Chicago; and the introduction of militarized police in colleges and high schools across the country.

The fight against the transformation of schools into think-tanks for US imperialism and recruitment centers for the military and intelligence agencies requires students to link up their struggles across campuses and develop a socialist perspective for opposing the war drive. All interested students should contact the IYSSE and become engaged in our campaign.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)