

New York University suspends two professors for opposing Gaza genocide

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New York University (NYU) has suspended two adjunct professors for expressing opposition to the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza.

Amin Husain, a professor at NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study, and Tomasz Skiba, a psychology professor at NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development, have both been accused of violating the university's Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment policies by making comments and social media posts denouncing the genocide and US imperialism's support for it.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at NYU denounces the suspensions of Husain and Skiba and calls on workers, students and youth at NYU, throughout New York City and beyond to fight for their reinstatement. Their suspension marks a further escalation of a months-long assault on democratic rights—organized by fascist forces, the American state and the military—aimed first and foremost at the campuses but ultimately at the working class. The denunciation of principled opposition to genocide as “antisemitism” and “discrimination” is slander that must be rejected.

Husain is a longtime Palestinian-American activist who joined NYU's faculty as an adjunct instructor in 2015. He was suspended on January 25 after a video of him criticizing media coverage of the Gaza genocide circulated online.

In the video, taken during a teach-in protest organized by Students for Justice in Palestine at The New School in December of last year, Husain says, “Don't take what the media says ... They try to say 'Oh my God, you're supporting rapists and people that behead babies' ... we know it's not true.” Husain also declared, referring to Hamas and other organizations, “These groups are fighting for the liberation of their people and their land. That's a right.”

Active in various radical protest groups for several decades, Husain has long been a target of attacks from various right-wing, pro-Israel elements. The present push to remove Husain from his position at NYU has been ongoing

for over three months.

On October 17, an NYU alumna launched an online petition slandering Husain as a propagator of “hate and violence against Jews” and demanding that the university “take immediate action by dismissing Professor Amin Hussain [sic] from his teaching position.”

According to the Parachute Project, a civil liberties organization representing Husain, NYU's Human Resources (HR) department pulled Husain in for two meetings in January. In these conversations HR asked Husain about his “speech-related activities” and affiliation with the radical “art-based collective,” Decolonize This Place (DTP).

University representatives referred to the organization's social media posts opposing the genocide in Gaza and questioned Husain regarding his connections with DTP. Following these meetings, Husain was suspended from his teaching position and instructed to await the findings of NYU's Office of Equal Opportunity. The university has yet to provide Husain with information about any allegations or complaints made against him.

About six days later, at the beginning of last week, NYU suspended adjunct professor Tomasz Skiba. The university informed Skiba that it will be “investigating complaints” regarding his “social media posts related to the Israel-Hamas war,” accusing the professor of engaging in “harassment” and discrimination on the basis of “race and shared ancestry.”

In December, Skiba reposted an Instagram story in which he criticized the United States government for “taking our money and paying for a genocide.” In another Instagram video, Skiba took up the propaganda surrounding the hostages taken by Hamas on October 7, denying the allegations of mass torture and abuse of hostages by Hamas.

Skiba told *Washington Square News*, NYU's undergraduate student news publication, “It's hard for me to watch killings of innocent children and not speak about it—that doesn't make me antisemitic. The last thing I would want is to make anyone feel uncomfortable, especially my students, because we all should be represented. We should

all be free and be able to speak up and be respected.”

Heavily funded by the American state and the military-intelligence apparatus, NYU plays a critical role in the recruitment of personnel and development of military-intelligence hardware. Now, it is providing the critical service of repression of domestic opposition to genocide and war.

The university’s discrimination policy uses the 2016 definition of antisemitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, which equates anti-Zionism with antisemitism. For years this has served as the basis for a campaign against left-wing criticism of Israel on campus, which has dramatically intensified since October 7.

Last October, NYU law student Ryna Workman was blacklisted, doxxed and removed from their position as president of the university’s Student Bar Association for issuing a principled statement on the rights of the population of Gaza to resist oppression.

In November, NYU Langone Winthrop Hospital resident physician Dr. Zaki Masoud was “removed from service” for expressing pro-Palestinian views. In December, freshman Hafiza Khalique was suspended and her scholarship rescinded in retaliation for her removal of pro-Israel posters on campus.

On January 25, two NYU administrators, flanked by Campus Safety officers, broke up a small pro-Palestinian demonstration of students and faculty in the lobby of NYU’s Bobst Library.

At NYU and all the major university campuses, an intense, McCarthyite atmosphere of intimidation is being whipped up against even the most mild criticism of the genocide in Gaza and the broader war developing in the Middle East.

At a pro-Palestinian protest on the campus of Columbia University on January 19, two former Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers sprayed student protesters with something resembling a foul-smelling chemical weapon called “Skunk.” At least 10 students were hospitalized.

In response, the Columbia administration blamed the student victims, calling the protest “unsanctioned.” Days later, the university announced it had banned the two students from campus, but students on social media have reported seeing both of them on campus multiple times over the past two weeks and no arrests or updates have been made.

Meanwhile, student victims of the attack have been outspoken about the lack of support and resources they have received from Columbia, another academic bastion of the Democratic Party, the US military and Wall Street. A Palestinian-American student wrote a recent Op-Ed in the *Columbia Spectator*, bluntly stating, “I thought that January 19 would be the wake-up call for the way in which

supporting genocide has material consequences for our own community. ...I was wrong.”

Furthermore, the university system has only increased its attacks on the democratic rights and academic freedom of its students this past month. In response to a pro-Palestinian protest held on campus in December, Columbia’s sister school, Barnard College, is targeting and intimidating student attendees and holding disciplinary hearings which threaten sanctions against them, including suspension and expulsion. A new Barnard campus event policy, which covers protests, ridiculously requires that students and faculty submit requests at least 28 days prior and gain approval by the administration.

On Friday, dozens of New York Police Department officers converged on a large peaceful protest against the genocide and repression of pro-Palestinian students outside the main entrance to Columbia’s upper-Manhattan campus. Police brutally assaulted protesters, reportedly dislocating someone’s arm, body slamming people to the ground and punching several others in the stomach. At least 12 people, including multiple Columbia students, were arrested. Columbia University has remained silent on the police assault and arrests.

Following the state-led ouster of Harvard University President Claudine Gay for failing to crack down on student opponents of genocide with sufficient force, Harvard has established a task force for investigating allegations of antisemitism on campus, which will play a central role in strangling opposition on campus to genocide and war.

Democratic rights on the campuses cannot be defended through appeals to the university administrations, just as the Gaza genocide cannot be stopped through appeals to the Democratic Party. To oppose war, genocide and fascism, students and youth must take up the fight to build a new socialist and anti-war movement in the working class.

The IYSSE has called for a political general strike to halt the production and shipment of weapons used by the Israeli government in its assault on Gaza. Students and faculty who want to stop the genocide, oppose war and defend democratic rights should attend the IYSSE in New York’s public meeting, “The way forward in the global fight against Israel’s genocide in Gaza,” on February 8 at 7 p.m.



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