

Los Angeles police terrorize schoolchildren in series of unannounced campus raids

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This month, Los Angeles police armed and clad in riot gear burst into classroom without warning at Northridge Middle Community school, pointing rifles at students and staff and demanding that the school be put on lockdown. The lockdown lasted for two full hours during which students weren't allowed to eat or use the bathroom.

An eighth grade student at the school, Annabelle Cardoza told press in an interview, "We weren't even given information that police were on campus. We didn't get the announcement that a lockdown was happening." The Northridge Middle Community School is part of the Los Angeles Unified School District, the second largest public school district in the country with more than 565,000 students.

Teachers and parents said that the lockdown was the fourth time within the past several weeks that police activity both in and around the campus had disrupted the school day and shocked parents, teachers and students.

A statement by the Los Angeles School Police Department, which conducted the raid, contradicted the claims made by virtually every student, teacher, parent and staff member at the school. It read, "every effort was made to provide the school community with all available information in accordance with Los Angeles United Unified [sic] policy and with the assistance of the Los Angeles School Police Department. During the incident, we sent three timely messages to the Northridge Middle School Community, providing updates on the status of and information about the lockdown."

At a protest held outside of the campus last Thursday, however, not a single parent or educator present could remember a single notice from either the police or the campus administration notifying them of the raid.

"They don't tell us the details of the events that happened," said Ivania Nolasco, a teacher at the school. "They don't tell us before, or after, or even during the crisis, what we're expecting. We're not prepared to handle these kinds of events."

According to the police, the raid was the result of a search they had been conducting on the campus but no further details have been provided.

Last May, two young boys, aged 13, were accused of bringing a 9mm "ghost gun" along with a 9mm Glock handgun onto campus. The boys were later arrested with the Los Angeles School Police Department likely seizing on the incident as a pretext for a virtually perpetual presence on the campus.

The police presence should also be placed within the context of a heightened campaign of repression launched by the US ruling class against workers, and immigrant workers in particular.

With the incoming Trump administration's plans for mass deportations of immigrants, the need to terrorize immigrant children will become a priority for the state, particularly as a huge proportion of LAUSD students are children of undocumented workers. The designation of so-called sanctuary cities by state and local Democratic politicians only provides a minor inconvenience to border patrol agents and police in their collection of immigrant data. Such designations will do nothing whatsoever to physically prevent raids from being carried out.

Moreover, the city and surrounding area of Los Angeles County are considered a priority target for domestic repression. Shortly after Los Angeles police raided the Northridge middle school, four students were arrested on the campus of the University of California Los Angeles simply for protesting the university's support for the genocide in Gaza.

The arrests follow a zero tolerance policy by the administration of Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom against pro-Palestinian protests at the University of California (UC) and California State University campuses across the state. During the previous year, police, in conjunction with Zionist thugs, launched a wave of violent attacks against peaceful protesters on campuses.

In response to these attacks, the United Auto Workers called a fraudulent “stand up strike” at the UC system in which they kept picketing limited to a fraction of campuses and which they quickly disbanded after a court injunction. Moreover, the latest arrest of student protesters has not resulted in even a murmur of opposition from the UAW and the other academic unions.

Similarly, the United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) has shown that it isn’t committed to protecting students and its own members from the ongoing police terror. In a statement released after the raid at Northridge Community Middle School, the UTLA is demanding, not that Los Angeles police immediately cease campus raids and terrorizing minor children, but instead only that adequate notice in advance of the raids and a “Trauma-Informed Curriculum” be put in place to help students and teachers deal with having guns pointed at them on a regular basis by police.

These actions are only a foretaste of what’s to come. Teachers, staff, parents and students must join and build rank-and-file committees to take up a defense of public education and the right of all to be free of police state terror on school campuses.



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