

New York University complies with Trump attacks on basic democratic rights

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Over the last week, New York University (NYU), one of the largest private universities in the United States, has made clear its intentions to fully comply with the fascistic policies of the Trump administration.

The university responded to the Trump administration's executive order preparing for mass deportations of anti-war, left-wing international students by declaring that it will "comply with the law." The White House order, titled, "Additional measures to Combat Anti-Semitism," orders the cancellation of the visas of pro-Palestinian noncitizen college students, preparing immediate deportation of these students, based only on their political beliefs, as part of a broader evisceration of democratic rights.

NYU spokesman John Beckman told the student newspaper, *Washington Square News*, "This is a topic of great concern for NYU, and we know that recent announcements have raised anxieties among our community. Of course, we will comply with the law."

Beckman stated that NYU Campus Security would allow law enforcement officers, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials, on to the university's campus "if they have a search warrant or subpoena." The university, he said, will provide any personal information about "a member of the community" when legally required to do so.

On the same day, NYU's Langone Health System, in response to the fascistic policy of the Trump administration to deploy ICE to kidnap thousands of undocumented immigrants every day, has instructed its employees not to shield patients from ICE.

As reported in *Crain's New York Business*, which obtained a copy of a memo sent to NYU Langone employees, the policy statement instructs hospital personnel that "you should not try to actively help a person avoid being found by ICE." This is contrary to directives from other health systems and trade groups

which emphasize staff responsibility to protect patients.

The NYU Langone directive cites "our obligation to comply with applicable laws and regulations," including providing patients' personal information requested by ICE, effectively forcing hospital staff to act in complicity with the police-state hunt for immigrants.

This is of a piece with Trump's directives that would turn universities into surveillance and enforcement arms of the deportation machine, directing school administrations to "monitor for and report activities" critical of American "culture, government [and] institutions."

NYU Langone's policy regarding ICE contrasts with that of the Greater New York Hospital Association, which encompasses many healthcare facilities in the region. In a January statement, the association recommends that a policy toward government attempts to identify and detain immigrants should be based on a commitment to patient privacy, "regardless of their immigration status or that of their family members." The memo describes scenarios in which staff can block ICE inquiries.

In further compliance with the fascistic policies of the Trump administration, NYU Langone has canceled appointments for transgender children under Trump's executive order threatening to withhold federal funds from hospitals that provide gender-affirming treatments. The hospital canceled the appointments of two 12-year-olds scheduled to receive puberty-blocking implants. One child's doctor told the child's father the cancellation was due to "the new administration."

These recent actions are in line with the past policies of the university and its affiliated organizations. NYU Langone, named after far-right Home Depot billionaire and major donor to the Republican Party Kenneth Langone, has an extensive track record of right-wing and anti-worker actions.

Last year, NYU Langone Health fired Hesen Jabr, a

labor and delivery nurse, for publicly calling Israel's ongoing mass murder of Palestinians in Gaza a genocide. At the end of 2023, NYU's Langone Winthrop Hospital terminated Dr. Zaki Masoud from the hospital's residency program for expressing pro-Palestinian views.

Over the last month, NYU has suspended 13 students and placed 20 others on year-long probation for participation in a pro-Palestinian sit-in protest at the end of the last academic semester. The university has been at the forefront of the government-backed crackdown on anti-genocide, anti-war protest activity on university campuses over the last 15 months, arresting, suspending, firing hundreds of students, faculty and staff for criticism of Israel's genocidal onslaught in the Middle East.

These escalating attacks on basic democratic rights are continuing to provoke mass opposition among students, faculty and staff at NYU. Last week, over 1,000 people protested outside NYU Langone's Tisch Hospital against the denial of gender-affirming care. ICE was forced to cancel some of its interviews with students at the NYU School of Law's Public Interest Legal Career Fair after a student-written petition condemning the agency's participation received well over 1,000 signatures. Hundreds of students and staff have demonstrated over the past several weeks in defense of immigrants and against the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

Clearly, there is massive opposition to the fascistic policies of the Trump administration. However, the genuine, healthy social anger of students is being directed by the middle-class organizations leading the protests into dead-end appeals to the university administration and the Democratic Party.

The bankrupt political line of the protest actions was exemplified by the comments and actions of the New York Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), which organized the NYU Langone protest last week. At the protest, DSA members distributed cards directing students and other protestors to make appeals to NYU Langone CEO Robert Grossman. One DSA representative stated, "NYU needs to reverse course and we're gonna f***ing be here until they do."

This is entirely in line with the orientation of the DSA to the capitalist state, and its subordination to protest politics. It expresses the DSA's central role in keeping dissent within the confines of the Democratic Party and blocking any turn by students to the working class.

NYU's actions against democratic rights did not arise out of thin air. They result from the development of this institution over the last 50 years. The American state and

military-intelligence apparatus, particularly elements connected to the Democratic Party, have embedded themselves deeply at NYU.

The university's Board of Trustees comprises a collection of multi-millionaires and billionaires with deep ties to Wall Street and one or both corporate-controlled political parties. For decades, the university has functioned as a critical component of military recruitment, domestic surveillance and censorship and technological and ideological preparations for world war.

The repressive, reactionary policies being implemented on the university campuses reflect the broader assault by the ruling capitalist class in every country on the basic democratic rights, working conditions and living standards of the working class.

Driven by the ever-intensifying economic crisis of capitalism, significant sections of the bourgeoisie have turned to the most reactionary political forces to escalate imperialist war abroad, strip all obstacles to the accumulation of vast private wealth and crush the resistance of workers to war, inequality, exploitation and destruction of basic democratic rights.

The working class is the only force capable of putting an end to war, genocide and destruction of democratic rights. Students and youth must direct appeals for action to this revolutionary social force, not the class forces driving the decent into barbarism.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) supports the call of the Socialist Equality Party, of which it is the youth section, to form Rank-and-File Committees at workplaces, in the working-class neighborhoods that will organize the working class to fight the fascist Trump administration. Students must be a part of this struggle. Join the IYSSE!



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