

Oppose the expulsion of pro-Palestinian students at Columbia University! Mobilize the working class!

International Youth and Students for Social Equality in New York and New Jersey
3 March 2025

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) unequivocally condemns Barnard College at Columbia University for expelling two students who protested a Zionist “History of Modern Israel” class in January, and a third for participating in the April 30 occupation of Hamilton Hall, renamed Hind’s Hall by protesters.

We demand the immediate reinstatement of these students, who were set to graduate this semester, and an end to all attacks on pro-Palestinian students’ democratic rights. The claim that opposition to the US-Israeli genocide in Gaza constitutes antisemitic hate speech is a blatant lie used to justify repression.

All students suspended or disciplined by Columbia University and other institutions for participating in anti-genocide actions must be fully reinstated, have their academic standing restored and have all disciplinary records expunged.

To realize these demands, we call on students to take up a concerted fight to mobilize the working class to defend democratic rights and force an end to the genocide.

The crackdown on campuses is part of a massive assault on the democratic rights of the entire working class. The fascist Trump administration seeks to overthrow the US Constitution, establish a presidential dictatorship, and carry out mass deportations of immigrant workers. Trump, emulating Hitler, aims to annex territories such as Canada, Greenland and the Panama Canal in preparation for a third world war, while advocating for the expulsion of the Palestinian people from Gaza.

These desperate measures do not reflect the strength of the capitalist system but rather its deep crisis and

instability. The ruling class fears that today’s student movement will ignite broader working-class opposition to fascism, war and the capitalist system itself. This is why both the Biden and Trump administrations have supported a ruthless crackdown on pro-Palestinian and anti-genocide speech and protests on university campuses.

Under Trump, this crackdown is being escalated to bring universities under the direct control of his authoritarian regime. Columbia University, New York University, and eight other institutions are now under investigation by the Orwellian “Federal Task Force to Combat Antisemitism.” In January, the Trump administration threatened to deport international students, falsely branding them as “perpetrators of unlawful anti-Semitic harassment and violence.”

The Democratic Party fully supports these efforts. On Thursday, New York City’s Democratic Mayor Eric Adams posted on Twitter/X: “The pain the protests held at Barnard College is causing to our Jewish community... is not lost on me. Let me be very clear: I condemn, in the strongest possible terms, any protest that calls for an ‘intifada revolution,’ which is a call for violence against the Jewish State of Israel.” Adams deliberately distorts the meaning of “intifada” to equate any opposition to Zionism and the genocide in Gaza with antisemitism.

Earlier this month, the Trump administration admitted to striking a deal with Adams to dismiss federal corruption charges against him in exchange for his full collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This revelation prompted several Democrats to call for Adams’ resignation. However, Adams is merely the most blatant example of the

Democratic Party's collaboration with Trump's reactionary policies.

Last week, New York's Democratic Governor Kathy Hochul ordered Hunter College at the City University of New York (CUNY) to remove a job posting for a faculty position in Palestinian Studies. On Thursday, students protested Hochul's scheduled appearance at the City College of New York (CCNY). In response, police arrested two protesters, and Hochul canceled her appearance, citing alleged security concerns.

The principal obstacle to developing the mass opposition to the genocide into a broader movement of the working class is the trade union bureaucracy, which serves to suppress and contain workers' opposition.

As the Trump administration wages an all-out attack on federal workers, a spearhead for the broader assault on the working class, the union apparatus is doing nothing—at most, proposing meaningless letter-writing campaigns and other empty maneuvers.

The union bureaucrats have also participated in slanders against opponents of the genocide in Gaza. On Thursday, the Transport Workers Union of America (TWU), which primarily represents airline, railroad and transit workers, issued a statement which sought to paint pro-Palestinian protesters as opponents of the working class.

A protester told the *Columbia Spectator* that they saw a Barnard security guard represented by the TWU “putting his arms around a student and twisting until a student fell to the ground. It was people trying to help that student, that is how that guard got injured.”

TWU International President John Samuelsen responded to the incident by denouncing “trust-fund baby ideologues” for supposedly “harming the blue-collar TWU workforce at Barnard” to advance their political cause. Samuelsen previously condemned Columbia for “failing to protect union members” during the April occupation of Hamilton Hall. He wrote a letter to then-University President Minouche Shafik alleging that Columbia “epically failed to protect the safety” of university employees.

Having made endless concessions on sick time, medical care, and working conditions to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority for decades, the TWU leadership can hardly claim to prioritize worker safety. Samuelsen's statement is nothing but an attempt to disorient workers and separate them from the fight

against fascism and war that confronts all workers.

As to his reference to students protesting the genocide as “self-important elitists,” Samuelsen makes a six-figure salary that he siphons every year from workers' dues money.

To stop the genocide in Gaza, fight fascism and prevent the further escalation of war, students need to fight for the development of a movement in the working class, not through the union bureaucracy but in opposition to it.

The IYSSE, the student and youth movement of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), fights for the development of rank-and-file committees in every workplace, as part of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees, which will connect the defense of the interests of workers with the fight against genocide, war and dictatorship.

There are no easy solutions or shortcuts, but the massive struggles ahead will provide immense opportunities.

The IYSSE calls on all students at Columbia and campuses nationwide to oppose the attack on pro-Palestinian students. We demand the immediate reinstatement of the expelled Barnard students and the dropping of all disciplinary actions against students facing repression for their participation in anti-genocide protests. We call for an end to the criminalization of free speech and the broader crackdown on democratic rights.

The defense of democratic rights and opposition to war can only succeed through the mobilization of the social force capable of challenging the capitalist ruling class—the international working class. This requires a political break from both the Democratic and Republican parties, which, despite their factional differences, are united in their support for genocide, war, and dictatorship.

The IYSSE is fighting to build a new socialist anti-war movement, based on the principles of revolutionary Marxism. We urge students and young people to study the history of our movement and join the IYSSE.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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