

Defend Logan Rozos! Mobilize workers and students to demand his diploma, oppose the assault on democratic rights!

Statement of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE)
16 May 2025

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) unequivocally condemns New York University's (NYU) blatant act of political censorship against graduating student and actor Logan Rozos. We call on students, workers and youth in the US and around the world to demand that NYU immediately release his diploma, which is being withheld in retaliation for his May 14 commencement address denouncing the US-backed genocide in Gaza.

Rozos bravely used his platform as commencement speaker for the Gallatin School to deliver a powerful denunciation of the ongoing genocide. "My moral and political commitment guide me to say," he told thousands in attendance, "that the only thing that is appropriate to say in this time and to a group this large is a recognition of the atrocities currently happening in Palestine." He continued, "I condemn this genocide and complicity in genocide." His comments were met with loud and sustained applause, especially from students and faculty.

Rozos' remarks express the sentiment of millions in the US and around the world. Since October 7, mass demonstrations have been held on every inhabited continent against the US-backed Israeli slaughter. Among students and young workers there is overwhelming opposition to the genocide and the bipartisan political conspiracy to silence critics.

The day after Rozos delivered his remarks, dozens of NYU graduates, many wearing keffiyehs, protested and walked out of Yankee Stadium as NYU President Linda Mills was delivering the commencement address.

Rozos' well-received speech provoked an immediate campaign of retaliation from right-wing and Zionist forces with deep ties to both Israel and the US

intelligence apparatus. In response to this intimidation and harassment campaign, NYU quickly capitulated. The same day of the speech, NYU spokesman John Beckman issued a statement denouncing Rozos for "misusing" his platform to express "one-sided political views"—that is, views opposed to genocide.

He claimed Rozos had "lied" about the content of his speech, an absurd accusation designed to justify a clearly political decision. While accusing Rozos of "abusing" a privilege, Beckman himself apologized to the audience for being "subjected to these remarks"—even though that same audience applauded them loudly and repeatedly!

Accepting the demands of the open defenders of genocide, Beckman announced that Rozos' diploma was being withheld.

This shameful act is part of a broader nationwide campaign to criminalize protest and suppress opposition to the genocide in Gaza. Thousands of students have been suspended or expelled, hundreds arrested and dozens are threatened with deportation. Last year at NYU, police arrested over 100 students while disbanding a peaceful solidarity encampment.

The campaign of repression, initiated under the Biden administration and now dramatically escalated under Trump, has become a full-scale assault on democratic rights. Trump has invoked the reactionary Alien Enemies Act to carry out mass deportations, detain immigrants and students without trial and criminalize political dissent.

NYU is one of 52 schools currently under investigation by the Trump administration over alleged "antisemitic" incidents on campus. The pernicious lie, advanced by both political parties, the mainstream

press and college administrators, has been used to browbeat, intimidate and even imprison opponents of genocide.

As of this writing, Mahmoud Khalil, a Columbia graduate student and legal US resident, remains imprisoned in a Louisiana immigrant detention facility for the “crime” of protesting the genocide while at Columbia. Khalil was illegally kidnapped on March 8, 2025 outside his New York City apartment by immigration Gestapo, who did not have a warrant. Since he has been incarcerated, Khalil’s wife gave birth to their first child, an event the court did not allow him to be present for.

The Trump administration is attempting to deport Khalil using a McCarthyite provision in the Immigration and Nationality Act that allows Secretary of State Marco Rubio to remove legal residents if he determines their “past, current, or expected beliefs, statements, or associations,” which are “otherwise lawful,” are a threat US foreign policy objectives.

The Democratic Party supports the suppression of anti-genocide protests and is itself complicit in all of Trump’s major policies. Following the arrests at NYU last year, Democratic Mayor of New York Eric Adams praised the police and blamed “anarchists” for “disrupting and tearing our city apart.” That same week, Democratic New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand released a statement claiming she was “appalled at the virulent antisemitism being displayed” on campus.

The targeting of students, including the attempt to destroy Rozos’ future for condemning genocide, is taking place amid an unprecedented political crisis. The Trump administration is working to establish a presidential dictatorship, escalate war abroad and dismantle social and democratic rights at home. Confronted with massive inequality, growing social unrest and rising opposition from below, the ruling class—Democrats and Republicans alike—is turning to repression to preserve its power.

NYU’s conduct also exposes the reality behind the university’s self-serving claims to be a haven of free speech and academic inquiry. The moment a student uses his voice to challenge the crimes of the state, he is silenced and punished. NYU’s real commitment is to wealth, power and its close ties to the military-intelligence apparatus and Wall Street.

The fight to defend democratic rights must be rooted in the political mobilization of the working class, in opposition to both political parties and their adjuncts.

A powerful strike by New Jersey Transit railway engineers has shut down the nation’s third-largest passenger rail system, which moves hundreds of thousands in and out of New York City each year. Postal workers, UPS and Amazon workers, healthcare workers, educators and other key sections of the working class in the tri-state area and beyond are entering into direct struggle against corporations, the government and union bureaucracies over sweeping austerity measures. This is the social force to which students must turn in the fight against genocide, imperialist war and the assault on democratic rights.

The campaign to defend Logan Rozos must become a rallying point for the working class. We call on all students, workers, educators, artists and defenders of democratic rights to speak out:

- Demand that NYU issue Rozos’ diploma immediately.
- Explain to workers and students the significance of this attack. If Rozos cannot condemn genocide without retaliation, you cannot either.
- Share Rozos’ speech and demand an end to the campaign of intimidation and retaliation.

The overwhelming mass of the world’s population opposes genocide, war, censorship and dictatorship. The IYSSE fights to unite students and youth with the working class on the basis of a socialist and internationalist program. The defense of Logan Rozos, and of all those targeted for opposing genocide, must be taken up as part of a movement to put an end to the capitalist system that produces war and repression.

We encourage all students who agree with this perspective to join the IYSSE and take up the fight for socialism.



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