

UCLA Values Free Speech... Until You Use it to Oppose Fascism

When a member of Trump's fascist cabinet comes to campus, UCLA rolls out the red carpet. When people oppose him, UCLA makes sure they're prosecuted.

What does free speech mean to the university when, in a test of a new policy for "events that trigger protest," three members of the Revolution Club and Refuse Fascism LA are on trial, criminally charged, some facing over two years in jail, simply for speaking out during a speech by Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin?

Last February, As Mnuchin bragged about imposing murderous sanctions that exacerbated the effects of drought in North Korea and prevented people from receiving proper medical treatment in Iran – my co-defendants and I called out his crimes against humanity, including the crimes of his fascist Tax Bill. We challenged the audience to take up the call of RefuseFascism.org to drive the Trump/Pence regime from power through sustained nonviolent mass resistance, like they did in Puerto Rico when they drove out their hated governor with 15 days of protests.

For this, we were forcibly removed from our seats and arrested. Video of this incident went viral when Mnuchin tried to suppress the footage, and UCLA went along until the Society of Professional Journalists filed a public records request because this was, after all, a public event with a government official speaking in that capacity!

A year later, we find out we are charged with several misdemeanor crimes: trespass, resisting arrest, disturbing the peace, and defying an illegitimate 7-day ban from the campus. We defied this ban to participate in a March 1 student protest, 11 minutes of silence for 11 million undocumented immigrants and again, several days later, to see the heroic whistleblower Chelsea Manning speak. This was in violation of our right to freedom of speech and assembly, acting as a prior restraint on our ability to exercise this.

Through the process of investigation, we found that UCPD arrested us on the say so of Vice Chancellor of Campus Affairs, Mick Deluca, rather than on the basis of probable cause. This is unconstitutional! UCLA also pushed for the criminal charges, taking advice from a Zionist legal organization trying to effectively criminalize any speech criticizing Israel and the genocide they are waging on Palestine - advice which they repurposed to persecute revolutionary communists. AND UCLA administrators testified against us during trial.

That's not all. Police reports reveal that UCPD stalked the Revolution Club, recording our activities and even licence plate numbers on several occasions when we were on campus carrying out constitutionally protected speech and simply talking to people - occasions completely unrelated to the incidents for which we are being charged. This is in addition to the LAPD sending an

informant into the meetings of Refuse Fascism in broader LA. Did UCLA green light this Orwellian surveillance as well?

Toward the end of the trial, resisting arrest charges were dropped because they suppressed evidence proving the police brutalized us and lied about it on the stand, claiming we resisted arrests and that there was no evidence of police brutality against us. This new evidence included photos taken by the UCPD of our injuries, use of force reports and audio recordings of interviews with us. Further exposing the illegitimacy of these prosecutions, the interviews were conducted by the UCPD without reading us our Miranda rights and even continued despite someone asking for an attorney.

These cases are criminalizing constitutionally protected protest and speech while the Trump/Pence fascist regime threatens humanity, gutting the rule of law, stacking the courts with fascists, rounding up immigrants – consolidating a fascist America.

In the face of all this, Universities across the country are complicit, spending millions protecting the free speech of fascists

with the bully pulpit of the president, and criminalizing ANTI-fascist protest and speech of students without the societal megaphone to amplify our voices and without the state power to enforce our dictates.

In March, Trump signed an Executive Order aimed at carving out more space for

fascist speakers and giving backing to a movement of Nazi youth. This is in an atmosphere where professors are put on watch lists by student organizations with ties to the highest office, where they are reported by right-wing students, amplified by hysterical fascist media unleashing a swarm of internet trolls – all working to drive critical thinking out of academia. Evolution, climate science, the truth about America's history and its role in the world today, Ethnic Studies and anything evidence-based is under assault.

Instead of saying NO, the universities are facilitating the suppression of dissent and normalizing a fascist remaking of the country. Apparently UCLA wants to be at the helm of trampling radical thought. Students, which side are you on?

This op-ed was
CENSORED
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**Nationwide Protests Demand:
The Trump/Pence Regime Must GO NOW!!**

Santa Monica Pier, Lifeguard tower 16

Spell out #TrumpPenceOutNOW on the beach