

New York City News

NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD – NYC CHAPTER



FALL 2025

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Chapter Mobilizes in Face of Threats to Deploy Military in NYC

BY FRANKLIN SIEGEL

As President Trump [threatens](#) to deploy federal military forces to New York City, the Chapter is mobilizing to address the kind of suppression of constitutional expres-

NYU-NLG Chapter kicked off the mobilization with a timely Continuing Legal Education (CLE) program, "Defending Protesters in Federal Court," to enhance defense resources in the event of mass arrests. Over 65 attorneys, as well as law stu-

In the last couple of decades, the NYC Chapter's Mass Defense Committee has developed significant and agile capacity to defend First Amendment protesters in New York courts, including cultivation of a new generation of "true-heart" protest defense lawyers.

sion which has accompanied troop and ICE deployments in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C. and Chicago. On Saturday, October 25th the Mass Defense Committee and the

dents and legal workers, attended the CLE.

In the last couple of decades, the NYC Chapter's Mass Defense Committee has
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CLE presenters included (l. to r.) Andrew Dalack, Prof. Amanda David, Jill Shellow, retired Judge Ronald Ellis and Deirdre von Dornum. Photo: Jefferson Siegel

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Officer's Column

Renewed Political Attacks: History Repeats Itself

BY GARRETT KASKE

On October 16, a Republican U.S. Representative from Texas wrote to the Department of Justice calling for an investigation into the Guild. While such letters have become a familiar tool of political theater, they echo a troubling legacy of government interference in the work of the Guild and its members — a legacy that the New York City Chapter knows all too well.

Our Chapter has endured decades of government harassment, infiltration, and surveillance. From the Guild's founding in 1937, it stood alone among legal organizations in opposing fascism and racial segregation, and for that, it drew the ire of those in power.

As part of the growing reactionary response against those resisting modern fascism and right-wing authoritarianism, right-wing influencers and politicians are seeking to tarnish our work by scribbling the Guild's name on chalk boards, podcasting about us, and, now, pleading for investigations. Though letters like this are commonly inconsequential acts of political theater, the National Office has advised our members that it takes this development seriously. As friends at the National Office reminds us, this is a moment to stay vigilant, assert our rights, and protect one another.

Our Chapter has endured decades of government harassment, infiltration, and surveillance. From the Guild's founding in 1937, it stood alone among legal organizations in opposing fascism and racial segregation, and for that, it drew the ire of those in power. During the McCarthy era, the NLG was labeled a "subversive organization" by the House Un-American Activities Committee — an accusation meant to destroy it. In 1977, Chapter members filed a successful — albeit attritional — lawsuit, which exposed widespread FBI spying and forced the Bureau to turn over more than a million pages of documents. Through this litigation, the public learned that the FBI had used over 1,000 informants to surveil the Guild and interfere with our work. The government broke into Guild members' offices, tapped their phones, and rummaged through their



trash, including here in New York.

The surveillance and repression of the NLG continues. As the NLG continues to stand with movements for Palestinian liberation, against racism, imperialism, and state violence, it once again finds itself in the crosshairs of reactionary forces. But as history shows, these attacks only underscore the importance of our mission.

We must remain undeterred. The National Office reminds us to assert our rights if approached by law enforcement, to immediately contact

For nearly 90 years, the NLG — and particularly this Chapter — has championed the people over the interests of repression and power. We have survived generations of political attacks because we chose solidarity over silence.

Chapter Officers and the National Office, and to exercise caution with the media when representing the Guild. Above all, members are urged not to retreat in fear, but to rely on collective strength: We keep us safe.

For nearly 90 years, the NLG — and particularly this Chapter — has championed the people over the interests of repression and power. We have survived generations of political attacks because we chose solidarity over silence. The NLG-NYC looks to 2026 standing firm in our solidarity with each other and the movements for justice that continue to shape history.

Meet the New Executive Committee Members

Izzy Bruschi

BY GARRETT KASKE

Izzy Bruschi is a native New Yorker with deep roots in community work. A Staten Island resident, they taught Jewish history and ethics for ten years at their local synagogue and worked on numerous

Izzy's commitment to the Guild grows from a belief that defending civil liberties makes way for social movements to achieve the change we desperately need.

local political campaigns. In the wake of October 7th, Izzy connected more deeply with the Guild after speaking out against the doxing of pro-Palestine students, helping to protect the rights of those engaged in solidarity movements. They joined the NYC Chapter's Executive Committee to continue that work, driven by the sense of purpose they've always found in leadership roles.

Izzy is a 2025 graduate of New York Law School, where they focused on constitutional and civil rights law. While in law school, they served on the executive board of the NLG NYLS student chapter, served as the NYLS' Student Bar Association President, and became a committed legal observer. They contributed as an author to LGBT Law Notes and advocated for unhoused LGBT youth at the Free to Be Youth Legal Clinic.

Before law school, Izzy's life was centered on music. They earned a Bachelor of Music in violin performance from the Brooklyn College Conservatory in 2022, serving as Concertmaster of the Symphonic Orchestra, composing original works, and directing theatrical productions. They performed with the New York Pops at Carnegie Hall, led chamber ensembles, and taught private lessons in violin, viola, piano, flute, and voice. Ultimately, during the Black Lives Matter protests, Izzy chose to transition from a music career to law, seeking a path that felt less self-focused and more deeply purposeful.

Outside of law, Izzy is a freelance violinist, budding guitarist, and occasional lyre player. They enjoy painting, reading, and—by their own admission—pretending to be a runner. Izzy's commitment to the Guild grows



from a belief that defending civil liberties makes way for social movements to achieve the change we desperately need. They are excited to channel their energy, creativity, and unwavering belief in protecting the right to speak into strengthening the Guild's ability to defend dissent and advance justice in the face of this deeply reactionary moment.

Ben Holda

BY GARRETT KASKE

Ben Holda is a dedicated grassroots organizer and emerging legal advocate committed to building power for marginalized communities.

Ben is currently pursuing his J.D. at New York University School of Law, focusing on international human rights law. He also holds a Master's degree in Philosophy from Columbia University, where he explored the historical development of human rights frameworks and their role in advancing justice.

Before beginning his legal studies, Ben organized an NLG chapter in his hometown in Ohio. There, the Guild became an essential resource for local activists confronting the town's legacy of racist policing and far-right hate groups. Over the last decade, he has continued this commitment by organizing in diverse contexts—always centering the struggles and empowerment of those



[Ben] is deeply invested in supporting war crimes accountability in Ukraine, reflecting his broader vision of justice that crosses borders.

most impacted by systemic oppression.

Ben's current work spans both local and international fronts. In New York City, he supports initiatives aimed at curbing police abuses and advancing accountability. Globally, he contributes to efforts for the legal and political empowerment of Indigenous communities in Guyana, who are facing displacement and environmental destruction due to illegal mining. He is also deeply invested in supporting war crimes accountability in Ukraine, reflecting his broader vision of justice that crosses borders.

As an active member of the NYC Chapter, Ben is passionate about ensuring that the Guild remains at the forefront of radical, left legal activism. His blend of organizing experience, academic rigor, and dedication to solidarity makes him an invaluable leader within the Guild community.

When he can, Ben enjoys biking and getting outdoors.

We are excited to have Ben on the Executive Committee, and we look forward to the continued impact of his work—both in New York and across the globe.

Meet the New Executive Committee Members

Yuna Park

BY ANN SCHNEIDER

Yuna Park (they/them) first began thinking of law as a career in 2017, when they were teaching English at a private language school in South Korea. They saw how their co-workers were being adversely treated, read up on Korean labor law and filed a complaint for benefits that weren't being paid and won! They explain, "I could do this because of a special status Korea extends to certain descendants," whereas my Black co-workers would be placed in the worst classes and denied materials." They are grateful their parents encouraged cultural immersion and says they felt most at home during the two years they worked in Korea. I asked them if they are bilingual, and they said no, I'm trilingual, having also inherited their dad's Argentinian background. (They could read the Korean labor law both in English and Korean, thanks to their parents.)

As to why they chose St. John's University School of Law, known for being a prosecutor factory, "They wooed me." Their participation in the Pro Bono Scholars Program allowed them to pass the February bar and get quick admission to the New York



bar. They learned who their true friends there were (and weren't) because they were studying for the bar exam when October 7 happened. Overwhelmed with concern, they found it helped their focus on the task at

hand if they spent at least one day per week demonstrating or acting as a LO.

Yuna presently works at NYLAG, New York Legal Assistance Group, happily working in immigration, where they "feel the pull" that led them to devote three years to law school.

When they were teaching English at a private language school in South Korea, they saw how their co-workers were being adversely treated, read up on Korean labor law and filed a complaint for benefits that weren't being paid and won!

Yuna got their bar number in June 2024. They have now come full circle. Referring to the years they lived in the Bronx, they called it "NYC's last bastion," of hold-outs where gentrification has been resisted. Yuna now lives in the neighborhood where they were born, across the street where their parents lived in Queens.

Yuna says, "From the river to the Sea, Palestine will be Free!"

NYC Chapter Supports New NYS Division of Parole Regulations for Those Convicted at an Early Age

Bob Boyle's statement on behalf of the chapter supporting the adoption of regulations proposed by the NYS Division of Parole governing parole consideration for those convicted at an early age:

The New York City Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild (NLG-NYC) whole-heartedly supports the adoption of regulations proposed by the Division of Parole governing parole consideration for those convicted at an early age.

Members of the NLG-NYC have represented hundreds if not thousands of individuals convicted of crimes at an early age, e.g. the ages of 18 through their mid-twenties. As lawyers we have often been

frustrated by parole denials predicated on the type of person the offender was at the time of the offense rather than the person they are today, i.e. when they appeal before the Parole Board. The proposed regulations would bring New York States in line with advances in neuroscience that recognize that the brain is not fully developed until a person's mid-twenties. As one expert put it, "executive functions such as reason, long-range planning and impulse control aren't fully operational during adolescence," which we understand to be the premise of these proposed amendments. The regulations would also be consistent with the Supreme Court's

decision in *Miller v. Alabama*, 567 U.S. 460 (2012) where the Supreme Court recognized that modern science on brain development establishes that the "distinctive attributes of youth diminish" the justification for "imposing the harshest sentences" on children.

While we urge adoption of these regulations, we caution the Board to insure that the new regulations, if adopted, cannot be used as a basis for parole denial, i.e. placing a burden on a youthful offender to demonstrate that they have reached full mental development.

Respectfully submitted,
President NLG-NYC

Chapter Mobilizes

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developed significant and agile capacity to defend First Amendment protesters in New York courts, including cultivation of a new generation of “true-heart” protest defense lawyers. But mass prosecutions of protesters in New York’s federal courts have been largely unknown for almost half a century. Saturday’s CLE focused on familiarizing protest defense attorneys who have New York defense experience or capacity, with how to translate their state court defense skills into federal court arrest and arraignment practice. The CLE featured all-star panels of federal criminal defense lawyers, beginning with a panel on the federal prosecutions of protesters in Los Angeles, the longest running of deployments of the kind threatened for New York. Two subsequent panels featured



A full house packed the room at the October 25th “Defending Protesters in Federal Court” CLE. Photo: Susan Howard

As the president deploys federal troops to other cities, and New York’s place edges closer to the top of the president’s list, Mass Defense will continue to train its roster of “true-heart” state court defenders with federal court training and mentoring, as well as initiate collaborations with allied bar organizations, defender program unions and nonprofit legal providers.

Ashley Burrell, Andrew Dalack, Amanda David, Deirdre von Dornum, Jill Shellow, and “view-from-the-bench” observations by retired Federal Magistrate Judge Ronald Ellis, focusing on arrest authorities federal military and law enforcement can exercise

cesses which would come into play in mass prosecutions of protesters in the United States District Courts in the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York. The CLE also initiated the Mass Defense Committee’s outreach to assemble rosters of experienced

federal criminal defense attorneys willing to volunteer to represent protesters who do not qualify for free representation by attorneys appointed by the federal courts.

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The “Defending Protesters in Federal Court” CLE was hosted by the NYU Chapter of the NLG, and organized for the Mass Defense Committee by Chapter Executive Director Susan Howard, Sarah Kunstler, who is on the SDNY’s CJA (appointed counsel) panel, and Franklin Siegel.



DON'T BE A GRINCH

Please make a commitment to renew your membership before year’s end and get active in the Guild!

You can now pay your dues or make a contribution online by going to

www.nlgnyc.org/how-to-join



Chapter member **Suzanne Adely** was voted in as Interim President of the NLG national organization on October 7.

Lamis Deek, chapter member and director of Legal and Diplomatic Affairs of the **United Nations Palestine Commission**, was a speaker on a September 28 video panel in support of the Uniting for Peace in Gaza resolution to respond to the escalating famine and genocidal conditions in Gaza. The program aired in London, NYC, Bogotá, and Gaza City; and the resolution was adopted overwhelmingly.

On September 9, on his early morning WBAI radio program, in connection with the **54th Anniversary of the Attica Uprising and Massacre**, **King Downing** interviewed one of the people taken hostage at the prison.

Bina Ahmad was a panelist on **Lawyering for Palestine** presented by the American Muslim Bar Association on July 10. The subject was how lawyers and law students engaged in Palestine movement work can secure a law license, navigate the legal profession, and build a legal career without compromising their values. “We’ll also explore what ‘movement lawyering’ means in the context of Palestine advocacy, the challenges of working in both movement and traditional legal spaces, and strategies for sustaining this work.”

Socheatta Meng, one of the chapter’s 2024 Spring Fling honorees, has been a pioneering leader in a sub-section of immigration defense, which is securing pardons from state governors for U.S. immigrant residents whose residency is being revoked by ICE as a result of low-level criminal convictions. She was founder and director of the Southeast Asian Defense Project (SEADP) of **Mekong**, a community organization in the Bronx. Here is news of her

most recent effort. Following the 2024 Fling, **Soche** became **Mekong’s Executive Director**, and she has raised funds for purchase of a building in the Bronx which will become a community center operated by Mekong.

Ellen Yaroshefsky and **Justice Emily Jane Goodman** (ret.) were among the lead signers of an **Ethics Complaint** filed on June 30 with the Grievance Committee of the Appellate Division’s First Judicial Department against nine major NYC firms that capitulated to Trump: “[W]e respectfully request that the Appellate Division, through its Attorney Grievance Committee, open an investigation into whether compliance by the Respondents with the commitments they have made to the President violate the New York Rules, and if so, issue a public censure and/or order the Respondents to **cease and desist** from further such compliance.” The complaint charges the firms with 1) **failing to maintain the independence of the legal profession**; 2) **giving nonlawyers control over the professional judgments of lawyers**; 3) **being parties to illegal conduct that reflects adversely on their honesty, trustworthiness, and fitness**; and 4) **engaging in false advertising**.

“Big win for former chapter Vice President **Rachel Meeropol**”: On June 15 a Massachusetts District Judge **ruled** that Trump’s **cuts to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) were illegal** and ordered the funds restored. Judge William G. Young accused the Trump administration of discriminating against racial minorities and L.G.B.T.Q. people and ordered the government to restore much of the funding.



On June 12 **Marwa Sayed CUNY Law ’25** was named a **2025–2026 Justice Catalyst**

Fellow, project-based fellowship for graduating law students. Sayed will work with the **Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (STOP)** to examine the discriminatory impacts of artificial intelligence (AI) used in banking, particularly in Know Your Customer and anti-money laundering protocols. Her project, **Stopping AI-Enabled Discrimination in Banking**, focuses on **investigating financial institutions’ usage of AI and other automated decision-making tools in risk assessments, resulting in discriminatory outcomes**. Sayed cites her personal experience as a Muslim person and the negative impacts her community faces when **“Banking While Muslim”** as motivations to work on this project. One of her goals is to bring greater attention to the harmful practice of being unbanked due to racial discrimination. “I’m truly honored to receive this fellowship and to be able to work with STOP. This is an incredible opportunity to work on cutting-edge issues that will continue to proliferate in the coming years. I hope to make headway into investigating this issue and provide solutions to those impacted by it.”



A celebration of the life of **Marty Stolar** (1943 – 2024) was held on May 29 at the Manhattan School of Music.

On May 14, the National Lawyers Guild Foundation and the NLG National Office announced that **Youssef Aziz** is the recipient of the 2025 **Leonard I. Weinglass Memorial Fellowship**.

Youssef is a graduating law student at NYU School of Law, where he focused on international law, movement lawyering, and legal resistance to state and corporate violence. Born and raised in Egypt, he came to the U.S. after the Arab Spring, an experience that shaped his commitment to legal struggles

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grounded in community power, decoloniality, and internationalist solidarity. He has worked with the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, the African Society of International Law, and the Center for Constitutional Rights. As a student in NYU's Constitutional Litigation Clinic, Youssef provided litigation support in *Al Shimari v. CACI*, where Iraqi plaintiffs held a U.S. military contractor accountable for torture at Abu Ghraib. He has also contributed to legal advocacy at CCR, challenging U.S. complicity in the ongoing genocide in Gaza. **As a Weinglass Fellow, in collaboration with the NLG's Mass Defense and International Committees, Youssef will partner with the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg** to support activists facing Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) brought by multinational mining companies.

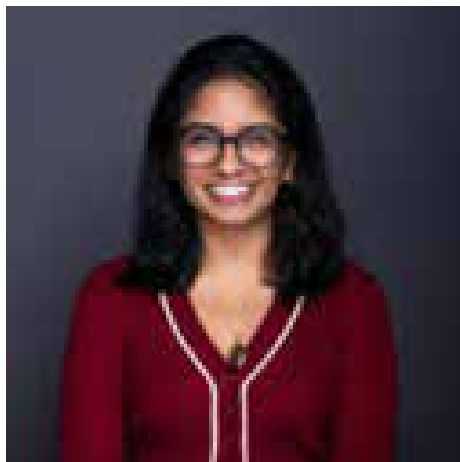
Executive Committee member **Franklin Siegel** was a member of the Host Committee that convened veterans, anti-war activists, and Southeast Asian refugee communities to commemorate **50 years since the victory for peace in Vietnam** on April 30, 1975. Funds raised in excess of event costs were donated to the [Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin](#).

"Trump strikes out in bid to toss 'Exonerated Five' defamation suit." **A defamation lawsuit against President Donald Trump can proceed** despite his objections, [a federal judge ruled](#) on April 25 as five Black and Latino men who were wrongfully convicted and later exonerated in the "Central Park Five" rape cases say Trump knowingly made false statements about them during a September presidential debate. **Jonathan Moore** is one of the attorneys for the plaintiffs.

On April 16, the NLG National Office presented a webinar: **The Feds are Knocking: Federal Grand Juries & State Repression** on how to support activists in federal investigations and grand jury proceedings, with a focus on representing witnesses who wish to litigate the validity of a subpoena. **Mo Meltzer-Cohen** led the training. Mo is an educator, attorney, and abolitionist, serving overlapping communities of activists, queers, and prisoners. Their work includes

criminal defense, particularly for those arrested in the course of justice struggles; representation of witnesses before federal grand juries; and advocacy for those seeking gender affirming and other necessary (but often withheld) health care while in prison.

On March 27, students and neighbors sued Columbia University alleging that it is stifling free expression by restricting access to public spaces following protests. Former chapter member **Toby Golick** represents the plaintiffs who are suing the school for closing its gates and keeping the public from entering the campus via College Walk at 116th Street. Toby is the former director of Cardozo Law's clinical programs and is Clinical Professor Emerita.



Asha Ramachandran has been named a **2025 Haywood Burns Fellow**. Asha (they/she) is a 2L at the New York University School of Law who is passionate about disability justice, harm reduction, and anti-carceral movements. As a Haywood Burns Fellow, Asha will work at [Rights Behind Bars](#), a prison litigation and movement lawyering organization that advocates for the dignity of incarcerated people. Asha hopes to reduce the harm of the criminal legal system through person-centered lawyering.

Columbia Law School professor **Katherine Franke** was [forced to retire](#) because of her support for pro-Palestinian students at Columbia. Katherine was the national Executive Director of the NLG at the time of the first Gulf War and is a former board chair of the Center for Constitutional Rights. CCR's [statement](#).

Joel Kupferman was interviewed on WBAI Radio on December 24, 2024, regard-

ing government lies about the **toxic effects of the 9/11 World Trade Center bombing**.

Abdeen Jabara has made a \$15K donation to the chapter foundation to fund an annual [Legal Observer Award](#) in his late partner **Holly Maguigan's** name.

NYS Assemblyman **Harvey Epstein** was [parodied](#) on November 2, 2024 on **Saturday Night Live**. (The "joke" is that he is frequently confused with both Harvey Weinstein and/or Jeffrey Epstein.) Harvey is a former Chapter president, and he was the executive director of the Community Development Project of the Urban Justice Center, which is now the independent non-profit Take Root Justice. (**PS: On June 24, 2025, Harvey won the Democratic primary for City Council** District 2 defeating among others, the infamous Anthony Weiner.)

Spring Fling 2025



Tow:
Spring Fling honorees
Emily Rieger, Debra James.
Photos by Erik Eckholm

Middle:
Spring Fling honorees
Gerald Lefcourt, Lisa Ohta,
Jonathan Gudian.
Photos by Milad Momeni
and Erik Eckholm

Bottom:
Honorees with Vanessa
Ramos (third from left).
Photo by Ann Ambia



Top:
Vanessa Ramos and Debra James.
Photo by Erik Eckholm
View of the room. Photo by M0.

Middle:
Michael, Milad, Stephen,
Gerald Lefcourt and family
Vanessa Ramos. Photo by Erik Eckholm

Bottom:
Milad Momeni.
Franklin Siegel. Photo by Erik Eckholm

The NYU chapter and the **NLG National Office Mass Defense Committee** co-sponsored a CLE program entitled **Defending Protesters in Federal Court** on October 25 at NYU Law's Vanderbilt Hall. One of the speakers was **Deirdre von Dornum**, [profiled](#) recently in the *NY Daily News* after she left her long-time position with the Federal Defenders "to fight the Trump administration over immigration and First Amendment cases".

where 237 members of the press have been killed since October 2023, many directly targeted and assassinated.

The Chapter's **Labor and Employment Committee (LEC)** held its **annual intern reception** on June 18 at the chapter office. All legal interns working for unions, union- and employee-side firms, workers' rights organizations, and labor and employment-related government agencies were invited to

summer in workers' rights internships this summer in NYC. Many of them are members of their local law school Guild chapters, who were excited to be invited to the Office and meet with Chapter members and other law students. Even the out-of-state folks (e.g., 2 students from Minneapolis, 1 from Austin), enjoyed themselves and were very appreciative (the Austin law student was enjoying being around like-minded folks, coming from a very anti-worker red state).

Thanks to Executive Director Susan Howard for facilitating this event and sorting out the logistics of using the space. I had several really insightful conversations with rising 2Ls and 3Ls who would appreciate more opportunities to connect with the Chapter."

On June 6, the chapter signed on to a [petition](#) to the NYC Council to amend its recently-passed sick-leave law, known as **Earned Safe and Sick Time Act (ESSTA)** to make injunctive relief standard in retaliation cases.

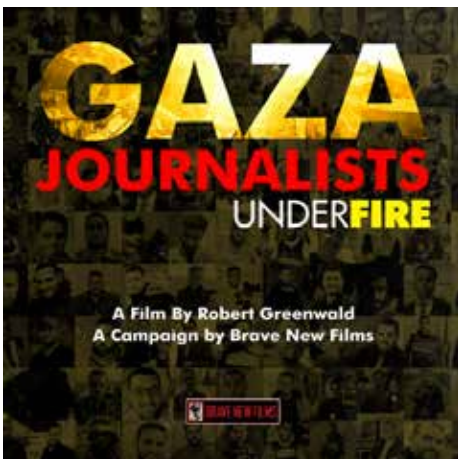
On May 22, the chapter's **Labor & Employment Committee** presented a **Workers' Rights CLE Webinar: Exploring the Upending of Employment Law Protections for Documented & Undocumented Workers**. The CLE explored ways in which employment law protections are being threatened or dismantled in the Trump era, with a particular impact on immigrant workers. The panel discussed potential remedies for these issues through litigation strategies, policy changes, and alternate forms of protection for workers. Presenters were **Ricky Blum**, Legal Aid Society; **Alice Davis**, Catholic Migration Services; and **Tana Forrester**, Kessler Matura P.C.

On May 25, the NLG Foundation and NLG National Office announced that **Youssef Aziz** is the recipient of the 2025 **Leonard I. Weinglass Memorial Fellowship**. Youssef is a graduating law student at NYU School of Law, where he focused on international law, movement lawyering, and legal resistance to state and corporate violence. Born and raised in Egypt, he came to the U.S. after the Arab Spring, an experience that shaped his commitment to legal struggles grounded in community power, decoloniality, and internationalist solidarity. He has worked with the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, the African Society of International Law, and



Michelle Karshan and **Michael O'Hora** represented the chapter at the **Cardozo Networking Fair** on September 30.

The **Free Palestine Subcommittee of the NLG International Committee** sponsored a screening of **Gaza Journalists Under Fire** at The People's Forum on West 37th St. in Manhattan on October 10. The film exposes Israel's crimes against journalists in Gaza,



attend. At the reception, interns met other law students who were working in the New York City area this summer and met with LEC members practicing in this area of law. **LEC co-chair Garrett Kaske**: "Just wanted to let you know that the LEC had a great intern reception at the office June 18. We had about 25 law students who are spending their

the Center for Constitutional Rights. As a student in NYU's Constitutional Litigation Clinic, Youssef supported provided litigation support in *Al Shimari v. CACI*, where Iraqi plaintiffs held a U.S. military contractor accountable for torture at Abu Ghraib. He has also contributed to legal advocacy at CCR, challenging U.S. complicity in the ongoing genocide in Gaza. As a Weinglass Fellow, **Youssef will partner with the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.**

The chapter conducted its annual **Anti-Racism Training** for the Executive Committee on May 25. The chapter's bylaws require anti-oppression training annually.

The chapter endorsed the **May 1 rallies for the rule of law** at Foley Square and at Cadman Plaza: **To Protect our Legal System; To Protect the Public's Legal Rights; To Protect Our Constitutional Democracy.** *We, as lawyers and allies, must speak out! Come to a demonstration sponsored by The New York City Bar Association, The New York County Lawyers Association, The New York Council of Defense Lawyers, and many other New York bar organizations and make your voices heard! We invite lawyers and non-lawyers to join us on Law Day, May 1 to make clear our support for the rule of law. Lawyers, be prepared to re-affirm your attorney's oaths! Bring your pocket constitutions!*

On April 30 the chapter's **Labor & Employment Committee** presented a **CLE Webinar: The Next Four Years for Labor Lawyers: Exploring the Future of Labor Law and Organizing Low Wage & Agricultural Workers**, featuring **Hannah Gordon**, Legal Aid Society of Mid New York; **Retu Singla**, Goldstein & Singla; and **Alvin Velasquez**, Indiana University School of Law.

The chapter held the second general meeting of the **Anti-Fascism Committee** on April 14 at NYU's Furman Hall for a facilitated discussion on specific projects such as **Know Your Rights (KYR), amici, archives/history, social media/press, rapid response.**

On March 4, the chapter signed on to support the campaign by **Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (S.T.O.P.)** to prevent New York's police and prosecutors from using alarming new legal tactics to

gain **unprecedented access to New Yorkers' location history.** "Geofence warrants" allow police to compel Google and other tech companies to identify every person in a specified place during a specified period. **The Reverse Location and Reverse Keyword Search Prohibition Act** (A.407 and S.404), sponsored by Assemblywoman Michaelle Solage and Senator Zellnor Myrie, would **ban both geofence warrants and keyword warrants**, a related practice that allows police to compel Google and other search engines to reveal everyone who searched for a specific name, event, or address. Both practices violate the Constitution and could easily be weaponized to track political protests, religious services, and other sensitive sites. A.407 and S.404 would also **ban police purchases of similar data** from tech companies and data brokers.

On February 21, the chapter joined a coalition of civil rights advocates, LGBTQ+ organizations, and concerned New Yorkers to urge the New York City Council to pass Int. 0625-2024 without delay. This legislation **will ensure that transgender, gender nonconforming, nonbinary, and intersex (TGNCNBI) individuals in city jails have a meaningful choice to be housed in alignment with their gender identity** — an essential protection against the rampant violence that TGNCNBI people face in custody.

The **New York University NLG Chapter** is among the NLG law student chapters that has been organizing to **stop recruitment efforts at their law schools by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP).** In late January, they initiated a campaign to demand that NYU uninvite and permanently bar ICE and DHS from all NYU-affiliated events, including the **Public Interest Legal Career Fair (PILC)** on February 6. As they wrote in a **letter outlining their demands**, "Working with and welcoming ICE recruiters into our community is abhorrent in general, but even more so now, in the wave of violently **anti-immigrant executive orders**, escalated **ICE raids**, and the stripping of due process rights for noncitizens through the **Laken Riley Act.**" The letter received signatures from more than 1,000 individual students and more than 75 student organizations from 15 of 19 participating law schools. NYC legal worker unions Association of Legal Advocates and

Attorneys (ALAA) and Legal Services Staff Association (LSSA) **publicly supported these efforts**, and at least seven employers dropped out of the PILC fair to protest ICE involvement. As a result of student organizing, ICE **cancelled drop-in interviews** planned during the NYU PILC fair, but still participated in a limited capacity when NYU refused students' demand to remove them.

The **NLG-NYC Chapter**, along with CUNY School of Law, New York Civil Liberties Union, and the Society of American Law Teachers presented **The Presidential Inauguration and the Unfolding Legal Era: Social Justice Advocacy in an Age of Revenge**, a free full-day CLE, on February 1 at CUNY School of Law in Long Island City.

The New York City chapter issued a statement on January 3 condemning the brutal murder of **Robert Brooks** at Marcy Correctional Facility on December 9, 2024. Video released by the State showed over a dozen prison guards relentlessly beating the handcuffed Brooks while other prison guards casually stood by a few feet away.

On November 18, 2024 the New York City Bar Association presented **Oversight of the NYPD's Investigations of Political Activity: 40 years of the Handschu Consent Decree**

The *Handschu* class action decree (named for lead plaintiff and NLG lawyer Barbara Handschu), has since 1985 required the NYC Police Department to follow rules (Guidelines) when investigating First Amendment activity of class members, and prohibits police investigations of lawful First Amendment political and religious activity. The *Handschu* case was the first of a number of cases brought in the 1970's to address abuses by local police department "Red Squads" in Chicago, Los Angeles, Jackson MS, and Michigan.

Book Review: Cyber Citizens

BY ELBA GALVAN

Heidi Boghosian's *Cyber Citizens: Saving Democracy with Digital Literacy* serves as both an origin story and a practical resource, an exploration of how we got here, and the steps we can take now.

The book opens by exposing a major gap in American education: the lack of consistent civics instruction. Boghosian cites *Cook v. Raimondo* (2018), a federal class-action lawsuit in which Rhode Island public-school students argued that the state failed to provide an education adequate for democratic participation, leaving many unprepared to vote, serve on juries, or engage effectively in civic life. Although the court dismissed the case, both sides agreed to form a task force to improve civic learning in Rhode Island schools rather than continue appealing. Since then, several states, including New Jersey, have launched civics education programs. Boghosian shows that ensuring every student receives a strong civics education is

tion (false information shared deliberately), and malinformation (true information used harmfully or out of context).

The lack of constitutional protection for education has become a target for "post-truth" political manipulation through the weakening of news standards. While strong educational safeguards are essential, democracy also relies on journalism that upholds accuracy, accountability, and public trust. Boghosian identifies 9/11 as a turning point in American journalism: "Since the early 1920s journalism has striven to uphold standards of impartiality, truth, and accuracy, as enshrined in the American Society of Newspaper Editors' Canons of Journalism. Journalists were routinely fact-checked and held accountable for inaccuracies in their work. However, after the 9/11 attacks, a surge in nationalism influenced coverage of the government's response. Few journalists dared to question the official narrative regarding Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction." This shift marked the decline of

Boghosian insists that twenty-first-century education must go beyond basic literacy. Students now face complex media environments and must learn to separate credible information from distortion.

just as important to democracy as protecting free speech and fair trials.

A core flaw in the U.S. Constitution may lie in its lack of an explicit right to education, a gap that could represent one of America's most enduring democratic paradoxes. Without universal access to quality education, citizens are ill-equipped to think critically or engage meaningfully in civic life. This vulnerability leaves the nation open to misinformation, manipulation, and the very "tyranny of the masses" the framers feared.

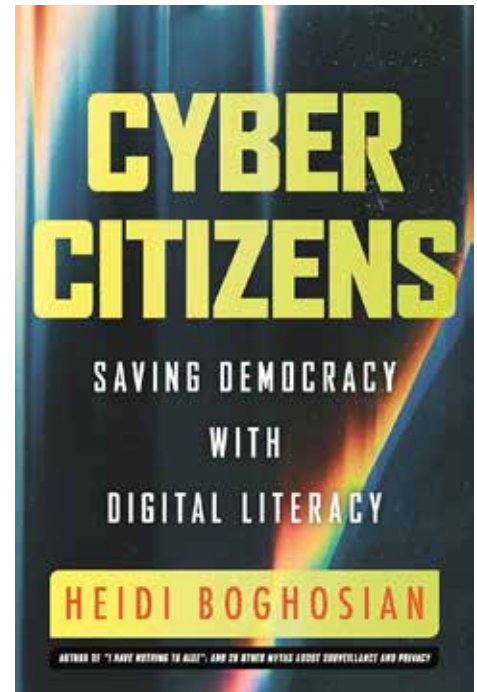
Boghosian insists that twenty-first-century education must go beyond basic literacy. Students now face complex media environments and must learn to separate credible information from distortion. A democracy that fails to teach digital and media literacy risks losing its ability to make independent, informed decisions. She points to Finland's education system as a model, one that weaves critical thinking and news literacy into every subject. From an early age, Finnish students learn to tell the difference between misinformation (false information shared by mistake), disinforma-

journalists' willingness to question those in power. Major outlets such as The New York Times and The Washington Post published unverified claims about weapons of mass destruction that later proved false. Patriotism replaced skepticism, setting a dangerous precedent where national loyalty overshadowed truth; sensationalism and confirmation bias overtook verification and factual reporting.

The digital revolution further transformed the information landscape. While it democratized access to knowledge, it dismantled

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the traditional systems that filtered and verified content. Algorithms optimized for engagement rather than accuracy elevated emotional and divisive material. Social media created echo chambers designed to influence purchasing habits, voting choices and beliefs.



These spaces reinforced group identities and undermined a shared sense of factual reality. Populist movements exploited this new terrain, using emotional storytelling to build loyalty while evading evidence. In this "post-truth" environment, distrust of authority morphed into distrust of reality itself.

Boghosian argues that in this era, truth-seeking is no longer optional, it's a civic duty. Citizens must understand how algorithms curate information, who benefits from digital content flows, and how data collection fuels manipulation. A healthy democracy depends on journalists committed to accuracy and individuals capable of verifying sources, reading critically, and recognizing the forces shaping their online worlds.

Finally, Boghosian offers practical strategies to strengthen digital literacy: teaching people to spot misinformation, supporting privacy laws and platform accountability, promoting open-source systems to limit corporate control, and raising awareness about algorithmic tracking. These tools, she argues,

are essential to protect democracy from manipulation and maintain an informed public. Reading *Cyber Citizens* reminds us that democracy's survival now depends not only on our right to speak freely, but on our collective ability to discern truth from noise.

NLG-NYC Annual Meeting and Holiday Party

Friday, December 5, 2025 • 6–9 pm

Music • Food • Drinks • Cheer

**NYC Chapter Office
14 East 4th Street, Suite 601**

**Please RSVP to
<https://bit.ly/NLGNYPARTY2025>**





The NLG-NYC Chapter Foundation Inc., a tax-exempt charitable-educational organization under section 501(c)(3), was created through the transformative bequest of chapter member and major donor Allan Botshon (stewarded by his friend and Chapter Director Susan Howard). Allan had a storefront law practice on Manhattan's Lower East Side. (Learn more about Allan's life on page 4 of the Spring-Summer 2015 Chapter newsletter, <https://nlgnyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/NYC-NYC-News-summer2015.pdf>)

The Chapter Foundation's policy is to preserve Allan's one-time bequest for the long-term benefit of the Chapter and its programs, and it makes allocations from income generated on the principal for Chapter program grants. Past grants include support for chapter educational activities and support for chapter operations including throughout the pandemic; start-up support for the Parole Preparation Project (PPP) of the Mass Incarceration Committee which enabled PPP grow and cultivate a substantial external funding stream; support for mass defense operations throughout the summer of 2020 related to the racial justice protests following the late May killing of George Floyd; and substantial grants to the chapter, which the chapter allocated to a chapter Affirmative Litigation Committee formally known as the George Floyd/BLM Affirmative Litigation Task Force. In addition to funding Chapter projects and operations, the Chapter Foundation was also responsible for the purchase of the office condominium, the first permanent home for the Chapter and the Chapter Foundation. The Chapter Foundation plans to raise funds to support the renovation of the Chapter and Foundation offices, to allow for events, trainings, and gatherings in our new home.

HOW TO SUPPORT CHAPTER WORK THROUGH THE FOUNDATION

Tax exempt gifts for educational and public service activities of the NLG-NYC may be made to The NLG-NYC Chapter Foundation Inc., and will be granted to the Chapter, including for donor advised Chapter activities. The Foundation does not charge the NLG-NYC Chapter administrative fees or commissions on donations made to the Foundation for qualifying Chapter educational and public service activities. Donations by check may be mailed to The NLG-NYC Chapter Foundation Inc., 14 East 4th Street, Ste. 601, New York, NY 10012. Online one-time or recurring donations can be made at <https://nlgnyc.org/nlg-nyc-foundation/>. Bequests for general support or educational and public service activities of the New York City Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild can be made by making the NLG-NYC Chapter Foundation Inc. the recipient of the gift. Charitable Gift Annuities are available through the Chapter Foundation, and, for members 70½ or older, you can make tax-free charitable gifts as provided by law directly from your IRA to The NLG-NYC Chapter Foundation. The Foundation's annual reports, tax returns and organizational documents are available on the Charities Registry website of the New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau: www.charitiesnys.com.



**Got a program-building idea?
Join a Committee or Project and apply for a
NLG-NYC Chapter Foundation Grant!**

The NLG-NYC Chapter Foundation Inc., the philanthropic partner of the New York City Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, has two grant programs to advance the Foundation's goals to promote membership in the NLG-NYC Chapter, build capacity of committees or program subdivisions of the Chapter, and seed creation of Chapter program addressing timely social justice issues in areas where the Chapter does not currently have a committee or working group.

The first program is for grants up to \$5,000 to Chapter committees, projects and subdivisions. The second is for grants of \$5,000 or above to Chapter committees, projects and subdivisions. Both a Simplified Application for the first program, and an outline of general criteria and application procedures for the second, are available from the Chapter office, nlgnyc@igc.org. (Grants are not intended for individual Guild members, outside entities, firms or non-profits where NLG members work, or cases of individual members or outside entities.)

The Foundation board is appointed by the Executive Committee of the New York City NLG Chapter for three-year terms. Current board members are Heidi Boghosian <https://heidiboghosian.com/our-team>; Corinthia Carter, senior staff attorney at Brooklyn Legal Services and immediate past president of the Legal Services Staff Association Local 2320 <https://nycclc.org/news/legal-services-nyc-union-ratifies-new-3-year-contract>; Marco Conner DiAquoi, foundation treasurer and immediate past Executive Director of Take Root Justice; Sarah Kunstler, foundation president, trial attorney and award-winning social justice filmmaker <https://kunstlerlaw.net/index.php/sarah-kunstler/>; Franklin Siegel, foundation secretary who taught at CUNY Law for many years <https://www.law.cuny.edu/faculty/directory/siegel/>; and Chauniqua Young, foundation vice president and partner at Outten & Golden LLP <https://www.outtengolden.com/lawyer-attorney/chauniqua-d-young>. Susan Howard serves as Executive Director of the Foundation.



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