



**US universities**

## Yale professor who studies fascism fleeing US to work in Canada

Jason Stanley, who says grandmother fled Berlin with his father in 1939, says US may become 'fascist dictatorship'

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**Rachel Leingang**

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A Yale professor who studies fascism is leaving the US to work at a Canadian university because of the current US political climate, which he worries is putting the US at risk of becoming a “fascist dictatorship”.

Jason Stanley, who wrote the 2018 book *How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them*, has accepted a position at the University of Toronto’s Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy.

Stanley **told the Daily Nous**, a philosophy profession website, that he made the decision “to raise my kids in a country that is not tilting towards a fascist dictatorship”.

He said in an interview that Columbia University's recent actions moved him to accept the offer. Last Friday, Columbia **gave in** to the Trump administration by agreeing to a series of demands in order to restore \$400m in federal funding. These changes include crackdowns on protests, increased security power and "internal reviews" of some academic programs, like the Middle Eastern studies department.

"When I saw Columbia completely capitulate, and I saw this vocabulary of, well, we're going to work behind the scenes because we're not going to get targeted - that whole way of thinking pre-supposes that some universities will get targeted, and you don't want to be one of those universities, and that's just a losing strategy," he said.

Stanley added: "You've got to just band together and say an attack on one university is an attack on all universities. And maybe you lose that fight, but you're certainly going to lose this one if you give up before you fight.

"Columbia was just such a warning," he said. "I just became very worried because I didn't see a strong enough reaction in other universities to side with Columbia. I see Yale trying not to be a target. And as I said, that's a losing strategy."

Stanley said he wasn't concerned about his ability to continue his scholarship at Yale, but the broader climate against universities played a role. He praised other faculty at Yale for standing up against the attacks on their profession and said he wished he could stay and fight with them.

"But how could you speak out loudly if you're not an American citizen?" he questioned. "And if you can't speak out loudly if you're not an American citizen, when will they come for the American citizens? It's inevitable."

Social media posts spread on Wednesday, noting the alarm sounded by a scholar of fascism leaving the country over its political climate. Nikole Hannah-Jones, the journalist and creator of the 1619 Project, **wrote** on the social media platform Bluesky: "When scholars of authoritarianism and fascism leave US universities because of the deteriorating political situation here, we should really worry."

In a statement, Yale said it remains a "home to world-class faculty members who are dedicated to excellence in scholarship and teaching".

"Yale is proud of its global faculty community which includes faculty who may no longer work at the institution, or whose contributions to academia may continue at a different home institution," the university said. "Faculty members make decisions about their careers for a variety of reasons and the university respects all such decisions."

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Stanley recently [wrote for the Guardian](#) about a new Department of Education directive that said teaching about systemic racism and other topics could be grounds for a civil rights violation, according to the Trump administration's legal interpretations. Stanley said this order sets the country "on a path to educational authoritarianism".

He said he considered leaving the US in 2017, but that the second Trump administration has "definitely" proved worse than the first. Stanley's profile has also risen since then after the publication of several books on propaganda and fascism. The Munk school is building a program with the view that there's an "international struggle against democracy" and provides a "very exciting intellectual opportunity", he said.

"I don't see it as fleeing at all," he said. "I see it as joining [Canada](#), which is a target of Trump, just like Yale is a target of Trump."

What does it say that a scholar of fascism is leaving the US right now? Said Stanley: "Part of it is you're leaving because ultimately, it is like leaving Germany in 1932, 33, 34. There's resonance: my grandmother left Berlin with my father in 1939. So it's a family tradition."

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