Far-right organizations aid White House in bogus antisemitism investigations of universities

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So far this month, the US Department of Education (DOE) has announced the opening of 18 Title VI Shared Ancestry investigations into prominent universities and school systems. The investigations have been launched over accusations that the schools have failed to properly handle antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents and/or discrimination allegations under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits recipients of federal funds from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin.

In fact, the investigations are overwhelmingly directed against student and faculty protests against the US/Israel genocide in Gaza, with the aim of intimidating and suppressing this opposition and shutting down free speech on the campuses. The pretext is the lie that defense of the Palestinians and opposition to the fascistic regime in Israel equal antisemitism.

Over 100 Title VI inquiries have been announced by the Biden administration since the outbreak of the war in Gaza last October. Overwhelmingly, institutions under investigation have been sites of anti-genocide and pro-Palestinian protests, or have active chapters of Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace.

University administrators and school boards have come under pressure from both of the major political parties and Zionist billionaires to limit expressions of opposition to the genocide in Gaza.

Among the institutions facing an inquiry are Temple University, Muhlenberg College, Ohio State University, University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, and the Oakland (California) Unified School District. On January 22 and 23, the DOE announced that Arizona State, Northwestern, Ann Arbor Public Schools, Yale and Abraham Lincoln University (Los Angeles) were also under investigation.

Several of the complaints taken up by the DOE were filed by far-right political organizations such as the Defense of Freedom Institute for Policy Studies and the website Campus Reform.

The Defense of Freedom Institute for Policy Studies (DFI) is a nonprofit founded by two former DOE officials under the Trump administration, Robert Eitel and Jim Blew. Eitel and Blew both worked under former Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

The DFI is one of 18 organizations that appealed to the DOE in a December 7, 2023 letter to cut funding to schools they accused of engaging in and promoting “antisemitic or anti-American viewpoints.”

DonorsTrust, an organization that takes money from the elite and distributes it to groups that are “dedicated to the ideals of limited government, personal responsibility and free enterprise,” wrote in an October 12 press release that “the pro-Israel Defense of Freedom Institute” was “an approved DonorsTrust grantee.”

Campus Reform was founded by long-time political operative Morton Blackwell in 2009 to publish hit pieces against left-wing students and faculty. The “news organization” solicits articles from right-wing college students that are then aggregated on media sites to stoke anger and resentment towards “college elites,” i.e., left-wing students and professors.

Blackwell began his political career in the 1960s

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working for Republican Senator Barry Goldwater. For his entire adult life, Blackwell has been a major figure in conservative circles and in the Republican Party. In 1981-1984, Blackwell was a special assistant to President Ronald Reagan. Since 1988, he has been a member of the Central Committee of the Virginia Republican Party. He has also served as executive director of the Council for National Policy (CNP).

The CNP is a secretive and highly influential right-wing political organization that serves as a nexus for business moguls, Republican politicians and fascistic media figures. CNP operatives, including Virginia "Ginni" Thomas, wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, galvanized Republican lawmakers following Trump's 2020 election defeat behind the right-wing legal theory that state legislatures, not voters, have the constitutional right to choose the president.

The Title VI complaint against Temple University cites a protest at the campus in October at which participants shouted "intifada revolution" and "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." It also references an incident in which a Jewish business owner and booster of the Israel Defense Forces was allegedly "harassed" by anti-genocide student protesters.

Campus Reform editor-in-chief and adjunct assistant professor at the University of Kentucky, Zachary Marschall, author of the complaint against Temple, wrote that "numerous Jewish students across this country [are] too afraid to speak up. I'm choosing to speak up for them because the University takes no action to protect them." *Temple News*, the university's student paper, reported that Marschall "has submitted 20 other Title VI complaints against higher education institutions."

In the last week, Campus Reform has gleefully reported that investigations were opened at Northwestern University, Arizona State and Yale following complaints from Marschall and DFI.

The opening of investigations over false claims of antisemitism represents a coordinated effort between the Democratic Party and the far-right to silence opposition to the genocide in Gaza and proscribe left-wing students and viewpoints on campuses.

Biden's alliance with the far-right against students is the domestic component of his war policy in Ukraine and his support for the fascistic Netanyahu government in Israel. It explodes his claim that he is basing his re-election campaign on the defense of democracy against the fascist Trump.

The spreading witch-hunt against students underscores that the only way to oppose the danger of dictatorship is mobilize the working class in the US and internationally against war and its root cause, capitalism. That requires a break with both political parties of American imperialism.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) has called for a political general strike to halt the production and shipment of weapons used by the Israeli government. We encourage students and faculty interested in stopping the genocide and defending democratic rights to contact the *World Socialist Web Site.*

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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