

# Biden launches police state crackdown at US universities

Andre Damon  
23 April 2024

The developments over the past week mark a political turning point. The Biden administration, in alliance with the fascist-led Republican Party, has moved to criminalize political opposition to the Gaza genocide, currently centered on campuses, through a massive police state mobilization.

Demonstrations continue to spread on college campuses throughout the United States in response to the escalating Gaza genocide, which is being funded, armed and politically enabled by the Biden administration.

Asked by a reporter on Monday, “What’s your message to the protesters?”, President Joe Biden replied, “I condemn the antisemitic protests.”

The charge of “antisemitism” is Biden’s “Big Lie.” It has no basis in reality. His remark Monday followed a statement Sunday in which he denounced the “reprehensible and dangerous” antisemitism, which has “absolutely no place on college campuses, or anywhere in our country.”

By sheer repetition, the Biden administration, along with the entire political establishment and the media, hope to bludgeon people into accepting that protests over the Gaza genocide are animated by antisemitism.

This slander is made all the more absurd by the fact that many participants in the demonstrations, and a large number of those arrested, are Jewish, and organizations such as Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) have played a leading role in the protests.

On Tuesday evening, police arrested over 300 members of JVP who were participating in a Passover Seder near the house of Senator Chuck Schumer in Brooklyn. The Jewish holiday commemorates the liberation of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. Protesters wore shirts proclaiming, “Not in our name,” and “Jews say cease fire now.”

Across the country, police stormed college campuses, carrying out hundreds of arrests. At New York University, cops clad in riot gear arrested over 100 students and faculty on Monday night, beating protesters and using pepper spray. At Yale University, 47 students were arrested Monday. At Cal Poly Humboldt, riot police stormed into a university building and arrested students. Nine students were arrested Tuesday at the University of Minnesota.

On Tuesday night, student leaders at Columbia said university administrators had threatened to call in the National Guard to suppress the protest, raising the prospect of a repeat of the Kent State massacre of May 4, 1970. In that incident, four Ohio college students were killed by the Ohio National Guard during a protest against the Vietnam War.

Biden is carrying out his crackdown in alliance with, and at the instigation of, America’s leading fascists and antisemites, such as Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene and senators Tom Cotton and Josh Hawley.

On Tuesday, Hawley and Cotton were joined by other leading Senate Republicans, including Lindsey Graham and Charles Grassley, in demanding that Biden go even further. The senators’ letter welcomes Biden’s statement condemning “antisemitism,” but calls on the administration to carry out criminal prosecutions and deportations of participants in the demonstrations.

The letter declares that there is an “outbreak of anti-Semitic, pro-terrorist mobs on college campuses,” led by “pro-Hamas rioters.” It alleges that “anti-Israel protesters, spurred on by prominent leftists, have gathered on college campuses in recent days.”

It states that “federal law enforcement must act immediately to restore order, prosecute the mobs who have perpetuated violence and threats against Jewish students, revoke the visas of all foreign nationals (such

as exchange students) who have taken part in promoting terrorism, and hold accountable school administrators.”

This letter reveals the fundamental political content of the crackdown on college campuses. Far from being a response to alleged antisemitic incidents of violence, it is aimed at banning all forms of left-wing opposition to the policies of American imperialism.

The language is itself an incitement to violence, appealing to forces such as those who gathered at the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017, which culminated in the murder of counter-demonstrator Heather Heyer.

The police assault on campuses is an open repudiation of the most basic principles of free speech. The conception of the “autonomy” of universities, in which open debate is encouraged and protected, is being completely overturned. Academic institutions are being transformed into agencies for the promotion of imperialist war policy, imposed by means of police batons, arrests, expulsions and deportations.

In a 2019 report, the Council of Europe declared that “democracy, human rights and the rule of law cannot become and remain a reality unless higher education institutions, and staff and students, enjoy academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Conversely, we cannot have genuine democracy unless the higher education and research community is able to inquire freely.”

The crackdown on political opposition on college campuses is the leading edge of a systematic effort to dismantle freedom of expression in the United States. Already this campaign is spreading to workplaces, with Google announcing the firing of over 50 employees for protesting its ties to the Israeli government.

The massive crackdown now unfolding on college campuses is inextricably connected to the global eruption of American imperialism. In 2022, Biden proclaimed the “decisive decade” in which the United States would “win the competition for the 21st century.” Biden has set out to construct a US-dominated “new world order” through military violence, aiming to subjugate Russia, China and Iran.

Victory in the “geopolitical competition between the major powers” requires the seamless integration of all aspects of society, Biden said, declaring, “The Biden-Harris administration has broken down the dividing line

between domestic and foreign policy.”

In the crackdowns on college campuses throughout the country, the world is witnessing the implementation of this policy of subordinating of all aspects of society to the war policies of American imperialism.

The central role of the Biden administration and the Democratic Party in supporting the Gaza genocide and the crackdown on domestic political opposition makes clear the complete bankruptcy of the politics of supporting the so-called “lesser evil.” The policies of war and attacks on democratic rights have the full support of the entire US political establishment because they reflect the central needs of the capitalist system.

Responding to the growing protests on campuses and beyond, Joseph Kishore, the Socialist Equality Party’s candidate for president in the 2024 presidential election, stated on X/Twitter Tuesday:

This battle ... cannot be waged on campuses alone. It must be taken into the working class, which has the social power to oppose imperialism and whose social interests are in conflict with the entire capitalist system.

The Socialist Equality Party election campaign calls on students and faculty on every campus to turn out to the factories and workplaces. We call on workers to denounce the attack on students and organize protests to demand an end to the repression. The fight against the genocide in Gaza must be developed as a fight of the international working class against imperialism and the capitalist system.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)**