Biden backs police repression against non-violent anti-genocide protests

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2 May 2024

On Thursday, US President Joe Biden gave a speech from the Oval Office backing the violent suppression of protests against the US-Israeli genocide in Gaza by police forces throughout the country. “Order must prevail,” Biden said.

Without citing a single example, Biden asserted that the mass nationwide peaceful protests by millions of people were violent and antisemitic.

> Destroying property is not a peaceful protest. It’s against the law, vandalism, trespassing, breaking windows, shutting down campuses, forcing the cancellation of classes and graduations. None of this is a peaceful protest, threatening people, intimidating people. Instilling fear in people is not peaceful protest. It’s against the law.

In fact, the violence that has taken place has been directed *against* the protesters.

Biden was speaking only hours after a huge force of police, including California state troopers dispatched by Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom, swooped down on the UCLA campus and arrested or dispersed the protesters who were camped there. On Tuesday night, a group of Zionist thugs, armed with clubs and firecrackers, assaulted the encampment when most of the protesters were asleep, while police stood by and gave them free rein.

New York City police carried out similar attacks, arresting nearly 300 students and supporters at Columbia University and City College of New York. There were also mass arrests at Dartmouth, the University of Wisconsin, Portland State University in Oregon and other colleges.

Biden’s reference to the “cancellation of classes and graduations” is particularly rich, given that it is administrators who have cancelled classes and graduations as part of the effort to suppress and shut down protests.

While claiming this police crackdown is intended to make American Jews feel “safe,” it has led to the arrest of hundreds of Jewish people, including Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein.

This attack on democratic rights is being conducted through a bipartisan alliance between the Biden administration, Democratic mayors and Republican governors.

The assault on protesters is a dry run for martial law. The police forces, filled with fascists, see it as an opportunity to test out their weaponry.

While on the surface, Biden’s speech might seem like a mere collection of absurd lies or non-sequiturs, it advocated a fundamentally dictatorial political outlook, in which the government has the power to declare any protest “violent” and brutally suppress it.

“Dissent must never lead to disorder, or to denying the rights of others so students can finish the semester and their college education,” Biden said.

Banning protests under the pretext of safeguarding “public order” and “economic stability” has been a hallmark of authoritarian regimes throughout modern history. For this reason, international human rights law has repeatedly emphasized that allowing “disruption” is crucial to the protection of freedom of speech and expression.

Biden’s claim that the protests are “antisemitic” is based on the reactionary falsehood that equates criticism of Israel and opposition to the right-wing political ideology of Zionism with hostility to the

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Jewish people. This is under conditions where the resemblance between Israeli policies and Nazi policies has become even more harrowing since October 7, as the Zionist regime presses ahead with a "final solution" to the Palestinian problem that combines mass murder and mass expulsions.

In slandering peaceful protests as "violent," Biden is seeking to protect the real perpetrators of violence: the blood-soaked Netanyahu regime that has killed at least 40,000 Palestinians.

While Biden declares that violence has "no place" on college campuses, his administration has enabled Israel to destroy every single university in Gaza and kill hundreds of Palestinian educators—some, like literature Professor Refaat Alareer, murdered in targeted assassinations.

In a statement on X/Twitter, Joseph Kishore, the presidential candidate of the Socialist Equality Party, wrote:

> Saint Biden, the prophet of peace, proclaimed this morning that "it's against the law when violence occurs."
>
> Aside from the fact that the violence is entirely on the side of the police and right-wing thugs suppressing campus protests, his incoherent 3-minute rant was directed at defending violence on a colossal scale—a genocide that has killed more than 34,000 people.
>
> Such is the hypocrisy of imperialism.

But it was Biden's remarks at the conclusion of his statements that are perhaps most telling of all.

Asked, "Have the protests forced you to reconsider any of the policies with regard to the region?" Biden replied bluntly, "No."

In other words, no matter what the sentiment of the overwhelming majority of the population, the genocidal policies of the administration will continue.

In fact, the police operation itself is preparatory to the offensive in Rafah, which is imminent—an offensive that will dwarf all the previous crimes.

The Biden administration has embraced the Israeli genocide in Gaza, despite occasional "tut-tuts" by diplomatic charlatans like Secretary of State Antony Blinken, because it has embarked on a program of global war, against Russia in Ukraine, in the Middle East against Iran, and in the Asia-Pacific against China. In the widespread popular outrage over the Gaza slaughter, it sees the embryo of a mass antiwar movement in the working class.

Biden is placing himself in the front ranks of the right-wing, anti-democratic frenzy against support for the Palestinian people and opposition to Israeli genocide. He employs different rhetoric than Donald Trump, who described the police crackdown at Columbia as "a beautiful thing," but the logic of events is unmistakable. The American ruling elite must carry out a war at home to enforce its policy of world war and counter-revolution internationally.

The program of imperialism is based on fomenting racism and bigotry of all kinds, including antisemitism, to split and disorient the working class. The struggle against war and genocide requires, on the contrary, the unification of the international working class in a common struggle.

Fighting for this revolutionary unification is the central thrust of the May Day Rally being held tomorrow by the International Committee of the Fourth International and the *World Socialist Web Site*. We urge all students, youth and working people looking for a political program that can unite the working class in a global struggle for socialism to attend this rally.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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