

United front of Democrats and Republicans back escalation of police attacks on campus protests against genocide in Gaza

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6 May 2024

Following President Biden's green light last week for police assaults on peaceful campus protests against the US/Israeli genocide in Gaza, both the scale of police violence and the fever chart of arrests continue to rise.

And as students in their thousands courageously defy the police state crackdown, demonstrating at graduation ceremonies across the US over the weekend, the fascistic rhetoric and bald-face lies from Democrats and Republicans alike grow increasingly shrill and sinister.

According to both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, more than 2,300 people have been arrested and criminally charged over the past two weeks for holding non-violent protests at US campuses to demand an end to the deliberate slaughter and starvation of civilians in Gaza, mainly women and children, and the termination by their schools of investments in corporations linked to the Israeli war machine and its crimes against the Palestinian people.

New police attacks were carried out over the weekend.

At 4 AM Sunday, local time, dozens of Los Angeles Police Department officers in riot gear, sent by Democratic Mayor Karen Bass, descended on the University of Southern California (USC) campus and pushed some 25 students who had been sleeping in a tent encampment out the main campus gate and onto the street. This was the second police take-down of a protest encampment on the campus since the administration last month cancelled a graduation speech by Asna Tabassum, a Muslim student who has publicly supported the Palestinians. That brazen act of political censorship followed attacks by Zionist groups on the administration for selecting Tabassum as class valedictorian. The first police rampage led to 93 arrests.

Later on Sunday, USC President Carol Folt issued a statement declaring, "We will not tolerate illegal encampments of any kind at USC." Sounding what is becoming a pervasive theme dredged up from the ideological sewers of McCarthyite anti-communism, Folt denounced "outside agitators" who had supposedly "jumped the perimeter fencing and assaulted our officers."

On Saturday, Chicago police, dispatched by Democratic Mayor Brandon Johnson, took down a protest encampment set up in the North Garden of the Art Institute of Chicago by students at the institute's school. The encampment went up at about 11AM, and within two hours a phalanx of police had taken it down, arresting 68 people and charging them with trespassing.

Also on Saturday, dozens of riot police surrounded an encampment at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, sprayed the occupiers with a chemical irritant, and arrested 25 protesters. The police assault took place on the same city where, in 2017, thousands of neo-Nazis marched in the infamous "Unite the Right" rally, shouting, "Jews will not replace us!"

No police were mobilized against that fascist and genuinely antisemitic demonstration, which culminated in the murder of 32-year-old counter-protester Heather Heyer by a white supremacist. Then-President Donald Trump later said the neo-Nazi mob included "very fine people."

As the police shoved the anti-genocide protesters off campus on Saturday, demonstrators shouted "What did you do when the KKK came to town?"

Indicative of the forces being brought forward in the supposed crusade against "left-wing" antisemitism on the campuses, video taken by the *Mississippi Free*

Press and the *Daily Mississippian* at the University of Mississippi last week showed a crowd of white male students jeering and taunting a lone black woman standing in front of a pro-Palestinian protest on campus, with one man making monkey gestures and hooting at her. Another video compilation showed the men yelling profanities and racist insults.

“Ole Miss” is where, in 1962, Democratic Governor Ross Barnett incited segregationist forces to riot in an attempt to block the admission of black student James Meredith. The administration of John F. Kennedy sent federal marshals and federalized the Mississippi National Guard to force the school to enroll the African American student. Two people were killed in the right-wing rampage.

In the face of the bipartisan reaction in support of the ongoing genocide in Gaza at the hands of the fascist Netanyahu government, students and, increasingly, professors continue to protest against the war and demand divestment.

Hundreds of pro-Palestinian demonstrators gathered at Kent State University in Ohio on Saturday, exactly 54 years after National Guard troops opened fire on students demonstrating against the Vietnam War, killing four of them.

At the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, dozens of students interrupted the commencement exercises on Saturday. Draped in Palestinian flags and kaffiyeh, they attempted to shout down the remarks of US Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro.

At Wayne State University in Detroit, more than 100 professors and other faculty members signed a letter on April 30 denouncing a police intervention against students protesting at an April 26 Board of Governors meeting, at which one student was arrested.

The letter stated, in part:

We unequivocally denounce the actions of university officials in perpetrating violence against the students of this university at the April 26 Board of Governors meeting. We particularly condemn President Kimberly Espy and the Board of Governors, who looked on silently as a large group of... students were assaulted and violated by campus police and security.

At Indiana University in Bloomington on Saturday, dozens of students walked out of the graduation ceremony in protest over the war in Gaza and joined other protesters at a campus encampment. The first group of graduation protesters shouted “Shut it down” and “Free Palestine” and walked out as university President Pamela Whitten began her opening remarks. A second group walked out during remarks by the main speaker, tech multi-millionaire Scott Dorsey.

With the protests continuing, despite the brutal police repression, politicians of both parties are escalating their fascistic rhetoric and their hysterical and baseless efforts to link the protesters to “outside” enemies and terrorist forces. On Sunday’s edition of ABC’s “This Week with George Stephanopoulos,” New York Mayor Eric Adams, an ex-cop and a Democrat, vied with fascist Republican Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas in slandering and attempting to frame up anti-genocide protesters.

In the course of a friendly interview by moderator Jonathan Karl, Senator Cotton, the first guest, called the student protests “little Gazas,” charged the students with “chanting vile, antisemitic rhetoric,” including calls for the “final solution,” accused them of “hate speech” and “assaulting Jews”—all without offering a shred of evidence—and added, ““Every civilian casualty in Gaza is 100 percent the fault of Hamas.”

He was followed by Adams, who reiterated his totally unsubstantiated charge that protests at Columbia University, New York University, The New School, and City College of New York were the work of “outside agitators.”

“There’s a real attempt to radicalize our young people,” he told Karl, as though US arming of Israel, including 2,000-pound bombs, jets and tanks, and full political and diplomatic support for the Zionist regime as it murders, starves and forcibly removes the Palestinian population of Gaza, were insufficient to radicalize young people.



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