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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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08.12.2023

Biden's Education Department expands scope of investigations into alleged antisemitism on college campuses

On December 5, the US Department of Education revealed that five more schools were under investigation for alleged violations of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The schools are under investigation for reported incidents of “discrimination involving shared ancestry,” including allegations of antisemitism.

The five institutions or school districts named in the most recent announcement include the Cobb County School District in Marietta, Georgia; Montana State University, in Bozeman, Montana; Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana; Union College in Schenectady, New York and the University of Cincinnati in Cincinnati, Ohio.



A student rally for Palestine at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana on October 26, 2023.

While it is unclear if all of the schools are under investigation for alleged incidents of antisemitism, anti-genocide protests, in some cases organized by groups such as Students for Justice in Palestine, have been held in recent weeks at Montana State, Tulane, Union College and the University of Cincinnati.

The Department of Education (DoE) has announced 23 separate alleged Title VI violations at elementary and post-secondary institutions across the country since October 7.

Including the aforementioned, investigations have been announced at the following schools in the last two months: Clark County School District, Las Vegas, Nevada; Community School of Davidson, Davidson, North Carolina; Wilson County Schools, Wilson County, Tennessee; The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York, New York; University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts; Maize Unified School District, Maize, Kansas; Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania; Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; Columbia University, New York, New York; University of Tampa, Tampa, Florida; Hillsborough County Schools, also in Tampa; Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; New York City Department of Education; Santa Monica College in Santa Monica, California

This is a significant increase over previous years. Since 2016, the Office of Civil Rights of the DoE has recorded only 71 investigations into alleged Title VI violations. More investigations of this type have been launched under the Biden administration in the last two months than during the entire Trump presidency and in all of 2022.

From 2016 through 2020, the Education Department launched a total of 10 such investigations. Six of those occurred in 2020. In the first full year of the Biden administration, 2021, only two investigations were initiated.

In 2022, a total of 22 investigations were initiated in the entire year. Between January 1 and October 7 of this year, the department announced a total of 19 investigations. In other

words, of the 71 total investigations, 42, or roughly 59 percent, have taken place this year alone, with over half of them started in the last two months.

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While the investigations for the most part have been launched under the guise of combating antisemitism, many of them have been initiated following student-led protests demanding a ceasefire in Gaza, divestment from war profiteers and the end of US military support for Israel.

Despite the overwhelmingly peaceful character of the protests, the Biden administration, in lockstep with his fascistic “Republican colleagues,” has sought to silence and stifle the growing anti-war and anti-imperialist movement by smearing it, slandering protesters as “antisemitic” for chanting phrases such as “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” and “intifada revolution.”

This new McCarthyism has targeted students around the country, including thousands of anti-Zionist Jewish students who have been denounced and threatened by bigots, police, right-wing commentators, Zionist billionaires and school officials for protesting against *Nakba 2023*. Workers in virtually every industry have been fired for showing public displays of support for the Palestinian people.

The pogrom-like atmosphere cultivated by the US government and a compliant press has led to a spike in violence. On October 14, six-year-old Wadea Al Fayoume of Plainfield, Illinois, was stabbed to death by his family’s landlord. His mother, trying to protect him, also suffered dozens of knife wounds.

Last month, a right-wing, anti-vaccine libertarian shot three Palestinian American college students in Burlington, Vermont. The gifted students were on their way to a family dinner. One of the victims, 20-year-old Tahseen Ali Ahmad, has a bullet lodged in his spine and is paralyzed from the chest down.



A photo of students Tasheen Ali Ahmad (left) Kinnan Abdalhamid (center) and Hisham Awartani (right) taken shortly before they were shot. [Photo: The Awartani family.]

Despite these, and literally thousands of other instances of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bias, Republican and Democratic politicians routinely demonize anti-genocide protesters as supporters of Hamas and antisemites, further inciting violence against all those opposed to the US-backed genocide in Gaza.

The latest investigations into colleges and public school districts coincided with Tuesday's House Education Committee hearing featuring university presidents from Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The presidents denounced anti-genocide protests on their campuses and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. They affirmed their support for the state of Israel and pledged to work with the politicians, the FBI and the Anti-Defamation League to police alleged "antisemitic" speech on campuses and reevaluate their curriculum to include pro-Zionist perspectives.

Despite the university presidents' best efforts to placate Republicans on the committee with promises to launch investigations into "antisemitic" incidents, up to and including expulsion of "foreign students," several Republicans, including the chair of the House Republican Conference, Elise Stefanik (New York), called for them to be fired.



Rep. Elise Stefanik, Republican-New York, speaks during a hearing of the House Committee on Education on Capitol Hill, Tuesday, December 5, 2023 in Washington. [AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein]

“The pathetic moral depravity on display by the witnesses yesterday, the university presidents from Harvard, Penn and MIT,” Stefanik said on Fox News Wednesday, “was abysmal.” She called for the universities to be “defunded” and for all the presidents to be fired.

Stefanik’s attempt to posture as a defender of the Jewish people is completely hollow. In addition to being an ardent supporter of aspiring dictator Donald Trump, she is a member of a party that this past weekend in Texas refused to dissociate itself from known neo-Nazis, including Nick Fuentes.

Stefanik, and virtually the entire Republican Party, regularly traffic in antisemitic conspiracy theories. This includes targeting Holocaust survivor and Jewish billionaire George Soros and promoting the anti-immigrant “Great Replacement Theory” that animated the Pittsburgh synagogue, El Paso and Buffalo massacres.

While Democrats and the university presidents were silent during Tuesday’s hearing on the role of the Republican Party in cultivating neo-Nazi and fascistic elements, after the hearing concluded, the House of Representatives adopted a Republican resolution declaring, among other falsehoods, that “anti-Zionism is antisemitism.”

Ninety-five Democrats joined 216 Republicans in approving the resolution. Only 13 Democrats voted against it, while 92 voted “present.”

The claim that anti-Zionism is antisemitism runs counter to hundreds of years of modern Jewish history. Up until the Holocaust, Zionism as a political ideology did not gain a significant foothold in the Jewish working class. Far more Jews identified with, and fought for, left-wing, Enlightenment and socialist principles. For the most part, Jewish intellectuals, workers and teachers advanced egalitarian ideals and rejected Zionism’s inherent separatism and racism.

Following the House vote, thousands of people, many of whom had previously voted for the Democrats, took to social media to denounce the representatives. “Can’t get healthcare or a living wage, but we can get called antisemites. Good job, Democrats,” wrote one X/Twitter [user](#).

“This is bad,” wrote [Maebbs](#). “This both obfuscates real antisemitism and represses any justified critique of the political ideology of Zionism.”

“I am apparently no longer Jewish,” wrote [Greg](#). “So glad to have freak show Christian Zionists in charge!”

“And just like that, some $\frac{3}{4}$ of Jews under 40 became antisemites,” Angleton’s Orchids [observed](#).

Tuesday’s resolution followed a similar one the week before that was also overwhelmingly adopted by both parties. House Res. 888 affirmed “the State of Israel’s right to exist” and declared that denying “the only Jewish state” the “right to exist” was a “form of antisemitism.”

The following day, in a warmongering 40-minute speech, which was hailed repeatedly at Tuesday’s House Education Committee hearing, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (Democrat-New York) accused anti-genocide protesters of “aiding and abetting” antisemitism. Less than 48 hours after Schumer’s speech, the misnamed “humanitarian pause” ended in Gaza and the Israel Defense Forces resumed its homicidal ethnic cleansing campaign.

Word Socialist 07.12.2023