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By [Natalia Marques](#)
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Funding Attacks on the Pro-Palestine Student Movement

Natalia Marques rounds up the links between the violent crackdown on Gaza solidarity student encampments and billionaire activists.



Counter protesters launch fireworks at UCLA Gaza Solidarity Encampment. (Screenshot from @FilmThePoliceLA, via Peoples Dispatch)

It has been weeks since the brutal state repression and right-wing violence unleashed against some of the most prominent Gaza solidarity encampments, including those at the University of California – Los Angeles and Columbia University.

Since then, independent reporting has uncovered disturbing links between extreme-right counter protesters and billionaire donors, as well as collusion between city officials and police conducting violent repression.

Far-Right & Zionists Unite

At UCLA, Zionist counter protesters conducted several rounds of attacks against the Gaza solidarity encampment. Student organizers reported counter-protesters releasing bags of mice injected with an unknown substance, as well as cockroaches. Counter-protesters also launched fireworks at the encampment.

Reporters at *Left Coast Right Watch* compiled a detailed timeline of the efforts of counter protesters to torment students.

One face at the counter protests was Narek Paylan, associated with the Proud Boys and the anti-LGBTQ Leave Our Kids Alone movement, who has shared anti-Semitic and Nazi imagery online. He was seen outside of the Gaza solidarity encampment, protesting on behalf of Zionists.

No Repercussions for Mob Attacks

The UCLA Gaza Solidarity Encampment was raided by police on May 1, with police brutalizing students with rubber bullets, tear gas and flashbang grenades; 132 pro-Palestine demonstrators were arrested.

The night before, however, Zionist counter protesters had unleashed their most violent attack against the encampment yet, which appeared to have been devised in advance.

[See: *Analysis: 97% of Campus Gaza Protests Nonviolent*]

Zionists would then proceed to torment students with constant loud noises including air raid sirens, racial epithets, and sounds of a baby wailing.

The attack escalated to the point where counter protesters launched several rounds of fireworks directly into the encampment. Police took hours to arrive, and when they did, not a single counter demonstrator was arrested.

Ultra-Rich Donors

For a Zionist counterprotest at UCLA on Sunday, April 28, a GoFundMe for the demonstration was set up, which managed to raise at least \$97,000.

Among its donors, Jessica Seinfeld, the wife of prominent Zionist comedian Jerry Seinfeld, who has vocally supported the IDF and Israel's ongoing genocide, who donated \$5,000. The GoFundMe organizer later made donations anonymous.

Bill Ackman, billionaire hedge-funder, donated \$10,000 to a GoFundMe to show Hamas go-pro footage across from the Gaza Solidarity Encampment at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

He also donated \$10,000 to fraternity brothers at the University of North Carolina — Chapel Hill, after they took down a Palestinian flag put up by protesters and replaced it with an American flag.

Ackman wrote on X in early May,

“I have seen a number of posts on @X claiming that I have funded counterprotests on the UCLA campus or otherwise. This is totally false. I don’t fund protests. I did support the UNC frat boys and a group that has set up large video displays of the Hamas GoPro footage on campus. I supported the frat boys because I was inspired by their patriotism in protecting our flag. I supported the presentation of the Hamas GoPro footage so student protesters who support Hamas have a better understanding of the terrorists that they are cheering for. I have never funded a protest nor do I support violent acts by protesters on any side of any issue.”

Ackman is known to Harvard pro-Palestine student organizers for his efforts against them back in October.

On Oct. 8, Harvard student organizations came together to write a statement regarding the Oct. 7 Palestinian resistance offensive, stating, “The apartheid regime is the only one to blame.”

“From systematized land seizures to routine airstrikes, arbitrary detentions to military checkpoints, and enforced family separations to targeted killings, Palestinians have been forced to live in a state of death, both slow and sudden,” the letter read. “Today, the Palestinian ordeal enters into uncharted territory. The coming days will require a firm stand against colonial retaliation.”

Ackman quickly mobilized in response.

“I have been asked by a number of CEOs if [Harvard] would release a list of the members of each of the Harvard organizations that have issued the letter assigning sole responsibility for Hamas’ heinous acts to Israel, so as to insure that none of us inadvertently hire any of their members,” he wrote in a tweet on Oct. 10.

NYC’s Wealthiest

In New York City, Mayor Eric Adams caused yet another scandal after [*The Washington Post* on May 16] revealed that hedge fund executives, real estate developers and other billionaires privately urged the mayor to use the police to crack down on the Gaza Solidarity Encampment at Columbia University.

In a separate private WhatsApp group, these financiers traded ideas on how to best convince Adams to begin the repressive crackdown, including political donations, and how to best pressure Columbia's president and board of trustees.

A few days later, Adams unleashed the police on Columbia's campus protesters.

On the night of April 30, NYPD violently raided pro-Palestine Columbia students staging protests on their own campus, including by occupying Hind's Hall which students renamed from Hamilton Hall [to honor Hind Rajab, a Palestinian child killed by Israeli forces.]

This police raid quickly became violent, as Reuters reported, with one officer firing a gun within Hind's Hall, and students sustaining injuries including broken bones, concussions, an ankle sprain, and injured wrists and hands from zip-ties.

Natalia Marques is a correspondent for *Peoples Dispatch*.

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