

# Mario Savio's Call to Arms: "Put Your Bodies Upon the Gears and Upon the Wheels". Mike Whitney

By [Mike Whitney](#)

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*There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part; you can't even passively take part, and you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all. [MARIO SAVIO - "Operation of the Machine"](#), YouTube*

No one in the anti-genocide movement is calling for a general strike, a worker's revolt or disruptive acts of civil disobedience.

**What they're asking for is a ceasefire and divestment in any company that is profiting from Israel's war in Gaza.**

These are reasonable requests and entirely appropriate. The problem is that the students making these demands have set up encampments on campuses across the United States which is the first step towards a more far-reaching mobilization against US-Israeli policy in Gaza.

That is why the government—acting in concert with its law enforcement assets in the states—has taken such a draconian and brutal approach to the mostly-peaceful demonstrations. They see the protests as the tip of the spear, the beginning of a populist movement that holds the moral high-ground and will eventually force politicians to oppose the present policy.

This is why the government has deployed its hordes of baton-wielding cops to the protester

encampments at every opportunity. They're trying to intimidate the protestors with a massive show-of-force and unusually harsh penalties in an attempt to crush the movement before it gets off the ground. And given the advances in surveillance technology and other repressive measures, they may succeed in that effort. We don't know. But we do know that the protestors views on Israel's rampage in Gaza is not that different than those of the average American. Take a look at this survey from *Gallup*:

## Majority in U.S. Now Disapprove of Israeli Action in Gaza...

Disapproval of Israel's military action is similar regardless of how much attention Americans are paying to the conflict.... All three major party groups in the U.S. have become less supportive of Israel's actions in Gaza than they were in November.... Democrats' widespread opposition to Israel's actions underscores the difficulty of the issue for President... Biden's approval rating for his handling of the situation in the Middle East, at 27%, is his lowest among five issues tested in the survey.... Among Democrats, 75% of respondents "disapprove of the military action Israel has taken in Gaza." [Majority in U.S. Now Disapprove of Israeli Action in Gaza, Gallup](#)

And we see similar results in a recent *AP/Norc* poll:

An increasing proportion of U.S. adults believe that Israel's military response in Gaza has "gone too far"....

Among U.S. adults polled in January, **50% said they believed that Israel's actions in Gaza had "gone too far,...** **Only 31% believed that Israel's military response has "been about right.** [Half of U.S. adults believe Israel has "gone too far" in Gaza war: poll, Axios](#)

These surveys show that the pro-Palestine protestors are not a fringe element parroting some arcane leftist ideology. They are in the mainstream and **their views reflect the opinions of the majority of Americans.** So, why are the cops beating them with batons and dragging them off to jail? It makes no sense. These students aren't toppling statues or burning buildings or looting department stores or attacking cops like we saw during the George Floyd riots. They're simply expressing their opposition to a scorched-earth rampage that is morally indefensible. So why are they being persecuted? Here's how Norman Finkelstein answers that question:

...One of the aspects of the emergence of the student movement is that ....there is more and more clarity that **the allegation of antisemitism is simply a pretext for suppressing legitimate protest against Israel's genocidal policies** against the people of Gaza. I should also add that among the list of surprises is the fact that **a group of Jewish billionaires—in order to suppress campus criticism of Israeli genocide—are now openly using the blackmail weapon.** They are telling the universities, the Board of Trustees, and the president—that unless you repress these demonstrations, we are going to withhold our hundreds of millions of dollars.

**This is without question, the most brazen assault by the private sector on academic freedom in our country's history.** And compounding that, there is now an assault by the right-wing in our country to exploiting the false claim of antisemitism to repress academic freedom on our campuses. So, it began with Jewish billionaires trying to repress dissent of Israel, and now that false claim of antisemitism is being

used by the right-wing in our country to repress any critical thought on our campuses. **This is not just an assault on academic freedom, but it's also a prefiguration of a fascist movement** among the right-wing and supported by the billionaire class to suppress any dissent beginning on college campuses but then eventually spreading everywhere else. [Norman Finkelstein on Genocide in Gaza, Mayadeen](#)

Norman Finkelstein, political scientist and activist, discusses the systematic usage of antisemitism as a pretext to suppress the students' protest against the Israeli genocide in American universities. [#GazaSolidarityEncampment pic.twitter.com/DAOviY8WV9](#)

— Al Mayadeen English (@MayadeenEnglish) [May 1, 2024](#)

This helps to explain the conundrum we discussed above, that is, **why are the cops brutalizing protestors who merely reflect the views of the majority of Americans.**

**The answer, according to Finkelstein, is that the cops are operating on behalf of special interests, in this case, the interests of “Jewish billionaires” whose Israel-oriented agenda trumps the civil rights of American students. Here’s more background from an article at *The Nation*:**

The violence at UCLA is instructive. **The pro-Israel counterprotesters were organized by a group funded by billionaire Bill Ackman and friends, including Jessica Seinfeld** (wife of the comedian Jerry Seinfeld). Many of the hired protestors seem to have been Iranian monarchists—a group that tends to be pro-Israel because of the old alliance between the deposed shah of Iran and Israel.

As both the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Forward* have reported, **the pro-Israel counterprotesters were extremely violent.**

According to the *LA Times*:

Four student journalists who work for the *UCLA Daily Bruin* were attacked shortly before 3:30 am. Wednesday by Pro-Israel counterprotesters during a campus demonstration that turned violent.

*Daily Bruin* news editor Catherine Hamilton, 21, told *The Times* she recognized one of the counterprotesters as someone who had previously verbally harassed her and taken pictures of her press badge....

As she tried to break free, Hamilton said, she was punched repeatedly in the chest and upper abdomen; another student journalist was pushed to the ground and beaten and kicked for nearly a minute. The attack was first reported in the *Daily Bruin*. [Eric Adams Is the Lying Face of the Campus Crackdown](#), *The Nation*

So, the so-called ‘counter-protestors’ were not really protestors at all. They were not even employed to promote Israel’s political position, but to harass, intimidate and brutalize the people who they see as a potential threat to Israel’s ongoing ethnic cleansing of Gaza. These were agitators who were not engaged in expressing their own heartfelt convictions, but focused entirely on suppressing the free speech of others.

And this isn't the only example that lends credence to Finkelstein's claims. There is also the bizarre case of Rebecca Weiner, the details of which are seriously creepy. This is from an article at the *Grayzone*:

**Rebecca Weiner is a Columbia U. professor who also serves as intelligence director of the NYPD. Mayor Eric Adams credits her with spying on anti-genocide student protesters and directing the militarized raid that dislodged them from campus.**

The violent crackdown carried out on Columbia University students protesting Israel's genocidal assault on the Gaza Strip was led by a member of the school's own faculty, ...

...Just a few hundred meters from the Gaza protest encampment, **Weiner maintained an office at Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA)**. Her SIPA bio describes her as an "Adjunct Associate Professor of International and Public Affairs" **who simultaneously serves as the "civilian executive in charge of the New York City Police Department's Intelligence & Counterterrorism Bureau."**

In that role, according to SIPA, Weiner **"develops policy and strategic priorities for the Intelligence & Counterterrorism Bureau and publicly represents the NYPD in matters involving counterterrorism and intelligence."**

**The NYPD's Counterterrorism Bureau currently maintains an office in Tel Aviv, Israel, where it coordinates with Israel's security apparatus and maintains a department liaison.** Weiner appears to serve as a bridge between the Bureau's offices in Israel and New York... [Columbia crackdown led by university prof doubling as NYPD spook](#), *The Grayzone*

There are so many questions here, it's hard to know where to begin.

Why is a "civilian executive in charge of the New York City Police Department's Intelligence & Counterterrorism Bureau" masquerading as an adjunct professor at Columbia? And if, in fact, Weiner does "serve as a bridge between the (NYPD)Bureau's offices in Israel and New York", then in what capacity is she gathering information on American students who are simply exercising their constitutional rights?

The Weiner situation casts enough doubt on Tel Aviv's relationship with Washington that there should be a thorough investigation, but that probably won't happen. What is more likely to happen is that the collusion will deepen and become more widespread until it poses a grave threat to US national security. Are we there yet?

We don't know, but we need to know; just as we need to know how many "Weiners" are operating in positions of authority across the country. Isn't that a reasonable proposition?

Unfortunately, the only thing of which we can be certain of is that if Weiner had been Russian or Chinese, she would have been bundled off to Gitmo pell-mell where she would face a steady diet of bread crusts and waterboarding. That much is certain. Here's more on the Israeli link to the violence at UCLA from *The Grayzone*:

*The Grayzone* has obtained a dossier detailing the identities of the Zionist hooligans who assaulted UCLA anti-genocide student protesters... **On April 30, thirty people were injured when a mob of Zionist hooligans savagely assaulted the pro-**

## **Palestine UCLA encampment shortly before midnight.....**

Los Angeles-area police have arrested droves of students protesting Israel's US-backed genocide in Gaza,.... (but) to date **there have been no arrests of pro-Israel goons.** (*The Grayzone* identifies many of the people involved.)

**Aaron Cohen. Cohen is an Israeli 'counterterrorism analyst' who embedded with police shortly before their May 2 raid** ... shortly before the raid, Cohen wrote on Instagram: "I just wrapped [up] a [sic] independent quiet infiltration operation for @drphil tonight into the heart of the UCLA encampment. I'm now down here with LASDs elite SRT who's staging now and preparing to make entry onto the pro terror antisemitic encampment."...Also present in the run-up to the attack were members of **Magen Am, a Los Angeles-based Jewish private security firm** founded in 2017 by Yossi Eilfort, an MMA fighter-turned-Chabad rabbi. Magen Am, which claims to employ 12 former Israeli and US soldiers, bills itself as "the only Jewish, non-profit organization licensed to provide physical, armed security services on the West Coast of the United States."

Speaking to the Los Angeles Times, **Eilfort admitted coordinating with UCLA on an April 28 counter-protest aimed at antagonizing the pro-Palestine encampment.... The group maintains a close working relationship with local law enforcement....** That "partnership" appears to be paying off, with Magen Am now openly boasting about its ability to influence LAPD operations....

But their links to the security state don't end there. **Magen Am's official website boasts: "We have direct connections at the FBI and Local law enforcement, including the LAPD, Sheriff's Department, DA's office and the US Attorney's office."**...

Meanwhile, at Columbia University, two former Israeli army soldiers who attacked students with toxic chemical "skunk" fluid this January, sending at least 10 anti-genocide protesters to the emergency room, have not been expelled from campus, nor have they been arrested. "There are no arrests, and the investigation is ongoing," an NYPD spokesperson told *HuffPost* [UCLA attackers exposed: meet the violent Zionist agitators LA police haven't arrested](#), *The Grayzone*

What does it all mean? **Why is an Israeli 'counterterrorism analyst embedded with LAPD and what possible link does that have with anti-genocide protesters at UCLA?** And why are members of a "Jewish private security firm" engaged in provocative attacks on peaceful protestors? And what in heaven's name are the "direct connections" that this Jewish security firm has with "the FBI and Local law enforcement"?

This is not a trivial matter. What we're seeing here is the deeply-rooted influence of a foreign country that now wields significant power within the federal and state law enforcement and Intel agencies. This is a big problem. If readers think I am overstating the importance of this issue, then please say so. But—**if even half of what Grayzone is reporting is true—we are in a world of trouble.** Here's more from a *Substack* piece by Ken Klippenstein:

**For the feds, it is all about turning protests into a national security crisis,** with imagined foreign influence, sympathy for Hamas and other terrorist groups, and a threat to the government itself....

while the students continue to speak out, and so many are clearly unhappy with American policy, **the federal government has wasted no time in surging resources from all across the country as it colors the students as threats to national security.**

**Here are just some of the federal agencies that have now become involved:**

**Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI),**

**Federal Protective Service (FPS)** – the Department of Homeland Security law enforcement agency that protects federal buildings and other assets, and

**Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)**, the Department of Homeland Security’s investigative arm....

**Under the Biden’s administration’s 2023 National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, a gaggle of additional agencies are called upon to take action....(including)**

The FBI

In an *NBC* interview last week, FBI Director Christopher Wray confirmed that “we do share intelligence about specific threats of violence” regarding the campus protests....

In March testimony to Congress, Wray warned that “we expect that October 7 and the conflict that’s followed will feed a pipeline of radicalization and mobilization for years to come.” ...

On Wednesday, **when asked about the campus protests, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said that “the DOJ and FBI is going to continue to offer support to universities and colleges in respect to federal laws.” ...**

**The FBI is also under pressure from Congress to crack down on the protests...***The Intercept* has also reported on a zoom call in which representatives Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ) and Mike Lawler (R-NY), along with trustees from several universities, discussed what they saw as the need for FBI intervention. [Attending Gaza Protests? The Feds Are Watching, Ken Klippenstein](#), *Substack*

Get the picture?

So, Federal law enforcement and the intel agencies are already involved and likely using their extraordinary surveillance powers to spy on leaders in the protest movement, infiltrate their camps (with confidential informants), and implement a dirty tricks strategy aimed at entrapping hapless protesters by encouraging illegal activity or property damage. All of this is designed to deter further “radicalization and mobilization”, which are FBI Director Wray’s buzzwords for ‘legally petitioning the government to abandon its support for the genocide in Gaza’.

All of the instruments of state coercion are now focused on a small group of principled activists who merely want to stop their government from participating in the killing of women and children in their historic homeland. And for that, they must be crushed.



It reminds me of a speech that **John F. Kennedy** delivered on the White House lawn in 1962 when he said:

Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.

Amen, to that.

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