

Trump threatens UC Berkeley funding cut after protest against fascist provocateur

By Gabriel Black
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President Donald Trump threatened to revoke federal funding to the University of California at Berkeley, one of the top public research institutions in the United States, following a protest Wednesday night by thousands of students against Milo Yiannopoulos, the extreme right-wing editor of Breitbart News. Yiannopoulos had been invited by the campus Republicans to speak at the university.

The protest was peaceful, but a small, well-organized group of anarchists assaulted Trump supporters and vandalized stores and other property. The university police canceled Yiannopoulos's appearance and ordered a lockdown of the campus, with students told to "shelter in place."

The gratuitous violence carried out by the black-hooded ANTIFA group was a gift to the Trump administration, which seized on its actions to smear the students who demonstrated to express opposition to the anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant racism and general contempt for democratic rights pushed by Breitbart News and Yiannopoulos. The former head of Breitbart, a media platform for the fascist "alt-right," is Stephen Bannon, Trump's chief White House adviser.

All three early morning network news programs led Thursday with the violence in Berkeley in reports designed to discredit the protesters and promote Yiannopoulos and his supporters as defenders of free speech and academic freedom. The viciously anti-Muslim Breitbart editor is touring mostly liberal US campuses in a well-organized provocation aimed precisely at inciting violent incidents that can be used as a pretext for the suppression of democratic and left-wing views.

Several other stops on Yiannopoulos's tour have been canceled. At his speech at the University of Washington, one of his supporters shot and seriously

injured a protester.

His speech Tuesday night at California Polytechnic University was a diatribe against the right to abortion. Yiannopoulos presented the world as a battle between Christian "Western civilization" and Islam. In another speech last year he said, "Islam, not radical Islam, is the problem." Muslim immigrants, he added, "bring their delicacies with them: pork chops, yoghurt and gang-rape."

Writing at 2 am Eastern Standard Time on Thursday, Trump tweeted, "If UC Berkeley does not allow free speech and practices violence on innocent people with a different point of view—NO FEDERAL FUNDS?"

Berkeley research relies on \$370 million in annual funding from the federal government, a little more than half of its yearly research budget. The University of California system as a whole receives \$1.6 billion in federal aid for students.

Protests on the campus began at around 5:30 pm on Wednesday, with some 2,000 students participating. Shortly after the protesters assembled, a section of anarchists began to shoot fireworks at police and event organizers and assault the few Trump supporters in the area. They attempted to break into the building where the event was scheduled by smashing the windows. The university police canceled the event and evacuated Yiannopoulos.

The police then fired tear gas, rubber bullets and noise grenades into the crowd. Some of the so-called "black bloc" protesters tore down a mobile floodlight and set its generator on fire.

After the event had been canceled, a smaller section of the protest took to the streets and marched around Berkeley. One teenager, not a student at UC Berkeley, was arrested. Two others were arrested earlier in the afternoon for allegedly assaulting a Trump supporter on

campus.

Anarchist groups such as ANTIFA are politically reactionary. They represent demoralized sections of the middle class that are hostile to any struggle to politically educate and mobilize the working class and youth against the capitalist system. Their tactics, gratuitous violence and destruction of property, flow from and reflect their bankrupt politics.

Undercover police and paid provocateurs would act no differently at a mass demonstration than ANTIFA did Wednesday evening in Berkeley. In fact, such organizations are, by dint of their politics and the social forces they attract, magnets for police infiltration. There can be little doubt that significant numbers of the hooded anarchists who rioted in Berkeley were police agents or informants.

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