

Abolish Washington's immigration Gestapo! Stop the persecution of immigrants!

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Tens of millions of Americans are watching in shame and horror as the US government arrests hundreds of thousands of immigrants, separates them from their spouses, children and parents and deports or detains them in a network of internment camps where guards subject them to physical and sexual abuse.

The attack on immigrants marks one of the darkest episodes of US history. Its historical parallels include the internment of 120,000 Japanese during the Second World War, the deportation of fugitive slaves to the antebellum south, and the arrests and deportations carried out in Germany under Nazi rule. The immigration agencies enforcing these policies deserve the label “the American Gestapo.”

Certain thresholds are now being crossed. This week, the Trump administration announced that it has run out of room for children detainees in detention centers and will house new detainees in an open-air tent city camp outside of El Paso, Texas. Attorney General Jeff Sessions defended the administration's policy of family separation yesterday by citing the bible verse Romans 13, which he said requires people “to obey the laws of the government because God has ordained them for the purpose of order.”

A total of 1,995 children were separated from their parents between April 19 and May 31. There has been a 30 percent increase in immigration arrests from fiscal year 2016, totaling 143,470 arrests in 2017, while a similar increase is already underway in 2018. An Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) budget predicted a 65 percent increase in the daily detention population, which will likely increase from over 40,000 on a given day at present. There are already 600,000 immigrants in deportation proceedings—roughly equal to the entire population of Baltimore, Maryland.

Each data point masks an individual story. Jose Luis

Garcia, a 62-year-old who moved to the United States when he was 13, was arrested Sunday morning while drinking his morning coffee after immigration agents staked out his home near Los Angeles.

Earlier this month, agents in a detention center plucked an infant from her weeping mother's breast. Marco Antonio Munoz, a 39-year-old, hanged himself with his sweater in a detention facility in Texas last month after being separated from his wife and his 3-year-old son.

Roxana Hernandez, a transgender woman who came to the US in the Stations of the Cross caravan, died in ICE custody in New Mexico due to HIV-related complications after being locked in an “ice box” jail cell maintained at freezing temperatures. Sources told the WSWs that recent detainees are being locked in padded cells with immigrants who have been detained for over a year and who have gone insane.

Despite these worsening conditions and recent draconian restrictions on the right to asylum, immigrants remain desperate to flee war, violence and inequality produced by over a century of US imperialist exploitation in their home countries in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Central America. Fifty-five immigrants were found in the back of a big rig truck Tuesday night in San Antonio, Texas after crossing the border. Several immigrants were hospitalized.

The policies of the Trump administration are extensions of the policies of the Democratic Party and the Obama administration. The Democratic Party's role is not one of insufficient opposition but of active involvement in planning and enforcing the anti-immigrant policies Trump is now implementing with unprecedented ferocity.

The Democrats have not lifted a finger to prevent or even stall the ongoing attack on immigrants, as

evidenced by their decision to abandon efforts to protect recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Trump administration attorneys cite the Obama administration as precedent for each of their xenophobic measures. And in California, a center of the war on immigrants, Democratic Governor Jerry Brown agreed to send the state's national guard to the border with Mexico.

To call these policies “bipartisan” actually *underestimates* the pioneering role played in the attack on immigrants by the Democratic Party, both under Bill Clinton and Barack Obama.

The impact on the working class, in both a material and political sense, has been devastating. Six million US citizen children live in families with at least one undocumented family member, and half a million children experienced the arrest, detention or deportation of at least one parent between just 2011 and 2013. One study showed that families lost between 50 and 90 percent of income within six months of a parent's immigration-related arrest, detention or deportation.

Workplace raids like the military crackdown on plant nurseries last week in Sandusky, Ohio show that the government is setting a precedent whereby it can arrest and detain all workers who conduct strikes or protests deemed “illegal” by the corporate-controlled courts. The trade unions and Democratic Party support the “right” of the government to drag workers off the job and haul them off to internment camps.

The agencies responsible for enforcing these measures, including the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Customs and Border Protection (CBP), are threats to the working class as a whole. They are comprised, in significant part, of bureaucrats and police officers who are fascistic in political outlook.

Despite the media's efforts to downplay the attack on immigrants, millions of people are responding with horror and disgust to Trump's family separation and mass deportation policies.

In Ohio, for example, a June Enquirer/Suffolk University poll found just 27 percent of midterm election voters want their vote to support Trump's policies, including on immigration, compared to 49 percent who want to oppose the direction Trump is leading the country. The American working class,

linked by family connections and by the process of production to workers from all parts of the world, is organically hostile to the anti-immigrant policies of the government.

Across the world, the ruling classes are whipping-up xenophobia to scapegoat immigrants for the loss of jobs and wages. In Italy, France, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland and elsewhere, far-right parties have risen to prominence in the vacuum produced by the pro-corporate, pro-war policies enacted by the social democratic parties.

In Italy, the coalition Five Star-Lega government has provoked a pogrom atmosphere against immigrants, facilitating physical brutality against immigrants and denying entry to the *Aquarius*, a boat filled with over 600 refugees seeking to escape Africa. Two refugees from this boat have now died. In Greece, the self-proclaimed “left” SYRIZA government has rejected international legal mandates demanding that it allow immigrants to leave the island camps where they have been held captive.

All over the world, the dismantling of the deportation machines is a life and death question for the working class, against whom the dictatorial arrest-and-detain policies will next be employed. Nowhere is this demand more crucial than in United States.

The Socialist Equality Party (US) demands the immediate abolition of ICE, CBP and all associated agencies responsible for the deportation of immigrants. It calls for the urgent mobilization of the working class to defend immigrants, which must be a central component of the fight to unify all workers against their common class enemies—the corporate and financial oligarchy, all of its political representatives, and the capitalist profit system.



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