

Concentration camps in America

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A Navy memo released Friday reveals that the government is planning to build a network of “austere” concentration camps to house 120,000 people across the United States. The proposal is yet another milestone in the breakdown of democracy and drive toward dictatorship.

The Navy plan includes the establishment of two massive camps in California, each holding 47,000 people, one outside the San Francisco Bay Area and another between Los Angeles and San Diego—areas with large working-class immigrant populations. The camps will be sufficiently close to these major urban areas to facilitate mass deportations and military interference in the state government.

The Navy memo has been largely ignored by the corporate media. On the Sunday morning talk shows, none of the talking heads or political guests, Democratic or Republican, made mention of the military plans, limiting their comments to hypocritical appeals for a “more humane” removal of undocumented immigrants.

In another display of contempt for constitutional principles and legal due process, President Donald Trump continued spouting his fascist filth yesterday, tweeting: “We cannot allow all of these people to invade our Country. When somebody comes in, we must immediately, with no judges or Court Cases, bring them back from where they came. Our system is a mockery to good immigration policy and Law and Order.”

There are still 2,053 locked-up children who have been separated from their parents. Social workers say the immigrant children have become “eerily silent,” are “hearing voices,” and in their desperation physically cling to any adult.

The administration also announced that immigrant parents will not be reunited with their children until the conclusion of deportation proceedings—a process that can take months or even years. If parents wish to see their children sooner, they will have to abandon asylum claims and agree to voluntarily return to the persecution, violence and war that they risked their lives to flee. Many parents have already been deported and do not know how to reach

their children.

The Democratic Party’s response is a combination of fecklessness and rank hypocrisy. Democratic representatives have issued statements calling the family separation policy “cruel” and “inhumane” in an effort to posture as pro-immigrant for the 2018 midterm elections. The *New York Times* attempted to whitewash the Democrats’ own responsibility for the attack on immigrants in an editorial yesterday titled, “How the GOP Built Donald Trump’s Cages.”

The *Times* states that while Republicans “play to their base’s darker impulses,” the Democratic Party under Barack Obama “took a run at reform” and “enraged conservatives” by “expanding deportation deferments.” It is the Republicans, the *Times* claims, who have “done so much to pave the way for Mr. Trump and his immigration policies.”

In reality, Barack Obama deported 2.7 million people, more than any other president, and his administration expanded the border wall and built many of the for-profit prisons currently housing immigrant children, *literally* paving the way for Trump’s present policy.

Particularly significant has been the response of Senator Bernie Sanders. Appearing Sunday on CNN’s “State of the Union” program, Sanders volunteered that he had voted to fund Trump’s border wall.

When asked directly if he was in favor of abolishing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the federal agency that is overseeing the Gestapo-like attack on immigrants, Sanders gave a deliberately evasive answer, declaring: “I think what we need is to create policies which deal with immigration in a rational way. ... What we need is Trump to sit down with members of Congress and work on a rational program which deals with this serious issue.”

This is a capitulation to Trump’s anti-immigrant program. A “rational” immigration plan, in the eyes of the Democrats and Sanders, is one that jails or deports millions of immigrants, fortifies the border with military technology, and forces thousands of refugees fleeing

poverty and violence to die in the desert. It is a euphemism for speeding up the deportation machine and expanding the powers of ICE and the Customs and Border Protection stormtroopers.

Opposition to Trump's attack on immigrants continues to grow, with demonstrations in dozens of cities nationwide scheduled for the coming days and weeks. This opposition requires a clear political focus and policy.

The attack on immigrants both in the US and internationally must be recognized as a vast exercise in scapegoating the most oppressed in order to divert attention from the real cause of poverty and inequality: the capitalist system. The claim that immigrants are to blame for declining living conditions is a lie.

The Democratic Party must be recognized as no less responsible than the Republicans for the attack on immigrants and the growing threat posed by the military to democratic rights. Democrats voted overwhelmingly last week for an appropriations bill that increases the military budget by \$82 billion and grants Trump the power to stage a military parade in Washington, DC.

For the first two years of the Trump administration, the Democrats have sought to divert and dissipate opposition to Trump's anti-immigrant policies and channel it behind their warmongering anti-Russia campaign, attacking anyone who criticizes the military-intelligence agencies leading the investigation.

The social force that can and must halt the drive toward dictatorship is the working class, the central target of the assault on democratic rights. Through the Trump administration, the military is asserting an ever-greater role in domestic politics. Trump's attack on immigrants provides the military with a cover to prepare the infrastructure for cracking down on strikes and opposition to war and inequality.

The mobilization of the working class must take place in opposition to the Democratic Party, Sanders and his backers in the Democratic Socialists of America, other pseudo-left organizations and the trade unions. It requires the establishment of neighborhood and workplace committees to organize the resistance of family, neighbors, friends and co-workers when any immigrant is under threat of deportation.

The Socialist Equality Party demands:

- The immediate release of all children detained in the United States, as well as all immigrants detained in camps and detention centers around the world.
- The abolition of the American Gestapo—Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border

Protection (CBP).

- Active noncooperation with the deportation machine.
- Immediate amnesty for all immigrants without papers in the United States and guarantees of the right to travel and work.
- The provision of trillions of dollars in public services and job training programs to all workers, immigrant and non-immigrant alike. There is enough wealth and room for all.

Socialists reject the assertion that there is a "rational" way to block the tens of millions of people escaping imperialist war and poverty from seeking safe refuge. It is a fundamental contradiction of the capitalist system that workers and the poor are beaten, jailed or killed for the "crime" of crossing a border while the world's currency speculators, stock traders and corporate executives carry out their swindles at the click of a button and on a global scale.

Socialism and nationalism are mutually exclusive. The revolutionary task of expropriating the wealth of the rich and placing the world's productive forces at the disposal of the working class can be completed only by abolishing borders and bringing the world's political map into harmony with the international character of the process of production.

Under socialism, the working class will have both the material resources and the legal right to travel anywhere in the world free from harassment, detention or deportation. It is necessary to unite workers of all races and nationalities in a common international struggle for socialist revolution.



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