

Immigrant tent cities and right-wing terror: The new normal in America

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3 November 2018

This past week, in the run-up to Tuesday's midterm elections, has exposed a political establishment that is rotting on its feet.

In the US and around the world, political events more and more resemble the 1930s. The era of smart phones and social media is becoming the era of concentration camps, right-wing street violence and xenophobic, racist reaction. In America, there is a growing sense within the population that the Trump administration is taking the country into uncharted territory, with deadly implications.

Each day delivers a new blow to basic democratic principles.

Last Friday, the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested Florida native Cesar Sayoc, Jr., a Trump supporter who mailed improvised pipe bombs to more than a dozen Democratic politicians and prominent figures who have been targeted by Trump.

The next day, a gunman driven by hatred of immigrants and Jews, Robert Bowers, opened fire in the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, killing 11 people. He selected that particular synagogue because of its support for Central American immigrants.

On Monday, Trump echoed Bowers' language when he announced the deployment of 5,200 soldiers to block what he called an "immigrant invasion" at the US-Mexico border.

On Tuesday, Trump told HBO that the White House was preparing to issue an executive order repealing the 14th Amendment's birthright citizenship provision, enacted after the Civil War to guarantee citizenship to freed slaves and all people born on US soil.

The following day, Wednesday, Trump tweeted a racist campaign video portraying immigrants as killers and blaming Democrats for "letting them in." Trump also announced he might triple the total number of troops deployed to the border to 15,000.

On Thursday, Trump announced that he had ordered the indefinite detention of immigrants, an end to the right to asylum for immigrants crossing the border without papers between ports of entry, and the construction of "massive

cities of tents" to hold detained immigrants. Trump also said the military would be free to fire on immigrants: "They want to throw rocks at our military, our military fights back. I told them to consider it a rifle."

No previous president has ever said words like these.

On Friday, the *Brownsville Herald* reported that a man had opened fire on undocumented immigrants at a refugee center in Texas near the border with Mexico. Local Texas journalists also report that armed and uniformed fascist border militias are arriving in droves and are being welcomed by immigration officials.

All the while, Trump has been barnstorming throughout the country, holding rallies where he tells voters he is building a "movement" that can "bypass" the traditional political establishment. He has repeated threats of violence against protesters and immigrants, making volkish-style nationalist appeals to Americans as "one family and one glorious American destiny."

The vast majority of people are sickened by Trump's actions, his language and the violence they have provoked. Tens of millions of Americans are asking themselves, "How can these dangerous developments be stopped?"

Not through the Democratic Party and its allies in the press, who have adopted "cooperation" with Trump as their unofficial campaign slogan.

The Democrats and allied media have dispensed billions of dollars, thousands of hours of cable news programming and untold inches of column space to downplay or rationalize Trump's moves. Massive troop deployments, the specter of martial law and the erection of internment camps are treated by the Democrats as reasonable proposals, total nonissues or mere "distractions."

"I support the president 100 percent doing what he needs to do to secure the border," said Democratic Senator Claire McCaskill, one of several Democratic senators up for reelection who have praised Trump's anti-immigrant moves.

On Wednesday, the *New York Times* cited House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi's pledge that if the Democrats win control of Congress, they will "show voters that Democrats

are a governing party, not the leftist mob that Mr. Trump describes—and to extend an arm of cooperation to the president after an electoral rebuke.”

Senator Bernie Sanders, who has abandoned even the pretense of “independence” from the Democratic Party and is traveling the country campaigning for right-wing Democrats, defended Trump against those who blame his rhetoric for the massacre in Pittsburgh: “I’m not going to sit here and blame the president,” he said.

The Democratic Party’s feckless response is guided by its all-consuming fear of the growth of social opposition from below. The Democrats, who have dedicated themselves over the past two years to witch-hunting Russia and censoring left-wing media and social media platforms, have no fundamental disagreements with Trump’s right-wing measures and are equally complicit in the evisceration of basic democratic rights.

They speak for a section of the ruling class that fears Trump is lighting the fuse to a powder keg of pent-up social anger that could provoke mass strikes and demonstrations. The Democrats’ chief goal is to anesthetize the population and prevent social tensions from “spill[ing] over into the streets,” as former CIA Director John Brennan said in August.

The growth of right-wing violence and the descent into dictatorial forms of rule are not inevitable and they can be stopped.

But this requires a break with the Democratic Party and a mobilization of the immense potential power of the American and international working class, the billions-strong social force that occupies the revolutionary position of producing all of the world’s wealth under capitalism.

American workers must recognize that immigrants escaping poverty and violence from countries devastated by US wars and US-backed dictators are their allies. In their home countries, these workers left jobs as bus drivers, machinists, agricultural workers, warehouse workers, textile workers and teachers to travel to the US in the hope of securing a better life.

Native-born workers should recognize in this sacrifice the stories of their own ancestors, who came from all over the world to escape famine, war and autocracy in the “old country,” only to be denounced by the American oligarchs of an earlier era as racially inferior foreigners. Very few Americans, with the exception of Native Americans, can establish their family’s citizenship five generations back.

Trump and his big-business allies take workers for fools! Fanning racism and national hatred is the oldest trick in the capitalists’ book, used to divide and conquer and crush the class struggle.

The military deployments and other authoritarian measures

being employed against “illegal” immigrants will soon be used against all workers who engage in strikes and protests for higher pay, better living and working conditions, health care, education and other basic needs.

US citizen workers take heed: You, as well as your immigrant brothers and sisters, are the ultimate target of Trump’s dictatorial measures!

The Socialist Equality Party warns that in the absence of a mass movement of the working class, the attacks on immigrants and democratic rights will only grow more serious and deadly. The Democratic Party will collaborate with Trump and his fascist aides all the way down the road to dictatorship.

The alternative is socialist revolution.

The ruling class cannot be entrusted with control of society. Its plans, now on public display in the US and internationally, are to repeat the worst crimes of the 1930s and 1940s, including dictatorship, war and mass extermination—except on an even more vast and destructive, nuclear, scale.

The political and military power of the ruling elite derives from its control of the commanding heights of the capitalist economy, which workers must pry from its grasp through social and political struggle. The banks and corporations must be expropriated, the trillions in wealth put to use to provide all people with secure and fulfilling lives, so their decisions to travel or stay put are made entirely by choice and not dire necessity.

The ruling class will not give up its wealth without a fight. This is a struggle to put an end to the rule of the capitalists and establish workers’ political power. It requires the coordinated action of billions of workers internationally in a revolutionary struggle to transform society on an egalitarian basis.



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