

Defend immigrant workers from state violence!

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The Socialist Equality Party (US) condemns the US government's military operation at the US-Mexico border Sunday as a horrific crime against humanity. The likelihood of another government assault is high. Under the guise of halting an "immigrant invasion," the Trump administration is preparing a massacre.

All workers, regardless of immigration status, must see the teargassing of immigrants for what it really is: an attack against the entire international working class. Any workers who wonder how the US government will respond to *their* demands for a better life will find the answer in the footage of soldiers pointing assault rifles at mothers and children begging the government for asylum.

The target of the attack was a working class demonstration. The government launched Sunday's assault after hundreds of immigrant workers, waving the flags of Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala and the United States, approached the San Ysidro border crossing chanting the slogan, "We are not criminals, we are international workers!"

The demonstration was comprised of workers from different countries and different professions—agricultural workers, truck drivers, warehouse workers, manufacturing workers—who were too poor to afford a visa and a flight to the US and too afraid to stay in their home countries or travel north alone.

Mexico's *Proceso* spoke to many of the workers involved in Sunday's caravan demonstration. "Antonia, a 56-year-old woman, said she left with her family to escape the gangs who were raping her adolescent daughter. Kenneth, 20, was shot by police during a protest at his middle school demanding school supplies; tens of women were fleeing the beatings of their husbands and hundreds were looking for work."

Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador—the countries from which the majority of the nearly 8,000 immigrants already in Tijuana and neighboring Mexicali hail—are in social collapse. Many caravan participants lived through the civil wars fanned by US imperialism in the 1970s through 1990s or survived the CIA-backed dictators whose death squads massacred hundreds of thousands in order to suppress opposition to the exploitation of the region by American corporations.

After journeying over a thousand miles, sleeping in parks and living off of donations from overwhelmingly sympathetic Mexican workers and peasants, the migrants have been housed in an outdoor sports complex where conditions parallel those in the notorious New Orleans Superdome that housed victims of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Medical and food supplies are running low, and Tijuana's right-wing mayor is denouncing the migrants and encouraging Mexican *sinarquista* (fascist) elements, who threaten violence against the "unwelcome foreigners." The incoming government of President-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has pledged to help Trump enforce his immigration policies.

As immigrants wait in squalid and uncertain conditions, the US government refuses to accept asylum applications, processing only a small number of petitions each day in a deliberate effort to provoke an outburst.

Trump's coalition of allies in the military and immigration enforcement agencies responded with sadistic excitement to Sunday's attacks. US Border Patrol lead field coordinator Brian Hastings told the *Hill* that immigrant workers were "so willing to use violent methods and force" that the government would

be “applying some consequences to these individuals.”

Ronald Colburn, president of the Border Patrol Foundation, mocked the immigrant victims of police pepper spray attacks with thinly veiled racism: “You could actually put it on your nachos and eat it,” he said.

CNN’s Chris Cuomo, who speaks unofficially on behalf of the Democratic Party establishment, denounced criticism of the border crackdown: “The point is not to demonize the men and women on duty without cause,” he tweeted.

The US Northern Command issued a statement following Sunday’s attack in which the military asserted its support for the operation. The Department of Defense was present Sunday “providing military support to the Department of Homeland Security and Border protection to secure the southern border of the United States,” the notice read.

Trump responded with an escalatory tweet yesterday:

“Mexico should move the flag waving Migrants, many of whom are stone cold criminals, back to their countries. Do it by plane, do it by bus, do it anyway you want, but they are NOT coming into the USA. We will close the Border permanently if need be. Congress, fund the WALL!”

Anti-immigrant chauvinism is the chief political mechanism through which Trump is attempting to build a personalist, far-right movement—based partly within the state and partly outside of it—beyond the framework of the two-party system. The interconnected evils of political reaction, xenophobia and nationalism serve as the ideological bridge that links Trump’s reactionary supporters to the government forces of domestic repression.

Despite widespread popular revulsion over Trump’s attack on immigrants and his moves towards authoritarianism, the Democratic Party has responded to Sunday’s attack by reiterating its willingness to collaborate with Trump’s immigration crackdown and strengthen the repressive apparatus of the state.

Senator Bernie Sanders refused to condemn the use of tear gas when asked by CBS on Monday, calling for the government to “minimalize the level of force being used” in the future before pivoting away, saying “there are other issues as well” besides immigration. Senator Amy Klobuchar said Sunday that Democrats have “tried to negotiate with [Trump on immigration], but he won’t take yes for an answer.”

All over the world, liberal, centrist and social democratic parties are orienting themselves to the parties and traditions of the extreme right. In France, President Emanuel Macron has praised the Vichy leader and Nazi collaborator Marshal Philippe Pétain. The German grand coalition government is cultivating the closest ties with the fascist Alternative for Germany (AfD), elevating it to the status of chief opposition party as it develops networks of neo-Nazi assassination squads within the military and police.

This flows from the ruling class’s paralyzing fear of the growth of social opposition from below. What the ruling establishment fears above all is any interruption to the constant stream of corporate profits, dividend payments and stock buybacks that have bloated the bank accounts of the richest 10 percent in the decade since the start of the Great Recession, while all workers of all nationalities face increased hardship.

As strikes and protests grow worldwide, the ruling class, as in the 1930s, is turning more openly to the forces of the extreme right as stewards for violently suppressing the class struggle.

Sunday’s attack shows that if the working class does not intervene, the worst horrors of the 1930s and 1940s will repeat themselves. But the very phenomenon of mass immigration indicates that the international working class is organically fighting to break through the stranglehold of the capitalist nation-state system.

The Socialist Equality Party (US) appeals to US citizen workers: Defend your immigrant brothers and sisters from state violence! Don’t drink the nationalist poison—the migrant caravan’s slogan “*we are international workers*” is your slogan, too!

If workers are divided, the world’s most powerful corporations and governments can crush the working class section by section. United across national boundaries on a socialist program, the international working class is the most powerful social force in history.



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