

Trump's raids and the stench of fascism

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On Saturday night, undocumented immigrants across America will say goodnight to their spouses, parents and children, fearing it may be the last time they are able to do so. Beginning Sunday, the Trump administration plans to launch the largest immigration raids in US history, targeting 2,000 families for arrest and deportation in 10 of the country's most populous cities.

For the first time in a century, the US government will be conducting a military-style operation against its own people on a national scale. Scenes reminiscent of 1938 Germany or 1973 Chile will be playing out on the streets of the targeted cities: Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Houston, Baltimore, Miami, Denver, San Francisco, Atlanta and New Orleans.

Thousands of armed police, backed by armored vehicles, drones and helicopters, will storm into working class neighborhoods, breaking down doors and snatching people from their homes and off the streets.

Though the raids will ostensibly target immigrants with “final orders of removal,” including many who never received notice that they were in deportation proceedings, the government has boasted that it will target anyone and everyone at the addresses it has selected. As the *New York Times* wrote yesterday:

The raids, which will be conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) over multiple days, will include ‘collateral’ deportations, according to the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the preliminary stage of the operation. In those deportations, the authorities might detain immigrants who happened to be on the scene, even though they were not targets of the raids.

Victims will be zip-tied and frog-marched to ICE vans, catching last glimpses of their loved ones. The government will transport the detainees to a network of concentration camps in isolated regions of the country, where their families will be unable or afraid to visit them. Once locked up, they will be at the mercy of the fascist types who guard the camps, where conditions are worse than under Japanese-American internment during World War II.

If a foreign country in the gun sights of American imperialism conducted such criminal operations—Iran, Venezuela, Syria, etc.—the entire US political establishment would be demanding a military intervention.

Instead, the Democratic Party is adapting to Trump's plans. Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi gave a press conference yesterday urging Trump to consider a Democratic proposal to limit the right of refugees to seek asylum while physically present in the US. Pelosi said she thought Trump would find a bill sponsored by California Democrat Zoe Lofgren “appealing.”

Indeed, he would. According to a press release by Lofgren's office, the Northern Triangle and Border Stabilization Act would “establish Designated Processing Centers throughout Central America to register and process refugees for resettlement to the US or elsewhere,” so that immigrants would stay in their homelands to apply for asylum instead of entering the US, where they have due process rights. This amounts to a repudiation of international asylum law, under which an individual has the *right* to enter a safe foreign country to escape persecution.

The Democratic plan calls for “additional staff to [Customs and Border Protection] facilities,” and “expands the authority of law enforcement agencies” to monitor the border.

The text of the Democrats' bill also calls for an “information campaign on dangers of irregular

migration” in Central America. In other words, the Democrats plan to run advertisements in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala—all countries devastated by a century of US imperialist war and exploitation—to frighten desperate refugees about the dangers of seeking asylum and thereby prevent them from coming to the US.

Those who want to defend immigrants must draw a balance sheet of the Democratic Party’s responsibility for the attack on foreign-born workers. The Democratic Party supported all of the major anti-immigrant legislation in the 1990s and 2000s, and Obama deported three million people during his two terms in office—more than the entire population of the city of Chicago!

“Left” Democrats like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib have bowed to the Democratic leadership and facilitated Trump’s anti-immigrant provocations. In June, Ocasio-Cortez dropped vocal opposition to providing another \$5 billion to fund Trump’s anti-immigrant Gestapo after a three-hour meeting with Pelosi on Capitol Hill. She and Tlaib then voted “yes” to allow the appropriations bill to reach the House floor for a full vote.

Only later, after Pelosi had secured the votes for the bill’s passage, were Ocasio-Cortez and Tlaib allowed to vote “no” to save face. Trump will now cash the check the Democrats gave him to fund this weekend’s raids.

While the Democrats are accommodating Trump and facilitating his dictatorial moves, anger is mounting among the people of the US and internationally. Hundreds of millions around the world are shocked, sickened and outraged by the construction of concentration camps in America, along with reports of abuse of detained children and photos of immigrants drowned in the Rio Grande.

Many thousands of Americans will take part in demonstrations across the country today to express their determination to prevent the worst crimes of the 20th century from being repeated on US soil in the 21st.

The chief task is to mobilize opposition in the working class to the attack on immigrants and democratic rights as a whole. All workers, regardless of immigration status, will be the targets of the types of police state measures being tested out against

immigrants. Discussion on the strategy to oppose the attack must begin, including the organization of immigrant defense committees.

In the 1850s, after the Fugitive Slave Act was passed as part of the Compromise of 1850, Northerners successfully mobilized masses of people to defend blacks from being captured by slave hunters in the North and sold into slavery. In 1851, a crowd of 2,500 people physically prevented the capture of escaped slave William “Jerry” Henry in Syracuse, New York. In 1854, 5,000 people rescued escaped slave Joshua Glover from a jail in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and helped him escape to Canada.

The horrors of the Fugitive Slave Act led millions to draw the conclusion that decades of rotten compromises had to cease and the abhorrent slave system had to be overthrown through mass revolutionary action.

Today, the crimes of the Trump administration and the complicity of the Democrats must lead to the same conclusion. The defense of immigrants requires abolishing the capitalist system, opening the borders and guaranteeing the right to travel the world and live and work in the country of one’s choice without fear of arrest or deportation.



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