

Texas A&M students protest Trump's assault on immigrants, Democrats attempt to ban criticism

Our reporter
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On Wednesday, March 5, students at Texas A&M University held a protest against President Donald Trump's fascistic assault on immigrants, titled "Contra La Jaula de Oro" or "Against the Cage of Gold." The event, attended by roughly 200 students, reflected widespread anger at the Trump administration's sweeping Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids, mass deportations and attacks on democratic rights.

The demonstration was sponsored by several student and community organizations, including the Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA), the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), Aggies Against Apartheid (AAA), the Council for Minority Student Affairs (CMSA), and the Young Democrats. The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) participated by tabling, handing out flyers, and addressing the crowd, explaining the broader significance of Trump's attack on immigrants as a spearhead for an all-out war on the working class.

While the turnout reflected the immense anger that exists within the student body and the working class toward the Trump administration, there was no perspective presented as to the way forward outside of that advocated by the IYSSE.

Adding to the anger on campus was the university administration's own complicity. A few weeks prior to the protest, Texas A&M sent a campus-wide email declaring that ICE was permitted to enter public campus areas. The announcement effectively gave federal agents the green light to operate on campus, placing thousands of immigrant students and workers in direct danger. The policy underscored the collaboration of university administrations across the country—many of which are closely tied to the Democratic and Republican parties—in facilitating Trump's mass deportations.

Despite the real opposition among students, the event's main organizers sought to contain it within the framework of the Democratic Party and empty rhetoric. Instead of offering a serious analysis of the political situation, PSL members led chants and shouted "shame," as if indignation alone would stop the deportations.

The official demands of the event, as laid out in a petition, centered on vague calls to "define access policies of all locations on campus," "notify students and faculty of ICE activity," and "implement policies to limit Immigration Enforcement access on campus." These amounted to little more than an appeal for university administrators to regulate where students and faculty could be arrested and deported. No demand was made to oppose Trump's executive orders, to fight for the abolition of ICE, or to mobilize the working class against the fascistic measures of the administration.

In contrast, the IYSSE provided a serious political perspective on the broader significance of Trump's attack on immigrants. Speaking at the event, IYSSE member Josh laid out the essential political issues at stake:

Trump has ordered the deportations of millions of undocumented immigrants who constitute an essential part of American society and the economy. He has revoked guidelines keeping ICE out of hospitals and schools. He has signed executive orders calling for the deportation of international students who have protested the genocide in Gaza and [the suspension of] birthright citizenship, enshrined in the 14th Amendment. Redefining citizenship to be based on loyalty to the state threatens the rights of all left wing opposition.

Josh warned that these measures are part of a systematic effort to dismantle democratic rights and impose authoritarian rule. “The financial oligarchy is making clear it will tolerate no opposition as it accumulates ever greater wealth at the expense of the working class,” Josh explained.

But Trump did not emerge out of nowhere. The IYSSE speaker emphasized that his rise is a product of capitalism and the extreme growth of social inequality, which is no longer compatible with democratic rule. “Trump has violated the Constitution and is attempting to concentrate power in the executive branch to establish a personalist dictatorship. But Trump did not just fall out of the sky—he is the product of a long process of decay.”

At the same time, the IYSSE exposed the role of the Democratic Party in paving the way for Trump’s attacks. The Democrats have spent decades implementing the same fundamental policies.

“Obama built the concentration camps that Trump is now filling to the brim and deported more immigrants than any other administration to date,” Josh noted. Under Biden, the Democrats “closed the border and turned away asylum seekers under the same reactionary law that Trump invoked in his first term to put in place his racist anti-Muslim travel ban.”

The Democrats refuse to take any action against Trump because they fear mass opposition from the working class more than they fear a fascist dictatorship.

This political exposure provoked an immediate response from the Young Democrats, who confronted the IYSSE speaker after the event, claiming, “You couldn’t have this rally without us.” Rather than refuting the IYSSE’s exposure of the Democratic Party’s role in enabling Trump’s attacks, they resorted to attempted censorship—a telling demonstration of their real political function.

Following the protest, the Young Democrats sent a message denouncing the IYSSE’s criticism of the Democratic Party, writing: “Today, members of some organizations on campus took the opportunity to disparage and blame the Democratic Party for any issue imaginable rather than do the work which we were all there for in the first place: to stand up for immigrants and their rights.”

They went on to explicitly state their intention to censor political criticism, declaring: “This sort of commentary will not be acceptable at future events we are part of... particularly at the Free Speech protest tomorrow.”

In other words: There will be no free speech at the free speech protest!

The nervous reaction of the Young Democrats is telling. The reality is that the Democratic Party has played a central role in paving the way for Trump’s attacks on immigrants. Just last month, key Senate Democrats voted to confirm Trump’s fascistic nominee for Secretary of Homeland Security, Kristi Noem, who openly advocates for mass deportations and paramilitary operations against immigrants.

The Democrats’ overriding concern is that mass protests against Trump could spark a mass movement they cannot control—one that targets not just Trump and the Republicans but the entire ruling class and capitalist system. Their goal is not to fight dictatorship, but to suppress the independent political movement of workers and students against it.

Protests at Texas A&M and across the country are a sign of growing resistance to Trump’s fascistic policies. However, if this movement is to succeed, it must be guided by a clear political program that recognizes the source of these attacks: the capitalist system itself.

The Democratic Party and its affiliated organizations like the DSA and Young Democrats do not represent a genuine opposition to Trump. They are working to demobilize and disorient opposition. The only way forward is to break with these forces and turn to the working class—the only social force capable of defeating the drive toward dictatorship.

The IYSSE urges all students and youth to take up this struggle. Contact us today to help build the socialist movement on your campus.



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