

More Trump thuggery as Border Patrol goons threaten Democrats in downtown Los Angeles

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On Thursday, dozens of heavily armed Border Patrol agents in full tactical gear descended on the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo district. Their mobilization coincided precisely with a nearby press conference by California Governor Gavin Newsom and other leading Democrats to promote a ballot initiative, the so-called "Election Rigging Response Act," aimed at redrawing California's congressional maps to the Democrats' advantage ahead of the 2026 midterms.

The political purpose of the militarized deployment was unmistakable. Border Patrol officers, masked and carrying assault rifles, positioned themselves conspicuously near the event's perimeter. Sector Chief Greg Bovino attempted to portray the mobilization as part of routine "roving patrols" across Los Angeles "for the past two months," insisting any overlap with Newsom's event was coincidental. "Breaking the law is breaking the law," he said, dismissing questions about political motivations.

The scale of the operation, carried out in a dense urban center on the doorstep of a major political gathering, was part of the systematic use of military-police force by the Trump administration. It parallels the militarization of Washington D.C., where Trump has seized control of the local police and sent in federal agents and the National Guard under the same pretext of combating crime, creating what amounts to an occupation of the nation's capital.

The deployment in Los Angeles was not limited to the Border Patrol. Witnesses reported the active involvement of the Los Angeles Police Department alongside federal agents, underscoring the collaboration between local and federal forces in targeting immigrants.

This coordination makes a mockery of the "sanctuary city" and "sanctuary state" rhetoric long peddled by Democratic politicians in California. In reality, Los Angeles is the site of regular immigration raids targeting day laborers, street vendors and workers at retail outlets, car washes and hospitals, deemed "protected areas" until this year. As armed agents were setting up in Little Tokyo, an immigrant fleeing from an ICE operation at a Home Depot in Monrovia

was killed on the 210 Freeway.

The political theater surrounding Newsom's press conference was itself revealing. The Democratic governor was joined by Senator Alex Padilla, who was assaulted by federal agents during Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem's press conference in June.

The state's other Democratic senator, warmonger Adam Schiff, also stood alongside a lineup of union bureaucrats headed by Lorena Gonzalez, president of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO. The Democrats and the union leaders presented themselves as defenders of democracy and workers' rights against the Republican gerrymandering drive spearheaded by Texas and backed by Donald Trump.

These officials are not concerned about the democratic rights of immigrants or any other section of the working class. They have done nothing to halt the wave of immigration raids terrorizing working class communities across California or the US.

Newsom is pushing the redistricting initiative in California to protect the interests of the Democratic Party, which faces the loss of at least five seats in Congress through the Republican gerrymander in Texas. California is already even more gerrymandered than Texas, with a 43-9 Democratic delegation in the House of Representatives, compared to Texas, which currently has a 25-13 Republican delegation.

As for the California AFL-CIO, Gonzalez denounced "the billionaires" and "authoritarian tactics" of the GOP, while saying nothing about the bipartisan record of mass deportations, war, genocide and border militarization supported by both capitalist parties.

These union leaders, who preside over the suppression of strikes and the enforcement of concessionary contracts, now posture as champions of social justice. In reality they serve to chain the working class to the Democratic Party.

The scene in Little Tokyo carried a deep historical resonance. William T. Fujioka, chair of the museum's board and a third-generation Japanese American, condemned the operation as "reprehensible," drawing parallels to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

The symbolism of federal agents detaining immigrants on ground connected to that shameful history was unmistakable. The lone documented detention—a strawberry vendor making a delivery—underscored the everyday human cost of these operations.

City leaders reacted with rhetorical outrage. Mayor Karen Bass called the operation “a deliberate act of provocation,” asserting “there’s no way this was a coincidence ... they decided they were going to come and thumb their nose in front of the governor’s face.”

Newsom’s office blasted the incident on X, posting in language that mimicked Trump’s crude style, “**BORDER PATROL HAS SHOWED UP AT OUR BIG BEAUTIFUL PRESS CONFERENCE! WE WILL NOT BE INTIMIDATED!**”

While both parties practice gerrymandering, it is Trump and the Republicans who are spearheading the deployment of police and military forces within the United States. The Democrats, however, are concerned not about the threat to democratic rights but the threat to their own positions and the perks and privileges that accompany them. They view Trump’s methods as excessive and provocative, yet they share his core objective: preserving capitalist rule in the face of mounting popular opposition.

The comparison to Washington D.C. is instructive. There, Democratic Mayor Muriel Bowser publicly decried Trump’s federal takeover of the city’s police as “authoritarian,” yet she privately met with Attorney General Pam Bondi to agree to cooperate with the administration’s “Make Washington, D.C. safe again” campaign.

The supposed opposition to Trump’s methods evaporated in the face of an understanding that both parties are committed to the same program of state repression. Like the LAPD in Los Angeles, D.C. Police Chief Pamela Smith agreed to cooperate with ICE, and local cops were instructed to turn over anyone without legal immigration status to the federal authorities, even if they were only stopped for a traffic offense.

The August 14 provocation in Los Angeles follows directly from the military-style Border Patrol operation at MacArthur Park last month, when heavily armed federal agents swept through the area in an intimidation campaign against immigrant workers. In both LA and DC, at opposite ends of the country, the policy is one of normalizing the presence of heavily armed, uniformed paramilitary forces in the heart of major US urban areas.

This is the logic of the capitalist state in crisis. Trump, facing growing working class anger over declining living standards, endless wars and deepening social inequality, is turning to openly fascist methods of rule.

The use of immigration enforcement as a spearhead for

this militarization is no accident: Immigrants are a particularly vulnerable section of the working class whose persecution is used to test out repressive tactics that will be turned against the entire working class.

The Democrats’ opposition is entirely fraudulent. They do not challenge the militarization itself, only the manner and timing of its application. Their criticism of Trump is that he is destabilizing the political order and provoking mass opposition, not that he is laying the groundwork for a dictatorship.

What unites both factions of the ruling class is fear—fear of the independent political mobilization of the working class. The last several years have seen a steady increase in strikes, protests and demonstrations across the US and internationally.

The mass deployment of the Border Patrol in Los Angeles, like the federal occupation of Washington D.C., is part of a process of dismantling the remnants of democratic rights in preparation for state repression on a far broader scale. The Democratic Party, no less than the Republican, is committed to this project. They differ only on the tactics and style with which it should be implemented.

The working class must reject both camps. No confidence can be placed in the Democrats’ hollow invocations of democracy or the unions’ empty rhetoric about workers’ rights. The events of August 14 demonstrate that the defense of immigrants, democratic rights and social equality cannot be entrusted to any faction of the capitalist class.

The fight against militarization, authoritarian rule and dictatorship requires the independent mobilization of workers—immigrant and native-born alike—in a unified struggle against the entire political establishment. Rank-and-file committees must be built in workplaces, neighborhoods and schools to organize resistance, expose the role of the union bureaucracy, and link immediate demands for democratic rights to the fight for socialism.

What took place in Little Tokyo is a warning. The forces of state repression are being embedded into daily life. Their targets today are the most oppressed, but the machinery being constructed will be used against the whole working class. The only viable answer to the bipartisan conspiracy against democratic rights is the conscious intervention of the working class in political struggle, armed with a socialist program to put an end to the capitalist system that breeds dictatorship and war.



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