

Trump makes Chicago first target for his Department of Civil War

Socialist Equality Party (US)
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On Saturday morning, US President Donald Trump declared war on the third-largest city in the country, Chicago. His Truth Social account posted an elaborate graphic image showing Trump directing a wave of attack helicopters against the city's skyline, alongside the headline "Chipocalypse Now."

Both the image, the title and the accompanying phrase, "I love the smell of deportations in the morning," refer to the 1979 Vietnam War film directed by Francis Ford Coppola, *Apocalypse Now*. The graphic, apparently put together using AI at Trump's direction, puts Trump in the role of the crazed officer and war criminal portrayed by Robert Duvall, who loved "the smell of napalm in the morning" as American imperialism murdered the Vietnamese population.

Towards the bottom of the image is written: "Chicago about to find out why it's called the Department of WAR." Trump was boasting about his executive order, signed Friday, to rename the Department of Defense, the largest military establishment on the planet, the Department of War.

A more appropriate name would be the Department of Civil War, as the Trump administration is targeting the American population with the violence of the military-police apparatus. Trump and his aides have made clear that the deployments in D.C. and Chicago will be followed by dozens of other US cities.

These actions are without precedent and have no legal or constitutional foundation. Trump declared he would be a dictator "from day one," and he is now proving that this was not an exaggeration. He is reveling in violence and illegality. The question is not whether dictatorship is a danger—it is already being erected, step by step, in full view of the world.

The assault on immigrants is a spearhead for a broader assault on the entire working class. Last week nearly 500 workers were seized in a single raid at Hyundai's Georgia

construction site, with over 300 from South Korea, the largest immigration raid in US history. This was followed by the rounding up of immigrants and US citizens working at a granola bar factory in Cato, New York on Sunday.

Trump's "border czar" Tom Homan announced Sunday that Chicago and other "sanctuary cities" should expect mass raids backed by National Guard troops. Meanwhile, troops are being mobilized in Louisiana for deployment in New Orleans.

Trump is acting on behalf of the billionaires and corporate bosses whose corruption, greed and hostility to democratic rights he personifies. The class character of this assault was underscored last week when Trump met in Washington with a group of tech billionaires and financiers, including Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, Google's Sergey Brin, Microsoft's Bill Gates, and OpenAI's Sam Altman. The oligarchy is openly aligning itself with Trump's dictatorship, recognizing that its wealth and power depend on crushing democratic rights and suppressing the resistance of the working class.

Acting on behalf of this oligarchy, the Trump administration is engaged in a wholesale assault on the working class: eliminating public health measures and vaccinations to drive down life expectancy; implementing and planning a massive assault on Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security; and intensifying exploitation. Trump and the oligarchs are fully aware these policies will provoke explosive opposition. Already, thousands have taken to the streets in Washington and Chicago to oppose Trump's military occupation of the capital and his threatened deployment of troops to major cities.

There is a staggering contradiction between the scale of Trump's assault on democratic rights and the response of the media, the Democratic Party and the trade union apparatus.

The corporate media is doing its utmost to downplay the

danger of dictatorship. The *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal* all reported Trump's posted threat against Chicago on their websites Saturday, but not in their print editions, and the subject was dismissed by several of the Sunday television interview programs. "Meet the Press" made no mention of it, while CNN allowed Homan, speaking for the president, to claim that Trump's words—in a posting designed and paid for by the White House—had been taken out of context!

In Illinois, Governor J.B. Pritzker and Senator Tammy Duckworth described Trump's actions as "declaring war on an American city" and "not normal," while Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson warned that Trump wanted to "occupy our city and break our Constitution." But none of them proposed any action beyond filing lawsuits that will drag on for years in courts dominated by Trump's appointees.

The congressional Democratic leadership has said little and done nothing in response to Trump's escalating military-police repression. Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, in the midst of his "fighting oligarchy" tour, is doing everything he can to pretend it is not happening. There are no calls for impeachment, no effort to mobilize mass demonstrations, no fight to stop Trump's coup. This is because the Democrats are terrified that a call for mass opposition to the Trump administration could spiral out of their control and pose a threat to the entire ruling class.

The bureaucracy of the AFL-CIO, UAW, Teamsters, and the other trade unions are even more terrified of the consequences of a mass working class movement against Trump. It has said nothing about Trump's seizure of dictatorial powers, just as it has done nothing to defend the hundreds of immigrant workers rounded up in Georgia. The apparatus is an instrument of the corporations and the state, functioning as a labor police force to suppress opposition in the workplace.

But the issues now confronting workers cannot be ignored. The Socialist Equality Party insists that only the working class, organized independently of the union bureaucracy and the Democrats, can stop the establishment of dictatorship.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote on August 20:

In the absence of opposition from within the existing political structure, the center of resistance to Trump must move to the working class. The basic political questions that must be answered

are: What must be done by the working class, with the support of students and all progressive forces within society, to stop the establishment of a dictatorship in the United States? What are the new forms of organized mass action, including a general strike, required to defend the democratic rights of the working class? What changes in the economic and social structure of the country are necessary to break the power of the financial-corporate oligarchy?

These questions must become the subject of discussion in every workplace, neighborhood and school. Workers must organize to demand and fight for an end to dictatorship and repression, uniting native-born and immigrant workers alike against ICE raids and mass roundups. They must oppose the squandering of billions of dollars on imperialist war while social needs go unmet, resist the attacks on science and public health, and insist on safe workplaces where lives are valued above profit.

The Socialist Equality Party calls for the working class to take the lead in organizing mass opposition to Trump's coup. This means building rank-and-file committees in every workplace, school and neighborhood to coordinate strikes, demonstrations and collective resistance. Such committees must prepare the ground for a general strike against dictatorship and war.

If there is to be real opposition, it must come from the independent mobilization of workers themselves. Guided by a socialist perspective, this movement must aim to take political power out of the hands of the financial oligarchy and reorganize society on the basis of equality and human need, not private profit. Only in this way can inequality, repression and dictatorship be ended.



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