

Stop Trump's military deployment to Portland! Mobilize the working class against dictatorship!

Socialist Equality Party (US)
27 September 2025

Trump's deployment of troops to Portland, Oregon, with authorization to use deadly violence, is a criminal assault on the American people and part of a calculated conspiracy to obliterate democratic rights and establish a police state.

On Saturday morning, Trump posted on Truth Social: "At the request of Secretary of Homeland Security, Kristi Noem, I am directing Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth, to provide all necessary Troops to protect War ravaged Portland, and any of our ICE Facilities under siege from attack by Antifa, and other domestic terrorists. I am also authorizing Full Force, if necessary."

The president of the United States has ordered the military into an American city with the explicit directive to use deadly force against civilians. This is an unprecedented violation of the Constitution and the Posse Comitatus Act. It is a frontal assault on the inalienable rights of the population, including those inscribed in the First Amendment, which prohibits any abridgment of "the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." If there were any definition of "high crimes and misdemeanors," this is it.

As the Socialist Equality Party wrote in its statement of September 19, one week ago, "It is necessary to put aside all self-deluding hopes that what is unfolding is anything less than a drive to establish a presidential dictatorship, based on the military, police, paramilitary forces and fascist gangs." This warning has now been entirely confirmed.

All the events since the killing of Charlie Kirk have been orchestrated to implement plans that were drawn up well in advance. Trump and his accomplices, including Steven Miller and Steve Bannon, turned last weekend's grotesque Arizona memorial into a fascist call to arms, portraying Kirk as a martyr and demanding a "war" against the left.

Trump himself invoked Kirk's supposed "last words" to justify deploying the National Guard and federal troops into American cities. Even as Trump orders the military into Portland, preparations are underway for the deployment of the National Guard to Memphis this week. Other cities will follow, including Chicago, which Trump threatened with "war" earlier this month.

Trump's declaration of "war" on Portland also comes in advance of two developments taking place on Tuesday. First, the extraordinary meeting outside Washington called by "War Secretary" Pete Hegseth involving hundreds of active-duty generals and admirals ordered to return from military bases throughout the world. This meeting is intended to assert Trump's direct control over the military, whose

officers will be told to pledge an oath of loyalty to Trump as he deploys soldiers against the American population.

Second, the looming budget deadline, which expires at midnight on September 30. Trump has made clear his intention to use a government shutdown to carry out mass firings of federal workers and a vast restructuring of the state in line with his unfolding coup.

The targeting of Portland also follows Trump's September 25 memorandum branding all left-wing opposition as "domestic terrorism." The document, which followed an earlier executive order, strings together unrelated incidents to manufacture the fiction of a vast left-wing "terror" network and declares that the "common threads animating this violent conduct include anti-Americanism, anti-capitalism, and anti-Christianity."

The position of the Trump government is that all opposition to the fascist right is criminal "domestic terrorism." This definition is intended to provide the framework for the illegalization of all forms of political opposition. Included in this wide web of political repression is even the Democratic Party.

Last month, in an appearance on Fox News, White House deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller declared that the "Democrat Party is not a political party. It is a domestic extremist organization."

In a television interview Wednesday on CNN, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem was asked directly whether the DHS was considering classifying the Democratic Party as a "domestic extremist organization," potentially making it a target of the campaign of mass repression. Noem refused to respond to the question, except to say, "I think their views are extreme."

The British newspaper *The Independent* noted, "'Miller's suggestion that the entire Democratic Party could be criminalized as a 'domestic extremist organization' would effectively end American democracy if actually achieved.'" No major American newspaper has broached the subject, and not a single leading Democrat has warned that there are ongoing discussions in the White House about whether to outlaw their party.

Trump is not acting as an individual, but as a representative of the corporate-financial oligarchy which sees in him a vehicle to defend its wealth through war abroad and repression at home. The ruling elite is preparing a massive assault on what remains of social programs. The central target of this offensive is the working class itself, whose living standards and democratic rights must be crushed to preserve the obscene wealth and power of the oligarchy.

In carrying out its coup, the administration relies on the cowardice and complicity of the Democratic Party.

In response to Trump's deployment of troops to Portland, the Democrats have issued statements aimed at systematically downplaying the significance of Trump's actions and attempting to demobilize political opposition to his ongoing coup. "I ask Oregonians to stay calm and enjoy a beautiful fall day," wrote Oregon Governor Tina Kotek. The state's Democratic Party issued a statement begging Trump to "abandon this dangerous misuse of power and focus on the real work of governing."

At the national level, a handful of individual figures have posted mealy-mouthed statements that commit the party to nothing. There has been no call for an emergency caucus, no call for mass protest, and not even a warning to the military that it is legally bound to reject unconstitutional orders.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer tweeted, "Portland is not 'war ravaged.' U.S. troops are not political playthings. And Trump is not a king. Democrats will fight in Congress to stop him."

Senator Bernie Sanders likewise posted, "Mr. President: Read the Constitution. The function of the U.S. military is to protect us from FOREIGN enemies, not Portland, OR. In this country we have local and state police for law enforcement, not federal troops. Stop deploying the U.S. army against Americans." Sanders' statement is a political farce. He pleads with the coup plotter to stop his coup, as though Trump could be persuaded to abandon his drive for dictatorship with a civics lesson.

The Democrats, who represent the same billionaire oligarchs on whose behalf Trump rules, fear a mass movement against Trump far more than they oppose Trump's dictatorship. They remain silent even under direct threats by Trump and his top fascist aides to target the party as a whole.

As of this writing, the AFL-CIO has also issued no response to Trump's order to deploy troops to Portland. Its president, Liz Shuler, responded to developments over the past week with a public statement Thursday on the looming government shutdown, appealing for the administration to "get to work" and "find a funding solution now to avoid a costly government shutdown."

The question must be urgently raised in every factory, workplace and school: How is Trump's coup to be stopped? Opposition will not come from Congress, the courts, or the corporate media. If there is going to be resistance, it must come from below, through the mobilization of all genuine defenders of democratic rights, spearheaded by the working class.

Historically, when confronted with the threat of dictatorship and repression, the most powerful weapon of the working class has been the general strike—the organized withdrawal of labor to immobilize the forces of reaction.

Just one week ago, in a statement that warned of the unfolding conspiracy to overthrow the Constitution, the SEP called for "The building of a new form of organization that can unify the working class and mobilize its vast industrial and economic power against the Trump regime."

The statement explained:

This new form of organization proposed by the Socialist Equality Party consists of rank-and-file committees. They must be established in every factory, workplace, school and neighborhood to organize resistance to Trump's dictatorship. These committees must become centers of resistance, uniting all sections of the working class (in industry, logistics,

transport, restaurants and fast food, social services, legal defense, education, arts and culture, entertainment, medicine, health care, sciences, computer technology, programming and other highly specialized professions) and student youth against Trump's fascist government, the complicity of the Democrats, and the broader assault on democratic rights and living standards.

The building of rank-and-file committees is essential to break the stranglehold of the trade union bureaucracies, which function as industrial police for the corporations and utilize their power to block every form of resistance by the working class. Power must be transferred from the offices of the bureaucratic parasites to the workers on the shop floor and job sites, where decisions on all matters of strategy, policy and action can be made democratically by the working class.

These rank-and-file committees, spreading across all workplaces, will create new centers of coordinated social power upon which the defense of democracy throughout the country can be based. The mobilized working class will be able to inspire with confidence and unify all the now disparate elements of protest in a massive social movement against the hated government led and controlled by capitalist oligarchy.

The working class must be mobilized to defend all democratic rights. This means opposing the criminal and inhumane policy of mass deportations and defending without compromise the principle of birthright citizenship, enshrined in the Constitution. Class-conscious workers reject the reactionary division between "native" and "foreign-born," which serves only to divide and weaken the working class.

The struggle against Trump's coup can be carried forward only through the independent mobilization of the working class against the capitalist oligarchy and the capitalist system as a whole.

We call on workers, young people and all those committed to the defense of democratic rights to support and join the effort by the Socialist Equality Party to arm the growing opposition with a socialist and internationalist program, and to build the revolutionary leadership necessary to guide this fight.



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