

Trump ends fascist convention by calling on attendees to pledge allegiance to him

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President Donald Trump capped off the Republican Party's first-ever midterm convention in Dallas, Texas, an orgy of fascist reaction, by calling on those in attendance to pledge themselves to him and "cheat like hell" in the November 3 elections, less than two months away.

Ordering the crowd inside the less-than-capacity American Airlines Center to raise their right hands, Trump, pausing for the audience to repeat each phrase, spelled out the following pledge:

Please raise your right hand. I pledge to the greatest president in the history of the United States that loves us so much he can't even breathe, that I will go out with my family, my friends. I'll do it any way, I don't care if I'm registered or not, I'm going to try and cheat like hell like they do.

He later told the crowd that anyone who did not vote would "go to hell."

Trump's pledge and attack on the elections are not just one-off comments. He and the Republicans are systematically trying to undermine and take control of elections in states across the country. The main line of attack is on mail-in voting. At the same time, Trump's Department of Homeland Security is targeting voter rolls in so-called "blue states," seeking to disenfranchise immigrants and citizens who are legally entitled to vote on the basis of the lie that millions of "illegals" are voting.

Trump speaks for an increasingly besieged and unpopular ruling class. Ahead of the November elections, support for Trump and the Republican Party

has cratered, with mass anger among millions of workers over the illegal war in Iran, the ongoing genocide in Gaza, the war on immigrants, and skyrocketing inflation and inequality.

As workers and young people look for alternatives to the two big business parties and capitalism, the corporate oligarchy cultivates fascistic elements. At the Dallas event, nearly every speech featured attacks on immigrants, transgender persons, Muslims and socialists.

Before Trump spoke, the convention played a video titled "God Made Trump," portraying him as a divinely chosen leader sent to confront the "deep state" and defend the country. The video began, "On June 14th, 1946, God looked down on his planned paradise and said, 'I need a caretaker,' so God gave us Trump."

Trump repeatedly claimed on both nights that the convention was packed and additional supporters were waiting outside. The images inside American Airlines Center told another story. Entire seating sections were covered with tarps, while large portions of the upper level remained empty.

The arena, home to the National Basketball Association's Dallas Mavericks and the National Hockey League's Dallas Stars, can accommodate approximately 19,200 spectators for basketball and as many as 21,000 in certain configurations. While official attendance figures have not been released, the Republican National Committee struggled to fill the arena despite offering free tickets to the public. It opened a public ticket lottery in August and less than a week before the convention sent unsolicited text messages to Dallas-area residents advertising "FREE TICKETS" to see Trump.

The sparse attendance came as Trump's approval rating fell to 33 percent in an August Reuters/Ipsos

poll. Axios reported before the convention that only about 100 Republican lawmakers and candidates planned to attend, with most battleground district House Republicans staying away.

Vice President JD Vance addressed the convention, receiving chants of “48” from sections of the crowd, a reference to a prospective presidential run in 2028. Vance smiled and replied, “We gotta take care of business this November, then we’ll worry about what comes next.”

Tapping into the racist attitudes prevalent throughout the Republican Party, Vance declared early in his speech, “We were tired of being called racist for noticing that our country was becoming dirtier and poorer and less safe and less prosperous.” Later, responding to a protester who displayed a Mexican flag, Vance said, “If you love Mexico so much, get your ass over there. I’ll buy you the plane ticket.”

Vance made no direct mention of the US war against Iran, one of the several crises confronting the administration. His only apparent reference came while invoking the purported opposition to war of the assassinated fascist Charlie Kirk. “What I’m asking you to do is do what Charlie did: do not throw the baby out with the bathwater,” Vance said. “Don’t give the country over to a bunch of crazy people because you happen to disagree with us on a policy issue here or there.”

Vance was also silent on Trump’s proposed \$5,000 bribe to every adult citizen if the Republicans retained control of the House and the Senate in the November elections.

Seeking to whip up a pogrom-like atmosphere ahead of the 25th anniversary of the September 11 attacks, Texas Senator Ted Cruz denounced the Democratic Party, claiming it had been overtaken by a “new and dangerous red-green alliance: communists and Islamists.”

Cruz named New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani and the Democratic Senate nominees in Michigan and Texas. As he spoke, a man in the audience repeatedly called for their assassination.

“When Mamdani says he wants to seize the means of production, he means it,” Cruz said.

“He should be shot!” the man yelled.

“When Abdul El-Sayed says he has a, quote, ‘obligation to comply with Sharia law,’ he means it,”

Cruz continued.

“He should be shot!” the man shouted again.

“And when James Talarico says he wants to dismantle capitalism, he means it,” Cruz said.

“He should be shot!” the man yelled a third time.

Cruz did not acknowledge or condemn the death threats. His social media account later posted a video of the speech in which the threats were clearly audible.

Cruz, a supporter of Trump’s failed January 6 coup, said communists and Islamists were united because “they hate Christians. They hate Jews. They hate capitalism. They hate the Constitution, and they hate America.”

Trump’s pledge, including his call for supporters to “cheat like hell,” and the death threats shouted against three Democratic politicians came nearly 15 months after the assassination of former Minnesota House Speaker Melissa Hortman. Despite this context, neither incident received prominent treatment on the homepages of several major news organizations Friday afternoon.

The *New York Times* homepage contained two articles about the Republican convention, but neither headline mentioned Trump’s pledge or the death threats. ABC News’ live coverage of the convention, last updated several hours after Cruz spoke, did not mention his speech or the audience member who called for Mamdani, El-Sayed and Talarico to be shot.

This is not a mistake by the major capitalist press but a deliberate decision to downplay the danger of dictatorship and the threat of fascism. The turn towards fascism in the United States is part of a global process. From the recent election victory of the AfD in Germany to the promotion of fascist Giorgia Meloni in the pages of the *New York Times*, the ruling class in every country is turning toward far-right reaction. The defense of democratic rights depends on the development of an independent socialist movement of the working class against the financial oligarchy.



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