

# Democrats silent as Trump wages war on immigrants, erects framework for presidential dictatorship

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Over the past week, significant protests have erupted across the United States against the Trump administration's fascistic assault on immigrants. Demonstrations have taken place in major cities such as New York, Chicago, Houston, Detroit and San Diego, as well as in smaller cities across the South and Midwest, including in Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa and Missouri.

In Los Angeles, protests over the weekend and on Monday escalated into student walkouts on Tuesday, with hundreds of high school students joining. Walkouts have also occurred in cities across California, Texas, Michigan and other states. Today, major demonstrations are expected nationwide, including at state capitals, under the banner of the "50501 Movement" (50 states, 50 protests, one day), which has spread rapidly online in recent days.

These protests are a significant expression of growing opposition and horror at the actions of the Trump administration, which in just two weeks has launched a frontal assault on immigrant workers as a spearhead for a broader war on the working class and the dismantling of democratic rights.

Trump has gutted federal agencies, sought to freeze spending in blatant violation of the Constitution, and set in motion the dismantling of public education and other social programs. Responsibility for slashing social services has been handed to the world's richest man, Elon Musk, who is running the government as if it were his own private corporation—dictating mass firings, issuing ultimatums to federal employees, and consolidating power in an unelected "Department of Government Efficiency."

At the center of Trump's agenda is the assertion of unchecked executive power and presidential dictatorship. He has declared a fabricated "invasion" at the southern border, deployed the military under US Northern Command (NORTHCOM) to "seal" the border and override immigration law, and moved to transform Guantanamo Bay into a massive immigrant concentration camp and Latin

America into a giant American prison. His executive orders pave the way for mass deportations, already begun, and the invocation of the Insurrection Act, to lay the groundwork for martial law.

Under these conditions, the Democratic Party has responded with silence and paralysis. Even when in the minority, Republicans do everything possible to obstruct, filibuster and grind government to a halt. In contrast, the Democrats, even when they hold a majority, treat the Republicans as an unstoppable force, incapable of being opposed in any meaningful way.

This inaction has become so obvious that Edward Luce, one of the most establishment columnists in the *Financial Times*, publicly called them out this week. Under the headline, "While Democrats Sleep" Luce wrote on Monday, "To claim that America's minority party is too punch drunk to get its act together would be charitable."

Luce noted, "Democrats could have blocked confirmation hearings for Trump nominees—many of whom would have been laughed out of the chamber in that bygone era. A single Republican, Alabama's Tommy Tuberville, froze all of Joe Biden's military appointments for almost all of 2023. But Democrats are following regular order." In other words, while Trump steamrolls what remains of constitutional rule, the Democrats insist on business as usual.

The *New York Times* has also on occasion taken note of the Democrats' inaction. An article earlier this week headlined, "'We Have No Coherent Message': Democrats Struggle to Oppose Trump," states: "In private meetings and at public events, elected Democrats appear leaderless, rudderless, and divided. They disagree over how often and how stridently to oppose Mr. Trump. They have no shared understanding of why they lost the election, never mind how they can win in the future."

But it is not, as the *Times* asserts, a question of confusion or disarray. If the Democrats are not acting, it is because they do not want to act.

This is a party that has never had a problem taking rapid and decisive action when confronted with a strike or opposition from the working class. Under Biden, the administration worked with Congress to preemptively ban a rail strike in 2022, forcing through a contract that workers had previously rejected. The same Biden administration oversaw the brutal repression of protests against the genocide in Gaza, joining hands with Republicans in slandering demonstrators as “antisemitic” in an effort to suppress opposition to US imperialism’s backing of Israeli war crimes.

When it comes to Trump and the fascists around him, however, the Democrats’ primary concern has always been the strategic interests of American imperialism. The first impeachment of Trump had nothing to do with his attacks on democracy or his coup plotting, but was centered on foreign policy in Ukraine. Now, as Trump takes a wrecking ball to the Constitution, there is no suggestion of impeachment. The brief references to Trump’s existential threat to democracy and his fascist politics that appeared in the final weeks of the presidential campaign have disappeared.

Silence implies consent. The Democrats fear that even a symbolic show of resistance could provoke a movement from below that they could not control. Their overriding concern is to smother any genuine opposition and maintain collaboration with their fascist “colleagues” across the aisle.

Having handed over the White House in a “seamless transition” and wished Trump “success” in his presidency, Biden has wasted no time securing his financial future. He has signed with the Los Angeles-based Creative Artists Agency (CAA), owned by French billionaire François-Henri Pinault, to arrange lucrative corporate speaking engagements—where he will no doubt deliver platitudes about “the soul of America” at \$400,000 a speech.

The pseudo-left, that is, the organizations of the upper-middle class that operate in and around the Democratic Party, are also playing their assigned role.

*Jacobin* magazine, the main publication associated with the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), published an article headlined, “On Day One, Trump Wasn’t the Dictator He Promised to Be.” It argues that while Trump has issued a barrage of executive orders, these amount merely “to a somewhat bolder exercise of presidential power than is customary for an incoming president, but nothing approaching the exercise of dictatorial power.”

According to *Jacobin*, there is nothing to worry about. The Democrats are functioning as a normal opposition and business as usual can continue.

There are now indications that Bernie Sanders and his organization “Political Revolution” are seeking to gain control of the protests against the attacks on immigrants,

including those happening today. One must be blunt: Sanders and his ilk bear substantial responsibility for Trump’s return by channeling opposition into the Democratic Party and the Biden administration. And they are at it again.

The return of Trump is a political debacle for the Democratic Party and should mark its death knell as a political organization. Opposition will develop and is developing, as evidenced by the growing protests throughout the country. The critical question now is one of political perspective.

The Socialist Equality Party is spearheading the development of a mass movement of the working class, directed not only against Trump and the Republicans, but against the entire political establishment.

The SEP calls for the building of independent rank-and-file committees in workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods across the country. These committees will serve as centers of resistance, uniting workers and youth in opposition to Trump’s authoritarian rule, the complicity of the Democratic Party, and the broader attacks on democratic rights and living standards. They will provide the framework for organizing mass actions, including strikes and protests, to mobilize the immense social power of the working class against the corporate and financial oligarchy.

The fight against dictatorship is inseparable from the fight against the system that produces it—capitalism. The SEP calls for the expropriation of the billionaires, the dismantling of the imperialist war machine, and the establishment of a workers’ government that will reorganize economic and political life on the basis of social need, not private profit. We urge all those who want to take up this fight to join and build the Socialist Equality Party.



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