

Trump redoubles racist invective against Mexican immigrants

Patrick Martin
9 July 2015

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump issued a statement Monday in which he reiterated and amplified his racist comments about Mexico and Mexican immigrants. The three-page written statement was a calculated doubling-down in the billionaire's appeal to fascistic sentiments in the Tea Party wing of the Republican Party.

Trump cited the case of a young woman in San Francisco allegedly shot to death last week by an undocumented Mexican immigrant as proof of his claim that immigrants are criminals, rapists, drug smugglers and generally “the worst elements of Mexico.” The incident has been seized on by the entire political establishment, most notably Democratic Party front-runner Hillary Clinton, to denounce the city's “sanctuary laws”.

Trump added, using language reminiscent of Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels, “Likewise, tremendous infectious disease is pouring across the border. The United States has become a dumping ground for Mexico and, in fact, for many other parts of the world.”

Trump portrayed immigration from Mexico as the product of a conspiracy by the Mexican government to drive out its own criminal class and export it to the United States.

“The Mexican Government wants an open border as long as it's a ONE WAY open border into the United States,” he claimed. “Not only are they killing us at the border, but they are killing us on trade ... and the country of Mexico is making billions of dollars in doing so.”

Trump's portrayal of Mexico as the predator and the US as the hapless victim would be ludicrous if it were not so reactionary and sinister. The United States seized nearly half of Mexico's territory in the war of 1848, and has long dominated economic and political life in

its southern neighbor.

The rise of American imperialism led to significant US investment in Mexican agribusiness, oil and mining. This was accompanied by major military interventions during the 1911-1919 Mexican Revolution, including the landing of US Marines at the port of Tampico and the invasion of northern Mexico by Army troops headed by General John J. Pershing, in futile pursuit of the revolutionary guerrilla army of Pancho Villa.

Mexican immigrant labor was a central factor for decades in the development of both California and Texas, particularly in agriculture, and later in construction and sweatshop industries like garment manufacturing. The US ruling class continues to reap vast profits from the toil of superexploited immigrants from across the Rio Grande, including Trump himself.

Reporters for the *Washington Post* interviewed workers at a Trump hotel construction site not far from the White House in downtown Washington, and found the workforce predominately consisting of immigrants from Mexico and Central America.

Some of the workers had choice comments about their billionaire employer-once-removed (Trump's construction project uses labor subcontracted through another company).

Ramon Alvarez, 48, a window-framer originally from El Salvador, asked, “Do you think that when we're hanging out there from the eighth floor that we're raping or selling drugs? We're risking our lives and our health. A lot of the chemicals we deal with are toxic.”

David Montoya, another Salvadoran immigrant, drives a truck at the construction site. The 28-year-old arrived in the United States at the age of 10, and has built a life based on hard work, with three US-born children and a home he and his wife purchased in the

suburb of Silver Spring, Maryland. Reacting to Trump's slurs against immigrant workers, he told the *Post*, "Actually, we're more American than him."

These sentiments are in sharp contrast to the obvious reluctance of Republican politicians to condemn Trump's comments or the anti-immigrant prejudices he gives voice to.

Most recently, Wyoming billionaire Foster Friess, who more or less single-handedly financed the presidential campaign of former Pennsylvania senator Rick Santorum in 2012, sent a letter to Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus warning against any effort to pile on Trump or ostracize him. He called for Republican candidates to stay on the "civility reservation."

Friess claimed he had the support of Las Vegas casino billionaire Sheldon Adelson, who financed Newt Gingrich's 2012 campaign, and Todd Ricketts, co-owner of the Chicago Cubs baseball team and a leading financial backer of Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker in 2016.

The Associated Press reported that former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee has responded favorably to the appeal from Friess, expressing his "hope that we don't commit fratricide again as a party."

Two leading right-wing publications sounded the same note in relation to Trump, with the *Weekly Standard*'s William Kristol describing his comments as "crude and reprehensible" but appealing to a "genuine concern about illegal immigrants."

Rich Lowry of *National Review* wrote that Trump's comments "did more to insult than to illuminate, yet there was a kernel in them that hit on an important truth that typical politicians either don't know or simply fear to speak."

He continued: "Trump's rant on immigration is closer to reality than the gauzy clichés of the immigration romantics unwilling to acknowledge that there might be an issue welcoming large numbers of high school dropouts into a 21st century economy. If we don't want to add to the ranks of the poor, the uninsured and the welfare dependent, we should have fewer low-skilled immigrants—assuming saying that is not yet officially considered a hate crime."

Lowry is simply articulating in more sophisticated language precisely what Trump does more crudely and provocatively: deliberately instigating fear and hatred

of immigrants in order to divide the working class and pit American-born workers against their foreign-born sisters and brothers.

There is a division of labor here, similar to that in the Jim Crow South, when the Ku Klux Klan fomented racism in the crudest terms, while the White Citizens Councils performed the same task with greater respectability, using the language of the Chamber of Commerce rather than the gutter.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact