

The New York Times, fascism and Donald Trump

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11 December 2015

The *New York Times* published an editorial Thursday, “The Trump Effect, and How it Spreads,” that seeks to obscure the roots and significance of the Republican Party frontrunner’s candidacy for president.

According to the *Times*, Trump and “his appeals to exclusion and hatred” cannot be treated “as a solitary phenomenon, a singular celebrity narcissist who has somehow, all alone, brought his party and its politics to the brink of fascism.” The Republican Party as a whole, the newspaper argues, is to blame.

It is first of all remarkable that the “newspaper of record” in the United States has declared that one of America’s two principal parties, which currently controls both houses of Congress and most state governorships, has been brought to the “brink of fascism.”

According to the ideological narrative promoted by the *Times* and the mass media as a whole, the United States is the greatest democracy in the world. It is constantly at war to bring freedom to one country or another, to overthrow dictators or tyrants, etc. And yet one of the principal institutions of political rule in the country is, according to the *Times*, on the verge of becoming fascist. How is this to be explained?

In the *Times* account, various Republican candidates who “have been peddling their own nativist policies for months or years,” and Republican governors who are “declaring their borders closed to refugees” from Syria have created the environment for Trump to flourish. Trump is thus a product and expression of Republican nastiness.

This, however, explains nothing.

The proto-fascism of Donald Trump is of a particular character. He did not emerge out of a Bavarian beer hall or the trenches of World War I, but from Wall Street. He is the product not of Southern

Evangelicalism or a right-wing populist uprising, but of the New York State real estate industry.

While Hitler arose from the rage of the lumpenproletariat and petty bourgeoisie—exploited and directed by German finance capital—Trump is the direct representative of frightened billionaires who want to make the US, and the world, safe for their money. Trump is the excrescence of American capitalism, encouraged and promoted by the media.

What most concerns the *Times* is that the crude politics of Trump shatters the lying rhetoric used by Democrats and Republicans alike to justify the policies of the ruling class, at home and abroad. Thus, it worries that Trump is doing “serious damage” to the country’s “reputation overseas” by “twisting its message of tolerance and welcome.”

What is the “tolerance and welcome” of which the *Times* speaks? Is it perhaps the Obama administration’s deportation of more immigrants to Mexico and Central America than any other president? Or the construction of brutal detention facilities in the southern US to hold men, women and children seeking refuge in the US. The *Times* writes that Trump “has not [yet] deported anyone, nor locked up or otherwise brutalized any Muslims, immigrants or others.” The newspaper fails to add, “Obama, however, has.”

Or is the “tolerance” expressed in the bombing attack in Syria earlier this week that killed 32 civilians, including 20 children? Or the deliberate targeting of the Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan in October, massacring 22 people in a blatant war crime? Is it torture and NSA spying, defended and covered up by the Obama administration and its CIA director, John Brennan? Is it wars in the Middle East that have killed more than a million people and destroyed entire societies?

Notably absent from the *Times* editorial is any reference to US foreign policy, to war and militarism, aside from a passing reference to the “dark episode in American history,” i.e., the internment of Japanese-Americans in World War II (by the Democratic administration of Franklin Roosevelt).

Yet this is the heart of the issue. Racism and political reaction have always been associated with imperialist violence and war. Fifteen years of the “war on terror”—a period of continuous war unprecedented in American history—have vomited up Donald Trump.

In the Obama administration, the ruling class has sought to cover up its criminality and parasitism with a thin veneer of multiculturalism. In Trump, the reality of its predatory policies is fully revealed.



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