

Hundreds protest outside Trump campaign events in California

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Donald Trump's first two campaign appearances in California, which holds a June 7 primary election that could give him the delegates he needs to lock up the Republican presidential nomination, were met with tense protests.

Demonstrators gathered outside the California Republican convention in the Bay Area town of Burlingame where Trump spoke on Friday. Protesters surged past riot police massed in front of the hotel where Trump was set to speak, forcing the Republican frontrunner to park his motorcade on an adjoining highway, cross over a barrier and enter the venue through the back door. Police arrested five demonstrators.

The night before, police arrested at least 17 people among hundreds who demonstrated outside an Orange County, California amphitheater where Trump repeated his racist attacks on Mexican immigrants and his pledge to build a wall along the US-Mexican border.

The billionaire candidate is working to stoke up xenophobic sentiments in order to direct social opposition into extreme nationalist and militarist channels. Trump's anti-Mexican and anti-immigrant hate-mongering is particularly provocative in California, where the population is 40 percent Hispanic.

The mostly young and Latino crowd assembled outside the Orange County fairgrounds in Costa Mesa on Thursday was confronted by a phalanx of mounted police in riot gear, backed by 50 Orange County sheriff's deputies and a dozen Costa Mesa cops. Police helicopters circled overhead.

After the police ordered the demonstrators to disperse and began pushing them away from the rally site, a group of protesters swarmed a police cruiser and smashed its rear window. The tires of a police sport utility vehicle were also punctured, according to the

police, who said some five police vehicles were damaged in all.

Other demonstrators temporarily blocked the entrance from a major boulevard to the 55 Freeway. By 10:15 PM, the protest had largely subsided, without any serious injuries. Costa Mesa police confirmed that 17 people were arrested on "suspicion of unlawful assembly."

Prior to the start of the rally, the police inserted themselves between anti-Trump demonstrators, mostly in their teens and early twenties, some waving American and Mexican flags, and Trump supporters who arrived too late to gain entry to the 8,000-seat amphitheater where the Republican candidate was speaking. The police moved between the opposed groups after a section of Trump backers began shouting, "Build that wall! Build that wall!"

One of the protesters, Jose Cruz, 21, told reporters, "This is the anger people have against Trump. It's not because he's white—it's because of what he said."

Inside the amphitheater, Trump led the crowd in a chant to wall off Mexico from the US and surrounded himself with members of an anti-Mexican group carrying images of family members allegedly killed by Mexicans who had crossed into the US without legal documents. He said crime in the Los Angeles area had increased by 33 percent and blamed it on "illegal immigrants." He told the crowd, "No state has suffered more from open borders than the state of California."

Trump began his bid for the Republican presidential nomination by attacking undocumented workers from Mexico and other parts of Latin America as rapists and criminals, and blaming them for the spread of drugs in the US. He has said that, if elected president, he will ship all 11 million undocumented immigrants out of the country. He has also called for a ban on Muslims

entering the US.

The main organizer of the Costa Mesa protest was Chicanos Unidos de Orange County, a Mexican-American group affiliated with the Latino nationalist organization National Council of La Raza, which campaigned for Obama and backs his administration. The Bay Area demonstration was politically dominated by immigrant rights and Latino nationalist organizations as well as various pseudo-left organizations. These groups, all politically oriented to the Democratic Party, offer no viable perspective for youth and workers appalled by Trump's fascistic politics and looking for a way to oppose them.

They are preparing, either directly or by way of so-called third parties that function as external pressure groups on the Democrats, such as the Green Party, to line up behind the presidential campaign of the likely Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton. She, as well as her opponent Bernie Sanders, have wrapped themselves in the mantle of the Obama administration, which has deported more undocumented immigrants than any previous administration.

They both support the reinforcement and militarization of the US-Mexican border. Clinton, in a debate with Sanders earlier this year, defended the Obama administration's incarceration and deportation of youth from Central America with the declaration that it is necessary to "draw the line" against undocumented immigrants.



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