

“They opened fire as if we were animals”

AMLO’s police gun down immigrant near US border

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Mexican police ambushed a group of defenseless immigrants Wednesday, gunning down a father in front of his young daughter in Saltillo, in the state of Coahuila, along the US-Mexico border. The incident was not an accidental encounter but a planned political attack. Its purpose was to send a warning to the Central American working class on behalf of the Trump administration: stay put or face attack by the Mexican police.

One of the father’s companions told *Vanguardia* that the deceased was traveling to the United States to reunite with his partner. “I heard four shots and they had killed Marcos,” the witness said. “They opened fire as if we were animals.” The attack was first reported by the Casa del Migrante employees, who wrote in an open letter: “A Salvadoran father... was running next to his 8-year-old daughter, who witnessed how he fell.”

Marcos, who was about 35 years old, his daughter and eight other migrants were waiting next to the tracks to hop on the train dubbed “The Beast” to conclude their journey to the US after crossing more than 1,400 miles from El Salvador. After the migrants walked from the shelter a mile away, at 9:30 p.m. a convoy of plainclothes immigration officials in black trucks, along with federal police and several state law-enforcement agencies, surrounded them.

According to an eyewitness account, “the migrants came running with women and children, police from the Prosecutor’s Office came pursuing them and firing live rounds.”

The Casa del Migrante describes the incident as a “brutal hunt by the authorities against migrant families,” indicating that several in the group were captured, including a mother separated from her 2-year-old baby, who was taken by other migrants who hid in a store to escape the shooting.

This deliberate assault on defenseless Central American immigrants is a warning sign to the working class of Latin America. The administration of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), on the orders of the fascist Donald

Trump, has effectively transformed the federal and state police into a shock battalion against workers escaping violence and inequality caused by a century of imperialist exploitation.

These attacks will only escalate. At a rally last night in Cincinnati, Ohio, Trump praised the Mexican government and AMLO, proclaiming: “They’ve got 21,000 soldiers on the border right now. I’m starting to like the Mexicans; they do more for us than the Democrats.”

Trump’s endorsement of AMLO’s presidency is a devastating indictment of AMLO and all the “left-wing” and “socialist” groups and publications which support his administration. In a May 26 article, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)-linked *Jacobin* magazine praised “AMLO’s progressive agenda” and lauded the president’s “energy” in “bucking international economic nostrums.”

But this week’s assault on immigrants in Coahuila shows AMLO’s energy is directed entirely against the international working class. In his corrupt dealings with the US, AMLO is securing higher profits for the Mexican ruling class and better “investment opportunities” for Yankee businessmen. In a meeting on Sunday with a group of Mexican billionaires, AMLO said the Mexican ruling class could expect greater investments from international finance in the immediate future.

The Coahuila Prosecutor’s Office issued a lying statement claiming that the ambushed group of immigrants had insulted the police and that the Marcos pulled out a gun “from his clothes” and began shooting at them. The state alleges a gun was found next to his body.

The official account was quickly exposed.

Alberto Xicotencatl, director of the shelter, told *El País* that the migrants had spent a week at the shelter and “were escaping the violence and poverty in their country.”

“They say that he had a gun, but it’s a lie,” Xicotencatl added. “He was a very poor man who had no money to

afford weapons. Nothing could be further from the truth.” Moreover, the director explained that migrants go through a metal detector and are not allowed to carry weapons: “In 16 years, we have never found a single gun.”

This is the second killing of a migrant by Mexican authorities during the administration of “left-populist” Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO). In late June, federal police shot María Senaida Escobar, 19, in the head in Veracruz. She was traveling in a truck with two other migrants.

These murderous and thuggish measures, on top of recent reports by the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) documenting “torture and abuse” at the overcrowded migrant detention centers in Mexico, are the result of a deal reached on June 10 between the AMLO government and Donald Trump, after Trump threatened to impose tariffs unless Mexico agreed to dramatically reduce the flow of migrants reaching their shared border.

Mexico agreed to deploy 6,000 National Guard soldiers to its southern border with Guatemala and 15,000 to the northern border, effectively as an extension of the fascistic US Border Patrol agents and US National Guard deployed at the US-Mexico border.

Moreover, AMLO has since worked as the US Department of Homeland Security’s envoy to Central America, carrying out meetings with the presidents of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala—the countries most migrants into Mexico and the US come from—to twist their arms in order to implement measures to cut the flow of migrants.

At a meeting on July 21 between US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and his Mexican counterpart Marcelo Ebrard to review the measures taken since the deal, Ebrard boasted that the number of migrants reaching the US-Mexico border fell from 144,000 in May to 100,000 in June. Pompeo in turn applauded Mexico’s “significant advances,” but later insisted that the goal is to bring the number to “zero.”

The Salvadoran president, Nayib Bukele, has made no statement on either killing, while spending most of Thursday celebrating the graduation of 1,400 new troops. When Pompeo arrived in San Salvador on July 22, Bukele vowed to collaborate with halting migration. “We’ll work together to resolve our issues, we’ll resolve the issue of migration. I think the United States is clear about this and has seen the signs of our efforts... So, we’re very thankful for the things that we will start working together from right now,” Bukele declared.

Pompeo, the first secretary of State to visit El Salvador in a decade, responded by thuggishly referring to the Salvadoran government as “the team here” and noting, “I am confident that we can deliver the American objective, which is protecting our southern border and having sovereignty for

our country along that southern border.”

Through threats of tariffs and charges on vital remittances, Washington compelled the Guatemalan government last week to agree to become a “safe third country,” which will force migrants crossing Guatemala, chiefly from El Salvador and Honduras, to remain and apply for asylum to the US from Guatemala. The DHS sent 89 agents to oversee the expansion of Guatemalan border forces and concentration camps to stop and detain migrants.

On Thursday, DHS Acting Secretary Kevin McAleenan announced that he is “negotiating” similar agreements with El Salvador and Honduras.

After more than a century of US imperialist violence and plunder that devastated the societies in Central America, Washington is turning the region into an open air prison, training and arming soldiers as guards. It is developing a network of concentration camps to lock up a working class and peasantry with a long history of revolutionary struggles and one which is objectively linked, through globalized supply chains, migrant families, and cross-border culture, with workers in the United States, Mexico and internationally.

The ultimate aim of the militarization and anti-democratic measures against migrant workers is the suppression and isolation of the growing struggles of workers internationally against social inequality, on behalf of the financial oligarchy in Wall Street and its client elites across the region.

There is mass opposition to these attacks, as shown last week by neighbors of a migrant in Nashville, Tennessee, who formed a human chain to prevent US immigration officials from detaining him and his 12-year-old son. This opposition needs to be mobilized and organized to defend migrants across the world as part of a united political movement of the international working class against capitalism.



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