



To hell with Trump's wall! Full rights for all!

Defend the immigrants!

From the beginning President Trump has followed a divide and rule strategy by scapegoating undocumented immigrants for causing the problems confronting U.S.-born working people. And he's backed this with racist and often murderous anti-immigrant policies. Now, Trump has forced a partial government shutdown in order to get his widely hated wall built at the southern border. He claims there's a "crisis" there, and he's threatened to invoke a "national emergency" no less.

The actual situation at the border with Mexico

Close to 700 miles of walls and fences have already been built under the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations. Additionally, there are "virtual fences" consisting of sensors and cameras that are monitored by the greatly expanded Border Patrol. This has resulted in migrants increasingly being pushed into desert and mountainous routes, where hundreds now die yearly. Thus, while in 1994 there were an estimated 14 border-crossing deaths, in 2017 there were 412 recorded deaths, many of them from dehydration and/or hypothermia. Furthermore, when U.S. citizens leave bottled water along migration routes in order to save lives the Border Patrol destroys all it can find, essentially murdering people. But that's only one of many outrages at the southern border. Other recent ones include:

– Trump calling out the Army against the migrant caravan of poor people from Central America, then Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents twice tear-gassing hundreds of people—including mothers and children—on the Mexican side as they tried to rush the fence to apply for legal asylum, a right encoded in international law, law that does not require that asylum seekers enter at official ports of entry.

– 14,000-15,000 migrant children spending December in concentration-camp-style tent cities. Children also being held in cages made from chain-link fencing, where they're forced to sleep on the floor.

– People being thrown into cramped and frigid cells they call the iceboxes (*las hieleras*), where they shiver

on the floor beneath foil blankets and are denied needed medicines.

– Deaths. In December, a seven-year-old Guatemalan girl died of a combination of septic shock, fever, and dehydration after being in CBP custody several hours, and on Christmas Eve an eight-year-old Guatemalan boy with flu died. An additional 22 immigrants have died in detention centers during the past two years.

All of this is justified under a pack of scapegoating lies.

Trump's big lies

– "They're taking our jobs." No. Like any other population growth, immigration expands the market for goods and services of all kinds. This means there are more jobs in the industries producing, transporting and selling them. And, obviously, immigrants have nothing to do with unemployment caused by automation, robotization, speed-ups and job combination, or cyclical recessions. Those are rooted in the capitalist system of production.

– "They're not going to come in and just immediately go and collect welfare." No. By law undocumented immigrants cannot. What's more, undocumented workers contribute billions of dollars yearly to Social Security (\$13 billion in 2013) while rarely collecting any benefits. They also pay an estimated \$11.6 billion a year in taxes while having less access to public benefits than citizens do.

– "Animals," "criminal aliens," "rapists," "they're bringing drugs." No. Various new studies show foreign-born residents are *less* likely to commit serious crimes or to be incarcerated than native-born people. Moreover, the majority of illegal drugs coming from outside the country arrive through ports of entry in trucks and cargo ships. They're not carried across the line by future farm workers, housekeepers, hotel and restaurant workers, construction workers, landscapers, or factory workers.

– "This is an invasion..." Again no. The estimated number of immigrants living in the U.S. without papers

has been in decline since 2007, and there are also fewer recent arrivals.

No border wall!

In face of Trump's drumbeat of lies, the majority of people still oppose his wall, and often denounce and ridicule the idea. The Democrats, however, *agree* with Trump's demagoguery about the need for "stronger border security," and have only disagreed with him over costs and effectiveness. So faced with these oppositions, Trump has abandoned his bluster that he would build a 2,000-mile-long concrete wall in favor of a see-through wall made of spiked steel slats. But no matter how it's constructed there will still be people who will find ways to go over or under it in their quest for better lives. Moreover, the estimated *majority* of undocumented immigrants actually arrive from all over the world by air and ground transportation carrying legal visas that they then overstay. Those who travel on foot across the U.S.-Mexico border are usually among the poorest and most desperate, and this is who the bigoted billionaire Trump would make life more difficult for.

The people are fighting back

In defiance of Trump's bullying and the threat of deportation, undocumented immigrants are everywhere fighting back against all that's being thrown at them. For example: organizing hunger strikes against the terrible conditions in ICE detention centers (including in Tacoma); being at the forefront of organizing continual protests demanding the detention centers be shut down and the prisoners released; initiating law suits; workers seeking jobs outside Home Depot or Lowes or on street corners making agreements among themselves to not accept less than a certain amount of pay; joining with citizen workers to go on strike, such as during the Marriott Hotel strike. Also, undocumented immigrants are active in other progressive movements.

U.S.-born people are active in supporting all this, and they've long been part of the immigrant rights movement. Additionally, when news of the Central American refugee caravan spread, there were immediate calls to let them in, with many people demonstrating at the border demanding this, and some entering Mexico to help the asylum seekers. Now, when the CBP dumps hundreds of these people off in border towns, citizens rush to help them out and broadly denounce the inhumanity of it all, including the inhumanity of Trump's entire anti-immigrant onslaught, including his wall.

From the working-class perspective, we hail all this. The attacks on undocumented immigrants are attacks on

all of us. They're attacks on our unity, morality and capacity to fight back against all exploitation and oppression. Thus we must stand up in defense of our undocumented sisters and brothers, who deserve full rights. Everyone can play a role in this. We can expose and denounce Trump's filthy lies about migrants in our workplaces and schools and among friends. We can everywhere raise the demand: no wall! We can join in the upcoming immigrant rights protests such as the "Build Bridges, not Walls" demonstration on Tuesday, January 15 near the Ambassador Bridge. And we can join marches and meetings on other issues, such as the upcoming women's march on Saturday, January 19 at the Charles H. Wright African American Museum, and the ML King Day rally for "Jobs, Peace & Justice" on Monday, January 21, at St. Matthew's St. Joseph's Episcopal Church, 8550 Woodward Ave. Trump is in trouble with his wall plan, and it's time to turn up the heat. <

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