

Racism and Electoral Politics in 2016

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Global Research, March 08, 2016

Pan African Newswire

Both capitalist parties provide no solution to national oppression and the economic crisis

Donald Trump's hesitancy and denial of knowing much about the Ku Klux Klan in response to an endorsement by former Neo-Nazi and Grand Wizard David Duke speaks volumes about the political character of the Republican Party and its electoral base.

Trump appeared on Cable News Network's State of the Union program when he was asked about support coming from Duke.

"I have to look at the group. I mean, I don't know what group you're talking about," Trump said nonchalantly. He then went on to say:

"You wouldn't want me to condemn a group that I know nothing about. I'd have to look. If you would send me a list of the groups, I will do research on them and certainly I would disavow if I thought there was something wrong. You may have groups in there that are totally fine — it would be very unfair. So give me a list of the groups and I'll let you know." (CNN, Feb. 29)

Host Jake Tapper quickly responded saying:

"OK. I'm just talking about David Duke and the Ku Klux Klan here, but —" then Trump said: "Honestly, I don't know David Duke. I don't believe I've ever met him. I'm pretty sure I didn't meet him. And I just don't know anything about him."

Despite efforts to clean up these statements, Trump was attacked in various quarters from anti-racist organizations, Democratic Party candidates and officials, along with members of his own Republican Party. Others utilized the statements to further illustrate the racist and neo-fascist character of the Trump campaign and its following.

Trump's Family and the Klan

These remarks also came in the aftermath of a Washington Post article noting the arrest of Trump's father in connection with a disturbance involving the Klan in New York in 1927. Similar reports also appeared in numerous publications several months ago.

According to the Washington Post, on Memorial Day 1927, Fred Trump, Donald's father, was one of seven men arrested in a brawl on the streets in Jamaica Queens during a march of 1,000 Klansmen. The elder Trump was detained "on a charge of refusing to disperse from a parade when ordered to do so." (Feb. 28)

In the typical fashion of the Trump presidential campaign of 2016, the candidate denied any credibility to the report which was published at the time in a local newspaper, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*.



On Memorial Day 1927, brawls erupted in New York led by sympathizers of the Italian fascist movement and the Ku Klux Klan. In the fascist brawl, which took place in the Bronx, two Italian men were killed by anti-fascists. In Queens, 1,000 white-robed Klansmen marched through the Jamaica neighborhood, eventually spurring an all-out brawl in which seven men were arrested.

One of those arrested was Fred Trump of 175-24 Devonshire Rd. in Jamaica.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, W

<p>WARREN CRITICIZES 'CLASS' PARADES</p> <p>Police Head Declares Neither Fascisti Nor Klan Had Any Place in Memorial March.</p> <p>KLAN ASSAILS POLICEMEN</p> <p>No Progress Made In Tracing the Slayers of Two Italians—Seven Arraigned In Queens Battle.</p> <p>Police Commissioner Warren announced yesterday that he was in favor of fewer "extraneous" parades</p>	<p>550 Atlantic Avenue. The letter follows: May 24, 1927. Hon. Joseph Warren, Police Headquarters, Centre Street, New York City. My dear Commissioner: I note the enclosed article in tonight's issue of The Brooklyn Standard Union. This, I believe, is the first time the Ku Klux Klan ever attempted to parade in the city. Another feature of the matter is most of the Klan marchers are to be imported from distant parts. Whether these fellows are coming to provoke a riot or just to advertise their hate-breeding organization, I do not know. Maybe you will be interested in reading the enclosed. I hope you are well and meeting with lots of success and happiness in your new work as head of the Police Department. With best wishes, I remain, Yours sincerely, PATRICK F. SCANLAN. Commissioner Warren said he had passed the letter to Chief Inspector William J. Lahey, who had issued the order banning any robed Klan appearances</p>	<p>Peekskill, was held in \$1,000 bail on a charge of felonious assault and \$500 on a charge of third degree assault. According to the police, Kapp knocked down and kicked Patrolman William O'Neill and struck Sergeant William Lockyer. Pleading not guilty to a charge of felonious assault, John Marcy of 21 Cliff Avenue, Yonkers, was held also in \$1,000 bail for hearing next week. Patrolman O'Neill complained that Marcy helped Kapp. Fred Lyons of New Hyde Park, L. I., and Thomas Carroll of 476 South Street, Jamaica, who staged a fist fight, according to the police, were paroled when they pleaded not guilty. Charged with being disorderly, Thomas Erwin of 7,062 Reedland Street, West Philadelphia, and Harry J. Free of Westbury Avenue, Carle Place, L. I., were released in bail of \$500 each. Fred Trump of 175-24 Devonshire Road, Jamaica, was discharged. The funeral service for Carist and Amoroso will be held at 2:30 P. M. on Saturday at the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, in East 187th Street, the Bronx. About one thousand Fascisti will attend the service. The coffins were taken yesterday to the headquarters of the</p>
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This is Donald Trump's father. Trump had a brother named Fred, but he wasn't born until [more than a decade later](#). The Fred Trump at Devonshire Road was the Fred C. Trump who lived there with his mother, according to

Source: [The Washington Post](#), February 29, 2016

In relationship to his father and the 1927 incident, Trump said:

"He was never arrested. He has nothing to do with this. This never happened. This is nonsense and it never happened. This never happened. Never took place. He was never arrested, never convicted, never even charged. It's a completely false, ridiculous story. He was never there! It never happened. Never took place."

Trump's rallies have been a gathering point for racist and extreme right-wing elements that are emboldened by his primary victories and the ending of the Obama administration. People have been treated with extreme rudeness at Trump's rallies while others were escorted out and even assaulted.

On March 1, a group of African American students were asked by secret service agents to leave an auditorium at Valdosta State University in Georgia where Trump was scheduled to speak.

"I think we got kicked out because we're a group of black people," one of the students said on a video posted by USA Today. They went on to say, "I guess ... they're afraid we're going to say something or do something. But we just really wanted to watch the rally. To get kicked out because we're a group of black people ... shows you how racist our own school is." (Huffington Post, March 1)

At Radford University in southwest Virginia, a group of students, many of whom were African American, were forced out of a rally when they protested against the racist rhetoric of the Republican frontrunner. One woman being jeered by the crowd of thousands was repeatedly asked by Trump: "Are you from Mexico?"

In the seconds that followed a Time magazine photographer, Christopher Morris, was placed in a chokehold and slammed to the floor by a secret service agent. At no time did Morris put his hands on the agent.

Scenes were tense outside the Fox Theater in downtown Detroit when the Republican candidates' debate was held there on March 3. Police and secret service agents set up a law-enforcement barricade between protesters representing Civil Rights, Labor, Anti-War, and Immigrant Rights demonstrators angered by the presence of Trump and other candidates, and their largely white supporters in attendance.

The Clinton-Sanders Debate in Flint: Struggling for the African American Vote

At the same time, former United States Senator, Secretary of State and First Lady, Hillary R. Clinton, has not prompted any hope for conscious African Americans, although pandering to this electoral base of the Democratic Party. Clinton spent considerable resources in Flint in an attempt to exploit the plight of this majority African American city where the water system was poisoned with lead at the aegis of Republican Governor Rick Snyder.

Clinton secured the endorsement of Flint's new Mayor Dr. Karen Weaver and utilized videos of her speeches given in African American churches in campaign commercials where she pledged to address the water crisis in the city of nearly 100,000 people. A nationally televised debate in Flint on March 6 was acrimonious between Clinton and Sanders.

Sanders has been criticized for not speaking out strongly enough against racial profiling by law-enforcement and the special oppression of the African American people. Nonetheless, the Vermont senator has garnered key endorsements from some leading political officials and community leaders in Detroit over the last few months.

Under the Bill Clinton administration of the 1990s, African Americans were severely damaged through the signing of the ominous crime bill; the effective death penalty act; the placing of tens of thousands of new cops on the streets; the building of prisons; and the further deregulation of the financial industry. Millions of African Americans lost their homes due to predatory lending while many more suffered lay-offs and impoverishment while Wall Street bankers, empowered even more under the Clinton government, were rewarded under two successive administrations with trillions of dollars in bailout funds through Congress and

the Federal Reserve.

Clinton was the public face of the U.S. destruction of Libya and the escalation of the Pentagon Africa Command (AFRICOM) throughout the continent. Under the administration of President Barack Obama, AFRICOM has been strengthened and enhanced.

Even under a Democratic regime, oppressed nations both internationally and domestically are subjected to militarized repression and super-exploitation. On March 7, the Pentagon launched a bombing operation in Somalia against the Al-Shabaab group which reportedly resulted in the deaths of at least 150 people.

Both the Democratic and Republican parties pose grave dangers for African Americans and the working class as a whole. Irrespective of their rhetoric, Clinton and Trump are on record for supporting globalization and all capitalist-inspired trade deals.

The suppression of wages, mass joblessness and poverty are essential in the current phase of capitalist economic production and relations. Wall Street and their Pentagon allies will remain in supreme authority short of a fundamental transformation of U.S. society.

An independently organized fighting movement is the only possible response to the political culture that is developing and will emerge full blown in 2017. Notwithstanding the national elections, the contradictions within capitalist society will continue to emerge and manifest in various social forms.

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