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In wake of Texas school shooting, Trump glorifies police and vigilante violence at NRA convention

Just three days after a gunman killed 19 children and two educators at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, Donald Trump delivered a fascist rant to the National Rifle Association annual convention, held 200 miles away in Houston.

Trump seized on the horrific massacre, which occurred only nine days after a neo-Nazi advocate of the “Great Replacement” conspiracy theory murdered 10 black people in Buffalo, New York, to portray the Democrats’ feckless calls for mild gun control measures as a “war on the police,” part of a socialist-communist conspiracy against “law-abiding American patriots.”

Trump made an obviously insincere attempt to feign sympathy for the devastated families of the slain children and teachers, and give a nod to the shock and anger of working people and youth across the country and beyond over the endless wave of mass shootings in the country that presents itself as the “beacon of democracy.”

But he delivered a typical campaign-style speech. He began by distinguishing himself from other Republican politicians who canceled their scheduled appearances at the fanatically pro-gun event in the wake of the Uvalde bloodbath. “Unlike others, I didn’t disappoint you by not showing up,” he said.

He then sounded the theme, common to both capitalist parties and the corporate media, that the crime was to be explained as a manifestation of “pure evil, pure hatred, pure

cruelty” carried out by a “demonic monster”—an abstraction that explains nothing and absolves the malignancies of capitalist society and its political system.

His solution was to demand a massive expansion of the repressive powers of the police and the transformation of schools into militarized fortresses. This would include limiting schools to a single point of entry, surrounding them with fencing, installing metal detectors, allowing educators to carry concealed weapons and staffing every school with multiple armed officers.

Denouncing the Biden administration for not having reopened the schools earlier in the midst of the pandemic, he proposed taking back “every penny of unspent COVID relief money from the states and using it to secure the schools.”

Trump went further. In a clear incitement to vigilantism, he said that cops in the schools could be supplemented with or replaced by “armed, expertly trained members of the NRA.”

“The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun,” Trump declared, and added, “And that is why one of the core missions of the NRA is to train, prepare and equip responsible American men and women with the tools they need to defend themselves, their families and their communities.”

He called onto the platform Jack Wilson, a “veteran firearms instructor” who used his concealed weapon to gun down a man who had shot two people at his Texas church. Wilson told the cheering NRA crowd: “I did not kill a human being that day. I took out evil... You have to be prepared to deal with evil at all levels.”

The former president and aspiring dictator then denounced the Democrats for “stoking riots over a single police killing,” a reference to the police murder of George Floyd on Memorial Day 2020, which sparked mass, multi-ethnic demonstrations against police violence across the US and internationally. He boasted of surging “hundreds of federal law enforcement officers to Democratic cities” such as Seattle and Portland to crack down on protesters.

“If I run for president and win [in 2024],” he continued, “I will crack down on violent crime like never before.” He pledged to hire more police, arrest more “violent criminals”

and demand “speedy trials” to “get them in jail.” He would, he added, strengthen “qualified immunity” for police, to allow them to attack and kill workers and youth with even greater impunity.

He reiterated his standard lie of a “stolen election” and his incendiary attacks on migrants, whom he accused of fueling crime in the US.

The audience, packed with active and retired police and military personnel, responded with roars of approval and chants for Trump in 2024.

Across from the George R. Brown Convention Center, the site of the NRA meeting, some 1,000 protesters demonstrated to demand gun control measures. Anger over the endless wave of school shootings is very real, with students walking out at a number of schools across the US.

However, the protests have been politically dominated by the Democratic Party and aligned organizations, which seek to channel the social outrage into token gun control measures that do not even begin to address the profound social pathologies that are lodged in the capitalist system—endless imperialist wars, social inequality, raging inflation and shortages of basic goods and murderous police repression.

Even as the Democrats refuse to defend democratic rights, whether they be on abortion, voting, or immigration, they seek to defuse working class anger and, with the aid of the union bureaucracies and the pseudo-left organizations, lead opposition into the dead end of Democratic election campaigns. Friday’s protest outside the NRA convention was addressed by Texas Representative Sheila Jackson Lee and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Beto O’Rourke.

Just this past Tuesday, Biden marked the second anniversary of the police murder of George Floyd by announcing a toothless executive order that does nothing to rein in police violence. He boasted that it had the endorsement of the major police organizations in the country. At the same time, Biden has called for state governments to divert billions of dollars in unspent COVID relief money to increase funding for the police.

Meanwhile, a small group of Democratic and Republican senators, led by New Jersey Democrat Christopher Murphy, is seeking to fashion a bipartisan gun bill that drops any

ban on the sale of assault weapons and permits state governments to impose stronger background checks as well as the “red tagging” of would-be gun purchasers with a history of mental illness, but does not require them to do so. Even this token measure is unlikely to survive opposition from Trump and the Republican Party.

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