

FUELING FEARS OF AN **HISPANIC INVASION**

Julio Noboa Polanco

Despite his statements to the contrary, made not of his own volition but under massive public pressure, it is Trump's actions and policies that most truly reflect his racism, xenophobia and misogyny. Beginning with his own statements and slogans, we have a President who in his initial campaign railed against Mexican immigrants as "rapists, gangsters, and criminals."

He is intent on building a wall to keep out the "invasion" of Mexican and Central American immigrants and continues to separate Latino families, caging their children and adults in concentration camps. He relentlessly attacks immigrant communities, raiding them to deport fathers, mothers, and close relatives who've been here for decades as hard-working residents with no criminal record.

With a President like that, where do you think the white supremacists get the idea that they are serving the nation by massacring innocent Latino immigrants?

If nothing else, the El Paso massacre as well as the other racially motivated acts of mass violence, has forced elected officials to confront the realities of white supremacy as well as the incredible facility with which anyone, regardless of their age, intent, or mental state, could obtain a portable weapon of mass destruction.

The problem of automatic military weaponry in the hands of the public compels elected officials to enact and enforce a ban on these weapons. Yet, given the influence of the NRA, this may be a difficult though urgent political task. The cancer of white supremacy, however, will require a much more complex and multifaceted cure. Legislation alone cannot heal the profound disease of racism that still infects our American psyche.

The unapologetic murderer of El Paso expressed no regret or remorse for his evil actions, relying on the twisted ideological defense of his manifesto, a twisted ideology that needs to be analyzed, deconstructed and delegitimized in the face of truth and reason. We cannot permit these myths and manifestos to go unchallenged; white supremacy must be resisted not only by the force of law but also in the marketplace of ideas.

It is interesting to note key statements in his manifesto that reflect some of the most fundamental beliefs of racism that undergird white supremacy going back to the justifications for the enslavement of Africans, the genocide of Native Americans and the dispossession of Mexican-American citizens. Thus, it is quite ironic that the mass murderer should refer to the "Hispanic invasion" of Texas, a state with centuries of history under six flags, the first two being those of Spain and Mexico long before the Anglos arrived.

In reality, a well-known historical fact is that it wasn't Hispanics, but Anglo Texians who invaded Texas, beginning early in the 1800s, with waves of mostly southern confederates coming to the Mexican

state of Tejas.

It was Tejanos who founded the cities of El Paso, San Antonio, and Laredo, so often mentioned in Western song and legend. It was Mexicans who brought from Northern Mexico the entire ranching tradition bequeathed to the Great American Cowboy as documented in the language of corrals, ranchos, rodeos, lassos, mustangs and palominos in the semi-arid land of arroyos, mesas and canyons.

All these Spanish words, as well as cities such as San Diego, Los Angeles, Albuquerque, and Santa Fe, not only contradict the fallacy that Spanish is a foreign language in our nation, but also confirm that it was Hispanics who established the foundation of what evolved into

today's Western ranching lifestyle and architecture with verandas, patios and plazas. It was Hispanics who established schools, courts, churches and printing presses in these cities as well as the first orchards and vineyards in the valleys of California.

The original Spanish conquistadors were, indeed, cruel towards the indigenous people they dominated and the Africans they enslaved, yet their descendants, unlike the majority of the Anglo invaders, actually combined their cultures and genes through racial mixing creating the multicultural mestizo and mulatto populations of Mexico, Puerto Rico and Latin America.

It is precisely this very racial mixing that is roundly condemned in the murderer's manifesto and even criminalized by U.S. federal law until Virginia vs Loving just a half-century ago. Keeping genetic purity is a common racist motive going back to the Nazis, the KKK and evidently still among the white supremacists of today.

Nevertheless, Americans of all colors and creeds are meeting, mixing, falling in love and finding their common humanity in schools, churches, sport teams, and work places. For decades we have marched together with people of all races and faiths to end the scourge of rage, racism, and ignorance that generate vile acts of hatred and violence. Among the most memorable demonstrations for us was the annual Martin Luther King march here in San Antonio, a tradition we engaged in for nearly two decades.

We can overcome the evil troika of guns, racism, and misogyny only if we come together to pressure our elected officials, demand an end to accessible automatic weapons, and confront all forms of hatred based on race, gender, religion and nationality regardless if it comes from a brain-washed bigot or from a sitting President!

BIO: Julio Noboa Polanco, formerly a columnist for the *San Antonio Express-News*, served as Chair for the Esperanza board in the 90s. He retired as Asst. Professor of Social Studies @ UTEP in 2014 but continues to write on issues related to peace and social justice. Julio and his wife, Elsa, also an educator, now live in Costa Rica.



Demonstrators protest Trump's visit to El Paso, Texas. Photo: Mario Tama/Getty Images