

In “60 Minutes” interview, Bannon elaborates plans for American fascist movement

By Eric London
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Former Trump chief strategist Steven Bannon further described his strategy to build an extra-parliamentary extreme-right-wing movement during an interview on the CBS program “60 Minutes” with Charlie Rose.

“The Republican establishment is trying to nullify the 2016 election,” Bannon began, noting that Republican Senate and House leaders Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan “do not want Trump’s populist economic nationalist agenda to be implemented.” Bannon said he was “absolutely” going to go to war with the Republican Party leadership. The former White House chief strategist continued his cautious criticism of Trump, noting that his decision to “embrace the establishment” after his inauguration was the Trump administration’s “original sin.”

Bannon threatened to spur a “civil war” in the Republican Party by running primary candidates against incumbents, attacking what Bannon called the Republican Party’s “amnesty” positions on immigration. He called for the deportation of 800,000 children brought to the US by their immigrant parents who were given temporary lawful presence under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, and said mass deportation of immigrant workers “is about the sovereignty of a nation.”

Bannon harkened back to the emergence of American nativist politics: “Look at the 19th century. What built America’s called the American system,” he said, referring to Henry Clay’s program of high tariffs and increased infrastructure spending. He called for “a system of protection of our manufacturing, financial system that lends to manufacturers, OK, and the control of our borders. Economic nationalism is what this country was built on.”

Bannon proposed matching political reaction at home with bellicose maneuvers against China, who he

accused of “stealing our technology” and “cutting out the beating heart of American innovation.”

He praised Trump because he “singled out China as the biggest problem we have on the world stage,” adding that “China is at economic war with us.” Bannon called for the implementation of sanctions against Chinese banks, corporations and capital markets—moves which would likely bring the US into a military conflict with the nuclear-armed power.

Rose was most aggressive in response to Bannon’s claim that “there’s nothing to the Russia investigation.” Rose engaged in a long exchange with Bannon and asked: “Why does the president find it so hard to criticize Russia?”

During the interview, Bannon postured as a friend of the “working class” and demagogically denounced the “pearl-clutching mainstream media” which he said represent “the upper east side of New York and the Hamptons.” His fraudulent demagoguery is aimed at hiding a fascist program, which is actually backed by powerful sections of the American capitalist class.

Bannon is no ally of the workers of any race or nationality. The former Goldman Sachs speculator is the editor-in-chief of Breitbart News, a website funded with millions of dollars from the Wall Street billionaire Robert Mercer to advance the interests of the most right-wing elements of corporate America.

His political program of mass deportation and militarism has more to do with Adolf Hitler than with Henry Clay, let alone two of the other figures Bannon mentioned in his speech, Alexander Hamilton and Abraham Lincoln. He also cited James K. Polk and Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt as models of “economic nationalism.”

Bannon’s admiration for Nazism was again on display during the “60 Minutes” interview when he

applauded Trump's defense of the Charlottesville white supremacists as "very fine people" during the August 15 press conference following the ultra-right riot in the Virginia college town. "After the Charlottesville situation, that's what I told General Kelly, I was the only guy that came out and tried to defend him," Bannon told Rose. "I was the only guy that said, 'He's talking about something, take it up to a higher level.'"

Rose responded by noting meekly that "many people suggest" Trump should have denounced Nazis and white supremacists. Rose told Bannon, "you don't appreciate the diversity, you don't appreciate the respect for civil rights."

Bannon responded: "I was raised in a desegregated neighborhood" that was "predominantly black ... I don't need to be lectured by a bunch of limousine liberals." Earlier in the interview, Bannon claimed that his right-wing nationalist movement includes "every race, every religion, every sexual preference. As long as you're a citizen of our country."

Rose left these comments unchallenged and did not take Bannon up when the latter said he believed Nazis are "awful" just minutes after defending Trump's praise of them. Judging by the fawning character of Rose's interview, one would think the interviewer was dealing with a major political figure who has mass support. In fact, Bannon is one of the most hated figures in American politics, with just 10 percent of people stating they opposed his dismissal from the White House in August.

The media has responded to the interview with booming headlines: "Steve Bannon's not done," "Breitbart's Bannon declares war on the GOP," "Bannon seizes the spotlight as he mounts campaign against GOP establishment," "How Steve Bannon is preparing for war," etc. While calling Bannon's fascist sympathies "controversial," the purpose and effect of these articles is to elevate Bannon and facilitate the growth of the extreme right-wing movement that Trump and Bannon hope to build.

Bannon's ability to posture as a defender of the "working class" is made possible primarily by the pro-corporate program of the Democratic Party. Bannon himself acknowledged as much when he told Rose that the financial crisis discredited the Democrats: "There were guys in [the Obama] administration who

understood you had to go and hold those guys on Wall Street accountable. And they blinked."

He explained that Trump's election was made possible by the Democratic Party's emphasis on identity politics. Referring to the Clinton campaign's emphasis on racial and gender identity, Bannon said, "We got her. If that's where she's going to go, we got her ... She has reconfirmed to me she has no earthly idea what she is doing, she has no earthly idea where this country is ... she walked into a trap ... She's talking about identity politics when the elites in this country have had an economic hate crime—you want to talk about hate crime—an economic hate crime on the working class people of this country."

To defeat Bannon and his Nazi-loving billionaire backers, workers and youth must break the far-right's primary sources of strength: the monopoly of the Democratic Party, trade unions, and pseudo-left over "left-wing" politics and the pernicious perspective of dividing the population along the lines of race, gender and sexual orientation, rather than class.

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