405 years of 'Black Jobs'

written by Stephen Millies
August 16, 2024

Simone Biles: "'I love my 'Black Job'"

Make the Trumps pay reparations!

What does Trump mean by the term "Black Jobs"? The billionaire bigot has used the

phrase repeatedly since his debate with Genocide Joe Biden on June 27.

Superstar gymnast Simone Biles fired back. [She posted](#) "'I love my 'Black Job'" on X while earning another three gold medals and a silver one at the Paris Olympics. Trump's running mate, JD Vance, [attacked](#) Biles three years ago during the Tokyo Olympics.

Trump used the term again while speaking at the National Association of Black Journalists convention in Chicago on July 31. The political prisoner [Mumia Abu-Jamal](#) was president of the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists.

[Trump claimed](#) that "coming from the border are millions and millions of people who happen to be taking Black jobs. They're taking the employment from Black people."

It wasn't immigrants who shut down nine of the 10 General Motors plants in Flint, Michigan, impoverishing the Black-majority city. It was Michigan Governor Rick Snyder — not immigrants — who shifted the source of the city's water supply to the filthy Flint River, poisoning thousands of children.

The hundreds of thousands of Black people in prison weren't railroaded by immigrants, either. It's politicians like Joe Biden who are responsible for two million poor people in jail. Biden sponsored the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994.

Trump's obvious aim is to divide and conquer. He wants to pit the Black community against immigrants while keeping both exploited.

Donald Trump didn't even want to rent apartments to Black people. He and his daddy were [sued](#) in 1973 by the feds for massive housing discrimination.

Meanwhile, the wealthy and powerful keep themselves in power by pumping racism into the minds of millions of whites. Fox News is just the most obvious, recent

example.

Trump despises all working and poor people. To build Trump Tower on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue, Trump hired Polish immigrants, many of whom were undocumented, to tear down an older building.

They were paid low wages and given hardly any safety equipment to protect them against asbestos. It's unknown how many died of mesothelioma, a form of lung cancer.

Four centuries of exploitation

"Black Jobs" have existed in this country from before the Mayflower. Since the first enslaved Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619, the worst and most dangerous jobs have been reserved for Black and other oppressed peoples.

Right up to the Civil War, it was "Black Jobs" on the plantations that produced two-thirds of U.S. exports. Capitalism depended on enslaved Africans picking cotton for its textile mills.

Most steelmaking methods require coke, which is heat-treated coal. Apartheid hiring in U.S. steel mills meant the vast majority of coke oven workers were Black, who were 10 times as likely to die from lung cancer.

Members of the Navajo Nation who were uranium miners suffered similarly high rates of lung cancers. Farmworkers, the majority of whom are undocumented, are plagued by cancers caused by pesticides.

Chinese workers were indispensable to building the first transcontinental railroad across the Sierra Nevada mountains in California. Over a thousand were killed because of dangerous working conditions.

By 1968, a quarter of all U.S. auto and steel workers were Black, twice their percentage of the total population. ("Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619-1981," by Philip Foner.)

Since then millions of factory workers, many of whom were Black, have lost their jobs. Just in New York City, 900,000 manufacturing jobs were destroyed. Dozens of cities like Detroit were devastated by deindustrialization.

Black workers are often the first target of automation. Fifty thousand jobs held by Black coal miners were eliminated between 1930 and 1980. ("Black Coal Miners in America, Race, Class, and Community Conflict 1780-1980," by Ronald L. Lewis.)

Twenty thousand Black elevator operators lost their jobs in New York City. (Local 32B-32J: Sixty Years of Progress.)

The Midwest was the industrial heartland of the United States. White families' median income fell there between 1978 and 1982 by 7.1%. That's a deep recession.

But Black families' median income in the same region fell by 35.8% — five times as much. That's a great depression. (U.S. Census historical income tables.)

Black workers have never recovered from this tsunami. The largest employer of Black labor today is non-union, low-wage Walmart.

It's because Walmart workers are poor that the Walton family is filthy rich with a $267 billion fortune.

When will we be paid for the work we've done?

Simone Biles knows exactly what Donald Trump means by "Black Jobs" and the workers who hold them. Trump wasn't referring to Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett who helped lead efforts to develop a COVID-19 vaccine. (Moderna tried to deny Corbett

and other National Institutes of Health scientists credit by keeping their names off its patent application.)

Nor was Trump thinking of the computer wizard Dr. Mark Dean, who holds 27 patents including three of the nine patents which made desktop computers available for personal use. Dean designed the ISA systems bus, which allows the linking of printers and modems with computers, and helped develop the color PC monitor.

When Trump says "Black Jobs" he means the so-called menial workers, the ones who work in "dirty jobs" and clean up after all the Trumps.

During the COVID pandemic, these workers became known for what they really are: **essential**. They kept society running, something that banksters and real estate sharks like Trump could never do.

Just during the first year of the pandemic, over 3,000 healthcare workers died in the U.S.

While operating and maintaining the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority's subways, trains, and buses, 156 workers died of COVID-19.

John Tyson and other dead animal capitalists demanded that Trump issue an executive order keeping the meatpacking plants open. In the following months, over 59,000 meatpacking workers fell ill, and at least 269 died of the virus. The vast majority of these workers were Latinx, Black, and/or immigrants.

As the Staple singers asked in their great song, when will we be paid for the work we've done?

Make the Waltons, the Trumps, and all the billionaire families that run the United States pay reparations!