

The Murder of Alex Pretti and the Trial Run of Fascism in the U.S.

A Statement by Maoist Communist Union

Trumph's Brownshirts (ICE) have executed another person in the streets of Minneapolis. His name was Alex Pretti and he was a VA Hospital Nurse. He was attacked by ICE because he was helping a woman who had been pepper sprayed and now they are labeling him a domestic terrorist and working overtime to use his death to roll back Second Amendment rights. We can see Vance, Noem, and the other troglodytes of the Trump Administration using the same playbook that they drew on after the murder of Renee Good.

These executions of protesters are part of the larger blanket repression that is being rolled out against the people of Minneapolis, citizen and immigrants alike. This is a trial run for fascism in the U.S. A section of the monopoly capitalist class, especially the big tech/finance capitalists like Peter Thiel, want to roll out a system of AI-Surveillance and policing across the country that will facilitate a fascist form of class rule.

This trial run is playing out on a few different levels. Under Stephen Miller's guidance, the White House and Executive branches are trying out openly fascist messaging on official government social media. Nazi Slogans, KKK songs, and White Nationalist memes have replaced dog whistles and more typical conservative talking points. Protesters are being labeled as domestic terrorists for simply exercising their First and Second Amendment rights. New surveillance technology (which was often first tested on Palestinians) is being utilized on unprecedented levels to target immigrants and citizens alike. The Supreme Court has effectively overturned the Fourth Amendment. And of course, ICE is rampaging through the streets, using Brownshirt style tactics and going door to door.

However, we must understand the complexities of how the bourgeoisie maintains their class dictatorship. They cannot rule through naked force alone. Nor are they capable of shifting from bourgeois democracy to fascism without facing mass resistance. This is an inevitable result of the nature of bourgeois society, in which a tiny minority of parasitic exploiters reap the rewards of the collective labor of the vast majority. Therefore, an integral part of this trial run of fascism is testing how the masses of people will respond. The ruling class is curious to see if they can contain popular revolts within the established system of controlled opposition. Put more simply, will the people still continue to rally behind the bankrupt Democrats and their spineless NGOs? Can this

emerging mass resistance to ICE be corralled and co-opted as the George Floyd protests were?¹

Just as the ruling class has been laying the foundations for fascism (with increased ICE funding, new Palantir tech, etc.), so too have they laid the foundations for co-optation. We can see this in the milquetoast opposition to Trump in the “No Kings” protests which were astroturfed by billionaires like George Soros, Christy Walton, and Bill Gates. The “No Kings” framework for opposing Trump is fundamentally bourgeois and distorts the nature of the present struggle.

First, let’s be clear, the capitalist imperialists like Trump and Musk (but also like Obama, Biden, Soros, Walton, and Gates) are capable of, and have carried out, atrocities on a global scale that feudal monarchs could never even dream of, constrained as they were by the feudal mode of production. A global empire of drone strikes, mass surveillance, assassinations, regime change, and genocide is a distinctly capitalist nightmare. The type of hell that Palestinian people are facing and courageously resisting is something no feudal king could ever achieve, no matter how cruel, inbred, and insane he was.

Second, the “No Kings” framework whitewashes the true nature of bourgeois democracy in the U.S. This is not a struggle of democracy against monarchy, and we must reject any effort to frame this struggle in terms of the imaginary of the American Revolution. Giving ground on this amounts to falling prey to the illusions which the bourgeoisie promotes to defang the struggle against fascism. We need to be square that the present struggle is a struggle against the rise of fascism in the U.S. and that fascism is a particular form of bourgeois class dictatorship. Without clarity on this, we will inevitably be led into one dead end or another by the Democrats and their NGOs.

We can see the spinelessness of the so-called progressive Democrat politicians in recent remarks by AOC. After the murder of Renee Good, she was asked if she still supports abolishing ICE (a fairly basic position given that the majority of Americans now do), and she would not commit to this. Instead, she jawboned about reducing funding for ICE, even though her online store still sold hats that said “Abolish ICE.” Such is the grifting nature of the controlled opposition that is the “progressive wing” of the Democratic Party.

Another channel for containing popular discontent is the official union leadership. The day before Alex Pretti was killed there was a major mobilization in Minneapolis and around the country that involved large numbers of unionized workers.

¹ It’s no coincidence this trial run is being pioneered in Minneapolis, where mass revolts sparked the George Floyd protests. There are also, of course, the geopolitical considerations of building support for the international recognition of Israel-backed Somaliland. However, one thing that Minneapolis does not have is a high rate of undocumented migrants. The vast majority of Somali-Americans there are either citizens or have documentation. This clarifies the essential nature of the Trump administration’s push to expand ICE: It is fundamentally not about curtailing immigration or deporting people, but rather about trying out new and more repressive forms of class rule, and the selection of Minneapolis as the target for the current massive deployment of ICE forces is symptomatic of this reality.

This stands in sharp contrast to George Floyd protests and BLM more broadly, where many unions stood aside or meekly participated in a limited fashion, and even then only once the movements had already been co-opted by the Democratic Party. The mass participation of unionized workers in the struggle against ICE and the broader fight against the rise of fascism is an incredibly important development.

However, the existing union leadership, beholden to the capitalist class, is working overtime to contain proletarian militancy and ensure that the involvement of the working class in the movement does not develop into a mass political strike movement which would threaten the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie wants to see if the union leadership can keep a lid on the working class struggle. Can they prevent wild cat strikes? Can they defang and co-opt calls for a general strike? Can they successfully oppose the pressure from below for explicitly political strikes against ICE?

The recent involvement of the unions in the so-called general strike in Minneapolis is important to analyze closely. It seems that the union leadership got involved only once the calls for a general strike attained sufficient popularity that they could no longer be ignored. But then, instead of actually supporting a real general strike and mobilizing all of their available resources against ICE, they worked (at the behest of the capitalist class) to avoid a true general strike (which would have seen the whole city shut down as was the case in this country's great general strikes of the past).² It is therefore of the utmost importance that Marxists use this spinelessness on the part of the official union leadership to expose these misleaders of labor and advance the struggle to wrest leadership of the working class movement from them.

Since the passage of Taft-Hartley in 1947, it has been illegal for the workers in this country to have a political strike. This is a clear line the bourgeoisie have drawn: Workers can strike over economic issues, but they have no right to decide, as workers, on political matters. Implicit in this line is the idea that the bourgeoisie is the only class that has the right to run society. The spineless union leadership will use the fact that political strikes are illegal to say that the working class cannot and should not strike to oppose the rise of fascism. However, now is precisely the time to wage the struggle to reclaim the proletariat's right to political strikes.

In his lecture on the 1905 Revolution, Lenin explained how to judge the class character of movements and revolutions. He emphasized that Marxists must analyze not only the character of the demands put forward by the masses, but also their methods of struggle:

² A real general strike would have meant holding strike authorization votes, condemning and opposing the laws which make it illegal for workers to have political strikes in this country, using strike funds to pay striking workers, condemning and opposing scabs who broke the picket lines, etc. Even a cursory comparison to the great general strikes in the heroic age of unions in the U.S. shows that this action in Minneapolis was very far from a true general strike.

The peculiarity of the Russian revolution is that it was a bourgeois-democratic revolution in its social content, but a proletarian revolution in its methods of struggle. It was a bourgeois-democratic revolution since its immediate aim, which it could achieve directly and with its own forces, was a democratic republic, the eight-hour day and confiscation of the immense estates of the nobility—all the measures the French bourgeois revolution in 1792–93 had almost completely achieved.

At the same time, the Russian revolution was also a proletarian revolution, not only in the sense that the proletariat was the leading force, the vanguard of the movement, but also in the sense that a specifically proletarian weapon of struggle—the strike—was the principal means of bringing the masses into motion and the most characteristic phenomenon in the wave-like rise of decisive events.³

The recent mass mobilization of the working class in Minneapolis and around the country is an incredibly important development in the course of this struggle. It shows that the advanced elements of the proletariat are beginning to involve themselves in this struggle *as an organized force*. This is an important development, not seen in this country for decades, which shows the correctness of Marx's thesis that unions can and must become levers in the struggle for the general emancipation of the class. However, in order for this to be case, and in order for the present movement to take on a truly proletarian class character, Marxists must resolutely oppose the treacherous official union leadership.

Another aspect of this trial run is a test of how far the MAGA base and other conservatives are willing to go in supporting the rollout of new domestic repressive measures. However, the coalition that elected Trump was already fraying and fractured after the killing of Charlie Kirk and the administration's refusal to release the Epstein Files. While some prominent conservative figures and influencers have rallied behind ICE, others are openly expressing their concern about this unprecedented expansion of the police state.

The killing of Alex Pretti has driven a further wedge in the right, as the Trump administration is now openly using his death to attack Second Amendment rights. The Libertarian Party has come out and condemned the administration for this, as have many Second Amendment organizations, as well as various prominent figures on the right. Marxists must pay close attention to these divisions as they emerge and develop. This is key for not only assessing the level of popular support for fascism in the U.S., but also to understand which forces (such as the Libertarian Party) can potentially play a progressive role in the fight against fascism. In this shifting situation, even a few Republican politicians (other than Thomas Massie and Majorie Taylor Greene, who have consistently opposed Trump of late) have changed their tune and are refusing to toe the line set by the Trump Administration. Here we need to also differentiate between divisions among the ruling class in the Republican Party (and the capitalists who back them) and those among the MAGA base.

³ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/jan/09.htm>

Marxists thus must pay close attention to a few key variables in the present situation.

- 1) How willing are people to support the rollout of fascism? How much do they oppose it?
- 2) On what ground do people oppose fascism? Is it fundamentally a bourgeois-democratic opposition (“No Kings”, 50501, etc.), or are there more class conscious elements that are developing significant sway in the movement?
- 3) How successful is the bourgeoisie in channeling the mass movement into the controlled opposition of the Democratic Party and their affiliated NGOs?
- 4) What methods of struggle are used in the movement? Are things confined to mass street protests and small adventurist actions, or does the working class enter into the struggle as an organized force in the form of political strikes, even if initially in a halting and uncertain fashion? And as precursor to this, does the base of union membership begin to pressure the union leadership to take a more decisive stand in the struggle against ICE and fascism?
- 5) How much are the misleaders of labor able to contain and corral working class militancy?
- 6) What sort of divisions exist on the right? What forces can be won over to opposing fascism? Which can be neutralized so that, even if they do not actively oppose fascism, they do not openly support its rise either?
- 7) What are the divisions among the ruling class? Which sections are strong supporters of fascism? Which are more resolutely opposing it? Which are wavering elements? It is not uncommon for the rise of fascism to involve violent clashes *among the ruling class itself*. While there will be spectacle, false opposition, grand standing, and more, Marxists must differentiate between these media-spectacles and the true conflict between the bourgeoisie over the form that their class dictatorship takes.

Of all these factors, the sentiments and actions of the working class are the most important for Marxists to follow. We should be clear that while we cannot completely determine the course of the present struggle, we can have some influence, provided that we develop an objective analysis of the overall situation and our capacity to creatively intervene in the process of development of the class struggle. In particular, we must work to support the emergence of class consciousness among the proletariat and put pressure on the misleaders of labor who presently run all major unions in the U.S.

The bourgeoisie is certainly aware of the threat that an increased militancy among the working class poses to the stability of their class rule and their present designs to move towards fascism. This is part of why, for the first time in its history, the Department of Homeland Security said that “class-based grievances” are a source of “domestic terrorism” in this country. This speaks to the growing strength, though still

quite meager, of the working class movement in this country, and the fear it inspires in the capitalist.⁴

In the wake of Alex Pretti's death, we can see that the Trump administration and the capitalists who back them have continued with the same playbook. They have labeled Pretti a domestic terrorist and are trying to use his murder to roll back Second Amendment rights, like they just did with the Fourth Amendment. And while the administration may be backing off a bit with the dismissal of Bovino, it is also possible this trial run of fascism will continue and intensify in the coming months and possibly much longer.

Marxists must thus prepare for the hard struggle ahead and redouble our efforts to bring about the fusion of Marxism and the working class movement. The objective situation, in which the murderous and repressive nature of the capitalist state is made starkly clear by daily outrages, provides ample raw material for exposures of the brutality of the capitalist class. We must seize the time and work tirelessly to develop our influence among the working class and promote proletarian leadership in the existing mass movement. We must explain the present outrages from a distinctly Marxist perspective, and not tail the liberal bourgeoisie or petty-bourgeois reformists. Only in doing so can we promote a truly proletarian class consciousness among the working class.

Our motto must be that the working class must lead in everything, that we cannot tail the bourgeoisie in the fight against fascism, and that we must resist all efforts by the NGOs and Democrats to co-opt the movement. We must popularize the painful lessons of the George Floyd protests, so that the masses understand how the Democrats aim to put the movement in a straitjacket and shoot it full of mood stabilizers and lithium, so as to reinforce the strength of the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, whether it take a fascist or bourgeois democratic form.

In closing, it can be helpful to step back from the immediate situation and look at things in a broader historical context. After half a century of relative "peace" in the class struggle in the U.S. (though "peace time" is incredibly difficult for the working class and is full of oppression, poverty, police brutality, etc.) we are witnessing a rapid sharpening of the contradictions in the society. Even if the present trial run of fascism is defeated, we can expect that this will only lead to a local minimum in the longer-term trend of increased repression in the U.S. Therefore, very difficult and dark days are ahead of us. Nightmarish forms of AI surveillance are increasingly the norm in this country, with the bourgeoisie rolling out massive new data centers in an attempt to fulfill their fantasies of an omniscient and fully automated police state. Basic democratic rights are rapidly being rolled back. Fascist thugs are being armed *en masse* and promised "absolute immunity" from any and all repercussions as they rampage through the streets of our

⁴ That said, at present they are more concerned with Luigi Mangione-style Narodnik attacks on the bourgeoisie. While the calls for a general strike in Minneapolis may change this somewhat, there is still some blindness among the bourgeoisie to the threat that a more organized and militant working class movement poses to the stability of their class rule.

cities. We can expect all this and more in the coming years. More murder, more disappearances, more torture, more horrors.

But in the face of this onslaught we must not lose hope or abandon our fundamental confidence in the infinite creative capacity of the masses. The “great disorder under heaven” that we are seeing both domestically and globally is not a result of the strength of the U.S. bourgeoisie, but their growing weakness and vulnerability as they have entered into an ever-intensifying global inter-imperialist competition with China. They are deeply worried about their position internationally and their stability domestically. The Trump administration, in a typically hasty and ham-fisted way, is trying to reconfigure both the international order and the domestic situation to preserve the global dominance of U.S. imperialism. However, the blatant rapacity of their actions is exposing to the people of this country and the world the true nature of capitalist class rule. And so, as Mao said so long ago, this great disorder under heaven is excellent.

Franz Mehring, in his excellent biography of Marx, spoke of Marx’s disposition during times of heightened class struggle. We can all learn from Marx’s attitude and aspire to rise to the occasion as he did, time and time again:

“There is no doubt that the incomparable stature of Marx is due not a little to the fact that in him the man of ideas was indissolubly bound up with the man of action, and that the two mutually complemented and supported each other. Neither is there any doubt that the fighter in him always took precedence over the thinker. The great pioneers of socialism were all in agreement in this respect; as Lassalle once put it, how gladly would he leave unwritten all he knew if only the time for action would come! And in our own days we have observed with horror how right they were. Lifelong followers of Marx, men who had brooded for three and even four decades over every comma in his writings, failed utterly at the historic moment when for once they might and should have acted like Marx. Instead they swung this way and that, like creaking weather vanes in a blustering wind.”