

Justice for Good and Pretti!

Labor: Make ICE Stand Down!

Tens of thousands of furious protesters braved subzero temperatures in Minneapolis on January 23 to demand in no uncertain terms that ICE get lost, only for Trump's thugs to turn around and gun down Alex Pretti execution style the next day. This massive provocation cannot go unanswered. Pretti, an ICU nurse and AFGE Local 3669 member, was simply trying to help a woman who had been pepper-sprayed by federal agents when he was pinned to the ground, beaten and disarmed before being pumped full of bullets. Trump has once again escalated his reign of terror, and he will keep it up as long as he does not face any real consequences for his naked repression.

The Democrats certainly are not providing any serious opposition. They are talking about forcing a government shutdown to block ICE spending when Trump has plenty of resources to keep "Operation Metro Surge" in high gear. Governor Walz advises video recording of ICE activity when the Feds regularly post video of their violence and brutality to social media. Hours after Pretti's murder, Walz activated the National Guard to relieve sheriff's deputies who are providing crowd control at the Whipple Federal Building. The mandate of these troops is not to assist the protesters, but to assist in their suppression. For weeks now, Mayor Frey has called for ICE out but done absolutely nothing to make that happen.

Funding squabbles, video recordings and idle threats are not going to back down Trump and his band of killers. It is going to take a demonstration of social power to get through to them. Labor has the ability to force Trump to retreat, but only if it takes the gloves off and mobilizes actual strike action. Everyone from the mainstream media to union leaders and left groups plays up the January 23 protest as a general strike. If you can take a train or bus around town, if your mail and packages are delivered, if the schools are open, you are not in the midst of a general strike. It is good that workers turned out to protest in large numbers on January 23, but they did so as individuals, the vast majority having called out sick.

The union leadership is to blame for squandering this opportunity. They endorsed and attended the protest to get out ahead of the seething anger in their own ranks and confine it within bounds acceptable to Democrats like Walz and Frey. They talked

tough about shutting Minneapolis down. But they did not even organize union contingents at the protest, much less call out the ranks collectively, claiming their hands are tied by contractual no-strike clauses. So, while Trump tears up the "rules of engagement" and wields all manner of weapons in pursuit of the interests of the billionaires, the union misleaders hide behind these very rules in order to sit on labor's powerful strike weapon—and immigrants and workers pay for it with their very lives.

The ferocity of the ICE offensive in Minneapolis has many area Trump voters reconsidering their support. MAGA-leaning workers and those union members more reluctant to act can and must be persuaded to join the fight by highlighting the vital link between defense of immigrants and the defense of the unions. ICE has detained and disappeared dozens of members of Minnesota unions like the SEIU, UNITE HERE, CWA and ATU, and its rampaging through the city streets and crushing of dissent is designed to stomp out any kind of struggle against the bosses. Pretti's union, the AFGE, had its collective bargaining rights stripped away last year in the VA hospital system where he worked. In New York City, the hospital bosses, taking their cue from Trump, are attempting to ruthlessly squeeze striking NYSNA nurses into accepting a concessionary contract.

A real labor fightback is a matter of life and death, not only for immigrants and their defenders, but also for the unions themselves. Militant workers must go the extra mile right now before there is another Renee Good or Alex Pretti:

- Bring along coworkers to demand that union leaders mobilize displays of union power—from contingents at protests to the general strike so urgently needed.
- Call for emergency mass membership meetings to organize and prepare collective action.
- Wherever union leaders throw up resistance, launch committees in defense of immigrants and the union to push the struggle forward.

Labor must act decisively and take the lead to put an end to the ICE occupation of the Twin Cities. There is no time to waste—*for labor action to stop ICE!*

Read *Workers Vanguard*, Marxist newspaper of the Central Committee of the SL/U.S.: workersvanguard.org

Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

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