

# The mass shooting in Buffalo, New York: A political crime

Barry Grey  
16 May 2022

On Sunday, one day after a white supremacist gunman shot and killed 10 people and wounded three others at a supermarket in Buffalo, New York, President Joe Biden attributed the massacre to “hate that remains a stain on the soul of America.”

Speaking at a law enforcement ceremony at the U.S. Capitol, Biden echoed the remarks of Erie County, New York Sheriff John Garcia, who called the attack “pure evil.”

Such remarks explain nothing, nor are they meant to. They are intended to cover up and evade the disturbing social reality expressed in a horrific way in this event.

It is necessary to state bluntly: The mass shooting on Sunday was a political crime. It was carried out by a racist and anti-Semite on the basis of a definite, fascist political ideology. But while Biden refers to the “stain on the soul of America” in relation to the mass killing in Buffalo, he refers to the ideological and political inspirers of this attack—that is, dominant sections of the Republican Party—as his “colleagues.”

The gunman, Payton S. Gendron, 18, laid out in detail his plan to randomly target African Americans for instant death—and the neo-Nazi political agenda that motivated it—in a 180-page manifesto that was posted online in the hours before the attack.

He drove 200 miles from his middle class home in Conklin, New York to the Tops Friendly Market in Buffalo, having chosen that neighborhood because its zip code had the highest percentage of black people within striking distance of where he lived. Protected by body armor and wielding an assault weapon, he gunned down 13 people, killing 10 and wounding three.

In his manifesto, Gendron promoted the neo-Nazi “Replacement Theory,” denouncing immigration as “white genocide” and declaring: “The real war I’m advocating for is the gentiles vs the Jews... Jews are the

biggest problem the Western world has ever had. They must be called out and killed...”

Among those who inspired him, Gendron cited: Patrick Wood Crusius, who killed 23 in a Hispanic neighborhood in El Paso, Texas, in August of 2019; Brenton Tarrant, the Australian fascist who killed 51 Muslims at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in March of 2019; Dylann Roof, who killed nine African Americans at a church in Charleston, South Carolina, in June of 2015; and Anders Breivik, a Norwegian Nazi who in July 2011 killed eight people by detonating a van bomb in Oslo and massacred 69 participants at a social democratic youth camp.

The fascistic representatives in the Republican Party might not carry out such attacks themselves, but they promote the political and ideological conceptions behind them. The conceptions of “Replacement Theory” are expounded in different forms at Republican Party conferences and by fascistic media personalities.

It is nearly a year and a half since former President Trump organized a coup to overthrow the 2020 elections and establish a dictatorship. He mobilized fascist militias as his foot soldiers to overrun the U.S. Capitol and kidnap or kill his political opponents. He did so with the support of the Republican Party and considerable sections of the police/military/intelligence apparatus.

Yet neither Trump nor his main co-conspirators have been prosecuted, let alone jailed, while the Democrats preside over a massive cover-up. Trump and company are allowed to openly campaign and plot their next moves to overthrow the Constitution.

The Republican Party is acquiring the characteristics of an American fascist party. A large majority of its officials and office-holders agree with the neo-Nazi

manifesto drafted by Gendron. They are currently running a hysterical campaign against migrants, demanding that the Biden administration continue to enforce the anti-democratic Title 42 policy of expelling refugees at the US-Mexico border, denying their right to asylum and any form of due process. They claim that migrants fleeing mass poverty and violence are deliberately bringing disease and deadly drugs, such as fentanyl, into the US in order to kill off the white population.

This party controls the Supreme Court, which is about to rip up the constitutional right of women to an abortion, accelerating the assault on all democratic rights. And it is poised to take control of both houses of Congress in the November mid-term elections.

It is under these conditions that fascist gunmen such as Kyle Rittenhouse, who murdered two anti-police violence protesters and injured a third, are acquitted, and militia members who plotted to kidnap or kill Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer are set free, with the open support of large sections of the Republican Party.

What is the role of the Democratic Party? All of its efforts are focused on suppressing social opposition from the working class. It does so, on the one hand, by relentlessly promoting a racialist narrative to divide the working class, thereby facilitating the efforts of the Republican right to promote anti-black racism. And it works with the trade union bureaucracy to sabotage strikes and working class protests, which are nevertheless increasing day by day.

This is combined with the pursuit of imperialist war, of which the Democratic Party has become the preeminent instrument of the ruling class. But this inevitably entails ever deeper attacks on the working class and the more rapid growth of fascistic forces. Indeed, in its proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, the US is arming to the teeth the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion.

The noxious character of American politics intersects with an increasing breakdown of American society, which finds a reactionary expression in homicidal violence. Just over the past several days, mass shootings occurred in downtown Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where 17 people were wounded; at a Southern California church attended by Asians, where one person was killed and five others wounded; and at a packed flea market in Houston, Texas, where two were

killed and three wounded.

Hate crimes in the US hit a 12-year high in 2020, with more than 10,000 people reporting offenses related to their race, gender, sexuality, religion or disability. Crimes against Asian and black Americans in particular surged that year, FBI figures suggest. This year has seen a sharp increase in anti-Semitic hate crimes.

The social crisis in the United States has been immensely intensified, and social tensions exacerbated, by more than two years of the COVID-19 pandemic and the homicidal and incompetent response of the entire political system, leading to the deaths of more than 1 million people

The staggering chasm between rich and poor has dramatically increased, as both political parties have funneled trillions of dollars to bail out the corporations and the wealthy while slashing real wages and imposing brutal work schedules and conditions on the working class. All of these reactionary tendencies have been compounded by the incitement of a war against Russia that threatens to trigger a nuclear holocaust and devours endless billions of dollars.

The only progressive way out of this social and political impasse is the mass mobilization of the working class on the basis of a socialist program. The great social power of workers must be liberated by smashing through the barriers erected by the Democratic Party and the pro-corporate trade unions. This will open up immense possibilities for the struggle against imperialist war, social inequality and fascism in the United States and internationally.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:  
**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**