

Trump turns Kirk memorial into campaign for theocratic-fascist dictatorship

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Three days ago, the Socialist Equality Party wrote, in a statement calling for the mobilization of the working class against the Trump administration:

[I]t is necessary to put aside all self-deluding hopes that what is unfolding is anything less than a drive to establish a presidential dictatorship, based on the military, police, paramilitary forces and fascist gangs. The essential purpose of the glorification of Charlie Kirk has been to provide a martyr symbol to galvanize the most reactionary forces in the country.

This fact was on full display at the funeral rally held for Kirk in Glendale, Arizona on Sunday. What unfolded was something unprecedented in American history, a mobilization of the fascist right, orchestrated from the highest levels of the White House.

The festival of reaction culminated in remarks from Trump. In the course of a violent rant, Trump proclaimed, “I hate my enemies,” an extraordinary declaration from an American president about his domestic political opponents. This remark is particularly ominous coming from a president whose enemies list includes anyone in the country who rejects his policies.

Trump claimed that Kirk’s last words to him were an appeal to send the military into Chicago, on the pretext of “saving” the city from crime, and he promised to do so. He pledged to step up his campaign of military violence against the American people, focused on the major cities, while repeating the lie that “violence comes largely from the left.”

The day after the funeral, Trump signed an official order declaring “Antifa” a “domestic terrorist” organization. Given that “Antifa” is not, in fact, an actual organization,

the order creates the basis for left-wing opponents of fascism to be persecuted using the methods of the “war on terror.”

Trump closed his remarks with a pledge “to bring back religion to America, because without borders, law and order and religion, you really don’t have a country anymore.” The slogan of fascist Italy was more concise: *Dio, Patria, Famiglia*.

Any pretense of a separation of church and state was completely obliterated at the Arizona rally. References to Kirk as a modern-day Jesus Christ were ubiquitous. War Secretary Pete Hegseth declared, “Only Christ is king.” Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. drew the bluntest parallel: “Christ died at 33 years old. But he changed the trajectory of history. Charlie died at 31 years old but … he also now has changed the trajectory of history.”

Open calls for Christian theocracy came from fascist podcaster Benny Johnson, who pointed to Trump officials in attendance and declared: “God has instituted them. God has given them power over our nation and our land.”

This was combined with calls for vengeance. Perhaps the most strident declaration came from Stephen Miller, the White House deputy chief of staff and principal figure behind the construction of a presidential dictatorship. Trump’s version of Josef Goebbels howled at the administration’s opponents, “What do you have? You have nothing. You are nothing. You are wickedness, you are jealousy, you are hatred. You are nothing. You can build nothing. You can produce nothing. You can create nothing. We are the ones who build. We are the ones who create. We are the ones who lift up humanity.”

Miller paraphrased a tribute given by Goebbels in 1932 to the Nazi stormtrooper Horst Wessel, titled, “The Storm is Coming.” Miller declared, “We are the storm. And our enemies cannot comprehend our strength.”

Here, Miller is giving voice to the self-delusion of the capitalist financial oligarchy, the billionaires who imagine

that they, and not the working class, are the driving force of human progress. But it is human labor, armed with science and technology, that creates the possibility of a new world of freedom and prosperity for all. The profit-gouging capitalist class offers humanity only deepening mass misery, dictatorship and world war.

The statement that fascism will come to America “wrapped in the American flag and carrying a cross” has frequently been attributed to Sinclair Lewis, although he did not use those exact words in his great dystopian novel, *It Can’t Happen Here*. The Kirk funeral rally showed the prescience of Lewis’s depiction of the rise of an American fascist strongman who combines religious invocations and promises of centuries of American domination of the world. What Trump, Vance, Miller & Co. offer is Hitler’s “thousand-year Reich,” done up in red, white and blue.

As extraordinary as the rally itself was, perhaps even more significant is the response, or non-response, of the media and the Democratic Party. The American press has treated Sunday’s spectacle as if it were a routine political event. In their coverage, words like fascist, racist or antisemite are carefully avoided, not only in describing Charlie Kirk but also the lineup of fascists, racists and antisemites who spoke in his honor. More than 24 hours later, neither the *New York Times* nor the *Washington Post* had published editorials on the rally.

In the face of four hours of Nazi-inspired diatribes, no leading Democrats, including Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, could muster even a perfunctory criticism. “Democrats silent as Republicans galvanised after Charlie Kirk memorial,” the *Guardian* headlined an article published yesterday.

Explaining this silence, the *Guardian* commented, “Democrats trod carefully in responding to the memorial service, aware that any hint of criticism might be misconstrued and exploited.” The newspaper cited comments by historian Jon Meacham that the Democrats risked being accused of being “out of touch with America’s Christian heartland,” as the newspaper put it.

That is, the Democrats rationalize their silence by hiding behind the fiction that exposing the attempt to erect a theocratic-fascist dictatorship would be unpopular. In reality, the agenda laid out in Arizona is opposed by the vast majority of the population.

There is a significant element of cowardice in the non-response to the Arizona rally, along with the previous decision by the Democrats to back the resolution honoring the fascist Kirk. But the more fundamental issue is that

the Democrats are terrified of a movement from below, because any such movement would inevitably raise the question of who should rule society: the capitalist oligarchy or the broad mass of working people?

The turn towards authoritarian rule is taking place under conditions in which the social position of workers is rapidly deteriorating: wages eroded by inflation, families drowning in debt, public health and education dismantled, and an unending wave of workplace deaths. The ruling elite, terrified of mass resistance, is preparing to crush it in advance.

This is not a crisis unique to America. The same conditions exist, to one degree or another, in every major capitalist country. In France, for example, a modest proposal for a 2 percent wealth tax on fortunes exceeding €100 million has provoked howls of outrage from billionaires like Bernard Arnault of LVMH, who denounced it as “insane” and “communist.”

French capitalists, like their American counterparts, view even the smallest encroachment on their property as an existential threat. The same dynamic is at play in the United States: Once mass opposition develops, the conflict will not remain within the bounds of parliamentary debate, but will immediately threaten the wealth and power of the ruling elite. It is the capitalist system, not the personality of Donald Trump, that is the driving force in the effort to create an authoritarian regime.

The only serious question in American politics today is how this movement toward dictatorship can be stopped. It will not come about through the Democratic Party, Congress or the courts—all institutions that have already demonstrated their impotence and complicity. The necessary response is the emergence of a mass movement of the working class, mobilized independently, conscious of the scale of the threat, and prepared to fight not only against Trump, but against the capitalist system that has produced him.



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