

# Louisiana mothers organize daily ICE watch

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
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Slidell, Louisiana, Dec. 10 - Masked ICE agents film an activist conducting ICE watch from a parked vehicle outside La Morenita grocery store. Photo: ange\_50/TikTok

On New Year's Day, I spent the afternoon with activists watching for ICE in Slidell, a small Louisiana town about 40 miles northeast of New Orleans. We sat in parked vehicles outside a Latine grocery store in the middle of a strip mall.

The scene today was totally ordinary, if a bit slow; people came and got their groceries without incident. But this location has been heavily targeted by ICE, with multiple incidents documented on social media. In response, several youth-led protests have happened next to the highway here, and ICE watch has posted up daily. The community in Slidell has gotten organized.

Kayla, a Slidell native and mom, told me: "They thought these small towns were just going to roll over, but we're not. The kids were out here for three days protesting. They had a protest here yesterday but I couldn't make it because I was doing ICE watch somewhere else."

I asked her how often she's out doing this. "Every day. I'm living in this car," she laughed.

With the car seat and other signs of child passengers, her SUV looked like any other busy mom's, except this vehicle was packed with boxes of whistle kits and food to distribute. The whistles are for making noise when ICE shows up.

"They want people to be afraid to even go to the grocery store, so we've been doing food distributions. Some small stores are locking their doors until people come up.

"ICE is targeting construction sites, neighborhoods, and trailer parks. Things are so bad that notaries are going to people's houses to help parents give over guardianship of their children in case the parents are taken."

Kayla said she had never been involved in activism before Trump returned to office

in January 2025. I asked her if she ever imagined she would be doing something like this. She said:

“Absolutely not. I never saw myself doing something like this. I was not an activist. I went from being scared just to go to a protest to confronting ICE. I’m not very political but this is just wrong.”

Jennifer, another Slidell activist doing ICE watch, said:

“They’re changing their tactics, just driving around in single vehicles, looking less conspicuous. I feel like I’m chasing ghosts. Now they’re mainly getting people during traffic stops. The police departments are working with ICE. State police are doing checks, supposedly to check inspection stickers, but they’re really looking for immigrants.”

Despite the challenges, these activists aren’t giving up. They adapt. For example, Kayla said: “We’ve started school watches too, just in case ICE tries to snatch people up while they’re dropping off their kids.”

In Slidell, they’ve learned from ICE watch in other states. These networks across the country are increasingly linked up. Kayla explained:

“We’re 3-D printing whistles here, but some have also been donated by folks in Chicago, North Carolina, and California.

“It’s just amazing how many good people there are in the world. People we don’t even know are just giving us money to put these whistle kits and food packages together. There are so many people right here in our community. Yeah, there are some MAGA types who come out to troll us. But overall we’re getting a lot of support. There’s this one local guy - I didn’t know him at all - and he just gave me

money to get the supplies. He just trusted me.

“But there’s still a lot of education that needs to be done. You know, a lot of people think undocumented immigrants are getting all this free stuff and taking advantage of the system. It’s not true. They think they’re getting Medicaid and all this stuff, but they’re not. They are paying taxes, though. Immigrants are making a big contribution to the economy and then they’re treated like garbage.

Despite the terror being sown in our communities here in South Louisiana, Kayla is optimistic.

“A lot of what we have to do is just documenting and exposing them. That really does have an effect. It makes it more difficult for them to operate. And the community learns about their tactics and all the harm they’re doing to people and families, including children. We have to keep going.”

What Kayla describes as “documenting and exposing” ICE is not an appeal for transparency or reform — it’s tactical intelligence gathering for community defense. The daily ICE watch, the whistle networks, the food distributions that keep people from having to risk the grocery store — these aren’t symbolic gestures. They are concrete obstructions to the deportation machinery.

The activists’ presence has already forced ICE to change tactics, switching from conspicuous vans to single vehicles, making their operations slower and more difficult. When community members receive warnings, they avoid capture.

When mutual aid networks provide food, people don’t have to expose themselves at targeted stores. The strategy isn’t to make ICE operate better or more humanely — it’s to make ICE operations harder to carry out at all. This is working-class people in Slidell building the power to materially impede state terror in their community, one

day of organized resistance at a time.

*Names have been changed to protect the activists' identities.*



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# **While Trump spoke of peace, the CIA escalated war against Russia**

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While the Trump administration spoke publicly of peace talks, the CIA escalated a covert war on Russia's oil infrastructure with the president's approval.

A recent [New York Times](#) report documents this dual track, detailing how covert attacks continued even as public diplomacy gestured toward negotiations. The contradiction reflects divisions within the U.S. ruling class over how to keep wars going without provoking opposition at home.

What follows draws in part on New York Times reporting.

## **Two wars, one state**

Within the administration, rival groupings clashed over Ukraine policy, not over whether U.S. imperialist interests should be defended, but over how. One current, associated with Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, argued that the Ukraine war was bleeding U.S. military stockpiles needed for a larger confrontation with China. From this standpoint, Ukraine was a secondary theater draining resources from the main strategic priority.

Another current, represented by figures such as Gen. Jack Keane and Gen. Keith Kellogg, insisted that failure in Ukraine would signal a dangerous retreat. For them, NATO expansion eastward and the subordination of Russia were central to maintaining U.S. dominance in Europe. Failure on that front would expose the limits of U.S. power after decades of expansion.

Hegseth acted on his assessment. Military aid to Ukraine was repeatedly frozen, including critical artillery shipments. Senior officers described what amounted to a de facto suspension of Pentagon support. Those within the military who favored continued backing for Ukraine found themselves sidelined.

This paralysis did not restrain U.S. war policy. It merely shifted where decisions were made.

## **The Agency steps in**

As the Pentagon stalled, the CIA moved forward. Under Director John Ratcliffe, the agency's operations in Ukraine continued uninterrupted and, in some cases, expanded. Funding increased even as official military aid was frozen. When Trump briefly ordered a cutoff in intelligence sharing, the armed forces complied. The CIA did not. After Ratcliffe warned of the risks to agency operations, the White House quietly authorized continued intelligence flows.

Working in tandem with select military elements, the CIA intensified a campaign of drone strikes on Russian oil refineries and tankers. These operations were not conducted through Ukraine's regular armed forces. They were carried out through Ukraine's intelligence services, which relied heavily on networks of far-right and openly fascist paramilitaries.

At the center of this effort was the Russian Volunteer Corps, led by Denis Kapustin, a neo-Nazi organizer with long-standing ties to transnational fascist circles. That the CIA chose such forces was not an aberration. Imperialism has long promoted and relied on mercenary forces.

Trump approved the campaign privately. According to U.S. officials, he viewed covert escalation as a way to strike Russia while avoiding the political risks of open confrontation. Deniability was not an accident; it was the method.

### **Targeting the weak points**

By early summer, CIA and military planners refined the campaign. Rather than symbolic attacks on easily repaired facilities, the focus narrowed to specific refinery components that were difficult to replace. The aim was not spectacle but sustained covert disruption.

The U.S. role remained indirect. Intelligence and targeting assistance were provided, but weapons and equipment were not. The attacks themselves were carried out by fascist paramilitaries, made effective by U.S. intelligence support.

The campaign later expanded to include Russia's so-called shadow fleet — oil tankers operating outside the sanctions blockade in the Black Sea and Mediterranean.

### **Measuring the damage**

U.S. intelligence estimates claimed the strikes were costing Russia up to \$75 million per day. Officials spoke of gas lines and economic strain. One senior figure declared, “We found something that is working.”

Independent assessments told a different story. Analysts noted that even the highest estimates represented a small fraction of Russia’s annual oil and gas revenue. Reported shortages were linked to temporary logistical disruptions, not structural damage. Russia retained refining capacity well beyond domestic needs.

This divergence is not incidental. Intelligence estimates under imperialism are not neutral measurements; they are tools used to justify policy. In this case, inflated figures helped sell the program to a president looking for leverage. The damage was real, but it was manageable. Russia’s capacity to fight was not broken.

### **What the contradictions reveal**

Publicly, the administration pressured Ukraine to accept territorial concessions in negotiations that bore little relation to the realities on the ground. Russia’s position was explicit: demilitarization, denazification, and the removal of NATO infrastructure. These demands are considered by Moscow to be nonnegotiable. Russian forces now control the Donbass, which was incorporated into Russia’s constitutional framework in 2022. (See “[Why Russia recognized the Donbass republics.](#)”)

Washington’s proposals ignored these facts. There was no negotiating space on terms that would require Russia to surrender territory it already holds militarily and claims politically.

Alongside this public track ran a covert one: economic warfare aimed at raising the costs of continued resistance.

This was not confusion. It was the expression of real divisions within the U.S. ruling

class over how to allocate shrinking resources in defense of global dominance. One faction sought to conserve military capacity for Asia. The other refused to accept limits in Europe, fearing that failure to subordinate Russia would expose the weakening grip of U.S. imperialism after decades of expansion.

The CIA's role was not an exception but a confirmation of how imperialism operates in periods of decline. When open policy stalls and consensus fractures, the most unaccountable arms of the state move to the foreground. Covert war becomes the preferred instrument precisely because it bypasses public debate, conceals failure, and allows imperialist violence to continue without political reckoning.



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## Comrade Lee Paterson ¡Presente!

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"We can no longer be in a situation where big business rules over the lives of poor, working and oppressed people." - Comrade Lee Patterson

Comrade Lee will forever be a guiding light to me. He was a dedicated veteran member of the Struggle for Socialism Party and People's Power Assembly. Lee was

unapologetically Black. Lee told me once that over the course of being involved in the struggle, he has never felt more free to be himself, to be proud of his Blackness and fight for it with all he had than with the Party. The party empowered Lee to use all of his skills in art and design as well as organizing and speaking to contribute to the struggle with all he could. Comrade Lee was unwavering in his support for the global struggle to smash capitalism. He knew that it was and remains capitalism that kills and enslaves the Black community.

Comrade Lee never backed away from a fight. He challenged all klansmen, zionists, sexists, and homophobes. He held the line with his comrades against Venezuelan fascists attempting to take over the revolutionary governmental embassy in DC. He battled white nationalists and Nazis in Charlottesville. He was one of the loudest supporters of Palestinian Resistance to occupation because he knew the struggles of the Black person in America mirror the struggles of the Palestinian in occupied Palestine. A real student of the great Malcolm X, comrade Lee truly understood and lived by the words, “By any means necessary.”

In the hospital, Comrade Lee said that he will live to struggle against Trump. I say right now that Comrade Lee will get his wish. He will live on through his words and teachings. He will live on in the hearts and minds of those he called comrade and he will live on through the blood, sweat, and tears shed through continued struggle.

Comrade Lee helped me become a smarter revolutionary and he helped show me the power that exists in Blackness. His energy to never give ground in the fight for all working and oppressed people is an inspiration that keeps me going to fight harder and better my skills everyday.

Rest in Power Comrade Lee, we will carry your spark to help set the system ablaze!



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# **Lee Patterson, five decades in Baltimore's class struggle, dies at 70**

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Lee Patterson died peacefully in his sleep on Dec. 21, during a short stay in hospice care for complications from renal and heart failure. He was surrounded in his final days by loving comrades and family.

Until his last day, Lee remained a fighter. From his bedside, he recorded a message against Trump's visit to Baltimore, since he wasn't able to attend the protest in person. Patterson had dedicated his life to the struggle for the liberation of the working class and all oppressed people.

Lee was born March 27, 1955, in Baltimore, Maryland. His mother was a domestic worker, and his father a veteran of the Korean War. Over the next 70-plus years of his life, Patterson would give his heart and soul to the struggle for socialism.

After graduating from Northwestern High School in 1973, Lee worked at various jobs, including as a cook at McDonald's. He had a passion for Jimi Hendrix in his early youth and later set up street vending tables to supplement his income.

While working at Eastern Products, a local factory that manufactured Venetian blinds, Lee became involved with the United Furniture Workers Local 75. In 1977, Lee's shop steward approached him and asked Lee to attend a march for civil rights and affirmative action. Lee attended that march and spent the entire afternoon and evening marching through downtown Baltimore.

The revolutionary political struggle and Lee were a perfect match from the beginning. It was during this period that Lee met Vince Copeland, a co-thinker of Sam Marcy, who won Patterson to revolutionary socialism. Copeland was not only a revolutionary thinker but also an organizer, and became active in the union struggle of the workers at Lee's factory, advising young worker activists, of which Lee was one.

As a revolutionary socialist, Patterson became more broadly involved in fighting against all forms of oppression - advocating for the Black community and all oppressed groups. He helped to form the All Peoples Congress in Baltimore, which was founded in Detroit in 1981 to fight the Reagan administration's cuts to social services and jobs.

In his final days, Lee reflected on the different campaigns he participated in during the late 1970s - and through the 1980s - advocating for working-class power and the material needs of oppressed communities. Lee was particularly proud of his work on the campaign demanding rent control for the Black and working-class community and fighting against high utility rates.

About the March on Baltimore City Hall for rent control, Lee said: "I felt more powerful that day than I had ever felt in my whole life." Lee truly loved the working-

class struggle. Lee saw the oppression of the working class firsthand in Baltimore's Black community, and it drove him to embrace the struggle for a communist world.

During this period, Lee worked with the Welfare Rights organization, led locally by Rev. Annie Chambers. The group, which also included Sharon Black, Ray Ceci, Andre Powell, Stephen Millies, Doug Lawson and Bob Cheeks, formed the People's Campaign for Rent Control.

One of Lee's fondest memories was hand-drawing signs for not only the rent control campaign but almost every movement that took place in Baltimore City. "Those signs made me feel like a big human being. I couldn't wait to march downtown with those."

Lee took his advocacy and revolutionary spirit to the airwaves. Rarely a day went by where Lee was not calling into a local talk radio station to challenge homophobia, anti-abortion ministers, and pro-capitalist thought. Lee was incredibly proud to stand in solidarity with women fighting for their basic reproductive rights.

In 2012, after Trayvon Martin's murder, Lee and other Baltimore organizers, including Rev. CD Witherspoon, former president of the Baltimore Southern Christian Leadership Conference, founded the Peoples Power Assembly (PPA). Witherspoon became a lifelong friend of Patterson and his family.

Until his death, Lee marched, tabled, and organized fiercely with the PPA on a range of issues from public housing rights to police brutality to "serve the people" initiatives. 2015 saw Baltimore rise up against years of racist apartheid and police terror after the Baltimore police murdered Freddie Gray in northwest Baltimore.

There are a multitude of pictures of marches where Lee can be seen thrusting his fist in the air — pictured prominently in the media as symbols for the rebellion.

However, Lee wasn't just a fighter for the working class at home. He stood in

solidarity with the colonized people of the world. This solidarity extended to the people of Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Russia, China, Nicaragua, Palestine, Grenada, Iraq, Vietnam, Burkina Faso, Angola, and many others, against imperialist exploitation and war.

Anyone who saw comrade Lee at a protest would immediately notice his myriad of buttons demanding “Disband NATO” and “U.S. out of everywhere.” This same sense of solidarity is what drove Lee to join the counter-protest against the Unite the Right nazi march in Charlottesville in 2017.

In 2018, Lee was a founding member of the Struggle for Socialism Party. As a member, Lee continued the fight in the streets for working-class liberation and socialism even as his health began to decline.

Lee Patterson brought much to the working-class struggle. He brought passion, humor, and fire. And he brought his self-taught artistic skills to countless drawings on banners and signs depicting messages of fightback. More than anything, Comrade Lee Patterson will be remembered for his unwavering dedication to fight for the working class at every turn.

Lee Patterson loved the working-class revolution. Lee Patterson loved Black liberation. Lee Patterson loved Jimi Hendrix. Lee Patterson will be carried in memory by his comrades.

Lee is survived by his spouse and companion, Hollee Patterson, two daughters, Valencia Spruell and Safayi Jackson, loving granddaughter Danasia Patterson and other grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother Leonard Patterson and by Terence Lambirth, a loyal and loving friend who acted as brother and his many comrades in the struggle who continue his legacy.

A commemoration of Lee Patterson’s life is set for Saturday, Feb. 7, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

at St. Mark's Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall, 1900 St. Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21218.

Lee Patterson iPresente!

