



Minneapolis went on strike. The ruling class flinched . . .

By Gary Wilson

The first week of January, Trump sent 2,000 ICE paramilitary agents into Minneapolis, targeting Somali neighborhoods, along with Hmong and Latine communities, and turning the city into a domestic war zone.

Minneapolis' working-class communities responded with an ICE Watch network – thousands of people tracking raids, filming arrests, and rushing to protect each other, often armed with nothing more than Signal chats and tin whistles. When ICE paramilitary officer Jonathan Ross shot and killed 37-year-old mother of three Renee Good, a legal observer, on Jan. 7, protests exploded across the Twin Cities and helped fuel a statewide general strike on Jan. 23 against the operation.

Before the general strike, federal agents operated openly in Minneapolis. The day after, they responded to the political crisis by shooting Alex Pretti, who was filming them.

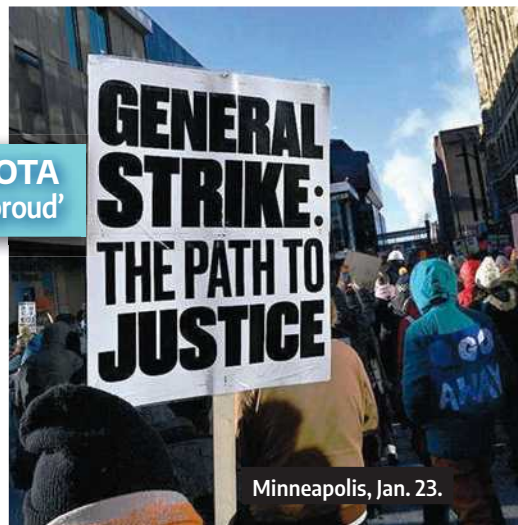
That sparked the Jan. 30 "National Shutdown," as walkouts spread from Knoxville to Seattle, from Pittsburgh to Kansas City, and the struggle went continental.

For years, commentators insisted U.S. workers were too divided to act together. Minnesota demolished that theory. People did not wait for politicians or appointed leaders. They moved.

On Jan. 23 in Minnesota, walkouts spread. Students left classrooms. Transit slowed. Freight stalled. Tens of thousands filled the streets in subzero temperatures. Large parts of

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MINNESOTA
'makes us proud'



Minneapolis, Jan. 23.

MINNEAPOLIS: ICE is funded more than most militaries + the war machine comes home + **Shutdown**
NYC: 'No! to ICE, Yes! to Immigrants' + Alex Pretti: union nurse + *'When one of us is struck down, a thousand rise'*
RED LAKE NATION asserts sovereignty + **Italy** rejects ICE at Winter Olympics + ICE: 'Amazon Prime' model



NYC nurses strike enters day 23: staffing, safety – and ICE
Trump moves to cut pay for homecare workers



Standing with Venezuela

Britain's Suez moment

Annie Jump Vicente Case(s)

NFL's priority: protecting genocide

José Martí: A revolutionary Cuba

Iran: From U.S. sanctions to U.S. armada

Gold versus dollar

New Yorkers say 'No!' to ICE, 'Yes!' to Immigrants

By Stephen Millies

Jan. 24 – Many thousands of people – maybe tens of thousands – marched in New York City on Jan. 23 as part of the national day of outrage against ICE. Low temperatures didn't stop people from streaming into Manhattan's Union Square in the late afternoon, largely organized by their unions, to stop the round-up of immigrants.

Dozens of unions brought members, including SEIU 32BJ building service and airport workers, as well as SEIU 1199 hospital workers. Transport Workers Union Local 100, whose members move millions of people in subways and buses every day, was there. So were construction workers, including the Laborers Union.

A contingent from the United Federation of Teachers marched together. So did members of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) who work in colleges. Many of their students come from immigrant families who are threatened by deportation.

Almost 60 years ago, then-UFT leader Albert Shanker led a racist strike against the Black and Latine communities who wanted a say-so in running their schools. Now, the union's members are saying no to bigotry.

The mass action echoed the general strike in Minneapolis, which largely shut down the city, along with St. Paul and adjacent suburbs. At least 100,000 people came out to protest in freezing weather. Over 300 cities across the United States saw solidarity marches.

Yet much of the corporate media, including the New York Times and the Washington Post, is downplaying this upsurge, fueled by outrage over murders committed by ICE and the images of small children being seized by their agents.

Whatever their differences with the Trump regime, billionaires fear an upsurge of poor and working people. The Washington Post is



Union members joined the rally in New York City's Union Square on Jan. 23 during a national day of action against ICE. Photo: SEIU

owned by Amazon owner Jeff Bezos. Amazon Union members, who are being denied a union contract by Bezos, also came to Union Square.

People marched out of Union Square carrying their signs and banners and took over 14th Street. Thousands then marched uptown,

ending up in Madison Square Park.

"The people united will never be defeated" was one of the chants that echoed in Manhattan's canyons. After 50 years of reaction, millions of people are rejecting bigotry and will fight. #

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Alex Pretti: ICE executed a union nurse – labor must organize

By Lev Koufax

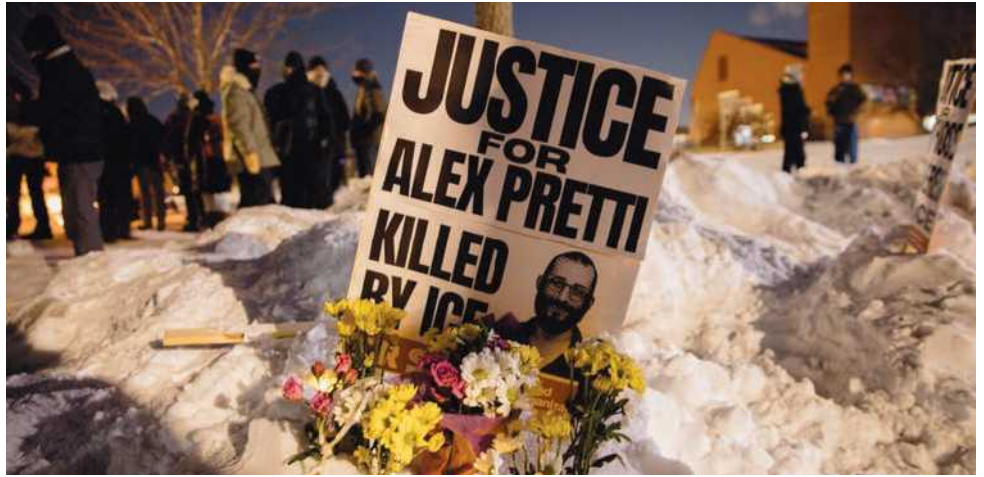
Alex Pretti, an AFGE Local 3669 member and ICU nurse, fought for his community until the very moment ICE agents took him from us. Faced with masked officers harassing his neighbors, Alex did what working people do when repression shows up at their door: He bore witness. He used his phone to film and placed his body between the armed agents and two fellow Minneapolis residents.

For this act of solidarity, federal agents brutally beat and executed him.

The official story from DHS Secretary Kristi Noem and President Trump is a lie. They frame Alex as a violent maniac. The truth, visible on video and admitted even by the New York Times, is far more chilling:

“The agent in the gray coat removes the weapon ... from the scene. Then, while Mr. Pretti is on his knees and restrained, the agent standing directly above him appears to fire one shot at Mr. Pretti at close range. He immediately fires three additional shots ... Together, they fire six more shots at Mr. Pretti while he lies motionless on the ground.”

Who was Alex Pretti? He was not a stranger. He was one of us – a worker.



Bystander video shows federal ICE agents pinning Alex Pretti to the ground before an agent fatally shot him in Minneapolis on Jan. 24, 2026.

For 40 years, his union, AFGE Local 3669, has represented the thousand-plus workers at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center – one of the largest health care facilities in the Midwest. The hours are demanding. The work is a daily struggle against staffing shortages and relentless union-busting.

I worked with Local 3669 for nearly four

years as a staff attorney. I saw firsthand the workers who make it a fighting union. During the brutal height of COVID-19, they were the ones who stayed at their posts, caring for our sick veterans at great personal risk. Alex was among them.

VA management brags about serving veterans, but senior executives and political appointees have little to do with the actual care. It is workers like Alex who provide it.

Licensed practical nurses. Registered nurses. Radiology techs. Housekeeping and maintenance staff. These are the people who make the VA run. They care for a veteran community plagued by substance abuse, mental illness, and chronic health problems born from systemic neglect.

Every single day, the members of Local 3669 commit to this hard work in the face of massive resource shortages. They have endured cutbacks, union-busting, and McCarthy-era surveillance, and they have remained strong.

Alex’s Local is a prominent one, known for its legacy of struggle. It has produced national union leaders. And now, it has produced a martyr – because repression always does.

The attack on Alex – like the attack on Renee Good – was an attack on every worker and every union that represents them. When ICE killed Renee, they sent a warning to working communities. When ICE killed Alex, they escalated it – making clear that witnesses, organizers, and union members are all targets.

To treat this as anything less than a declaration of war on our class is a disservice to the labor movement and to the life Alex lived.

Labor must now take this struggle into its own hands. We must choose, unequivocally, to fight for the lives of our members – lives like Alex Pretti’s. His fight is our fight. His execution must be our call to organize. #

Minneapolis went on strike.

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Minneapolis and St. Paul shut down.

How Minneapolis shut down

It was a political general strike – a collective refusal to keep society running while federal agents carried out raids and killings in working-class neighborhoods.

This was working-class self-organization, born of necessity.

Faced with working-class mass action and the danger of shutdowns spreading beyond Minneapolis, the Trump administration blinked. Officials were removed. Trump publicly spoke of “de-escalation.”

Even a heavily armed government depends on people going to work. When workers stop cooperating, repression alone can’t keep things running. Minnesota showed that. Corporate media claims workers are drifting right. What they miss is simpler: More people no longer trust courts, legislatures, or reform promises.

They trust what they experienced in January – the power of solidarity and collective action.

What workers learned in January

They saw federal agents shoot people in their neighborhoods. They saw officials lie.

They saw armored vehicles and rifles take over. And they saw what happens when workers respond and move together.

That experience is now guiding their actions. During the strike, people bypassed institutions. They did not ask how to influence power. They exercised it.

Reform politics treats moments like this as bargaining for policy change. Minnesota showed something different.

What emerged, unevenly but unmistakably, was working people stepping in where the system failed – organizing themselves.

The lessons came fast.

In a few days, tens of thousands learned more about how this system actually works than decades of elections and press conferences ever taught them. They saw that police exist to protect federal operations, not neighborhoods. They saw politicians close ranks around armed troopers, not around families who lost loved ones. And they learned something just as important: When workers move together – when they walk out, shut things down, and refuse cooperation – they can interrupt business as usual and force federal authorities to back off.

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‘Shutdown’ protests disrupt schools and jobs to oppose ICE

By Gary Wilson

Tens of thousands of workers, students, and community members walked off jobs and out of classrooms Jan. 30 in a coordinated National Shutdown demanding the removal of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement from local communities.

Organizers called for “no work, no school, no shopping,” as a direct response to federal immigration raids that have escalated into shootings, mass detention, and neighborhood occupations.

The protests were ignited by a series of cold-blooded assassinations by federal paramilitary troopers.

- **Alex Pretti:** An intensive care nurse in Minneapolis, executed by Border Patrol agents while filming their operations with his phone.
- **Renee Good:** A mother of three and member of the LGBTQIA+ community, shot dead on Jan. 7 by ICE officer Jonathan Ross. Rep. Ilhan Omar said Good was acting as a legal observer.
- **Silverio Villegas González:** A father shot and killed by ICE during a September traffic stop outside Chicago after dropping his children at school.
- **Keith Porter Jr.:** A Black father of two, shot by an ICE agent on New Year’s Eve in Los Angeles.
- **Six unnamed individuals:** According to a database published by the American Prospect, at least six other people have been killed by ICE or DHS agents since the current administration began its second term.

Plus

- **Record fatalities in detention:** 2025 marked the agency’s deadliest year in two decades with 32 confirmed deaths in custody – a figure that has already been compounded by at least six more deaths in the first two weeks of 2026.

These are not “isolated incidents”; they are the inevitable result of a militarized federal force deployed to crush dissent and terrorize the community.

Protest actions stretched from the Northeast through the Midwest and South, and across the West from Colorado to California, as students walked out, workers withheld labor, and communities mobilized outside federal buildings and detention centers.

In the Twin Cities, tens of thousands rallied despite subzero wind chills, converging on the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building, which houses an immigration court and other federal offices. Protesters demanded resignations from Department of Homeland Security officials and an immediate halt to ICE operations.

Students played a central role across the country. Groups from walkouts at more than 30 high schools gathered at the state capital in Phoenix, Arizona. Classes were canceled at more than 20 schools in Tucson after staff took leave in solidarity. Hundreds of high school students walked out in Asheville, North Carolina, while students in suburban Birmingham, Michigan, marched in below-freezing temperatures.

Campus actions were reported at Brown University, the University of Florida, and multiple colleges across Georgia. Educators said ICE raids and surveillance are destabilizing

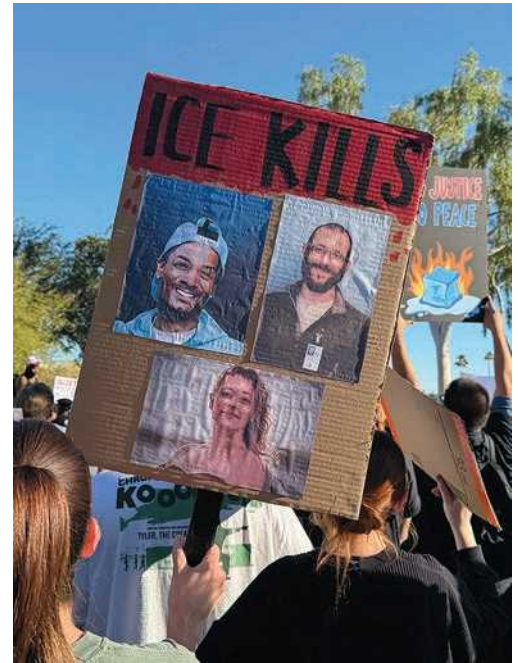


Photo: Delores Lemon-Thomas

Keith Porter, Alex Pretti, Renee Good sign in Phoenix, Arizona, Jan. 30.

classrooms by separating families and placing students under constant threat.

In Los Angeles, thousands marched to a federal detention center. Federal agents later deployed tear gas and chemical sprays against protesters who remained after nightfall.

In Nebraska the day before, a student outside Fremont High School was hospitalized after being struck by an SUV flying a Trump flag. Video circulating online shows the vehicle accelerating into demonstrators.

“This isn’t about immigration policy in the abstract,” said one Minneapolis organizer. “It’s about armed federal agents occupying working-class neighborhoods.” #



New Orleans, Jan. 30 – Gathering at historic Congo Square, several hundred people marched through downtown in solidarity with Minneapolis and against ICE.

SLL photo: Gregory E. Williams

‘Minnesota makes us proud’: 25,000 march against ICE in NYC

By Melinda Butterfield

New York, Jan. 30 – It’s bitterly cold – the coldest night of the weeklong polar vortex gripping New York City. Despite this, an estimated 25,000 people joined a rally and march to demand that Immigration and Naturalization Service (ICE) agents get out of Minneapolis and everywhere. The action was part of a call for a National Shutdown on Jan. 30, with actions in at least 300 cities and towns across the U.S.

A week earlier, the people of Minneapolis closed the city down in protest of ICE terror and occupation – prompting the call for a national shutdown.

Today’s protest was powered by walkouts of public high school students, who filled Foley Square in lower Manhattan with creative and colorful handmade signs. Workers and community members flowed out of subways to join the young people in a steady stream of resistance. As early arrivals retreated from the cold, new protesters entered the square to take their place.

Foley Square is surrounded by court buildings. Located directly behind 26 Federal Plaza, where ICE is headquartered, detainees are held in terrible conditions.

Rally speakers included Manolo de los Santos, director of The People’s Forum, who said the people must not wait for the midterm elections to deal with ICE, but act to abolish Donald Trump’s murderous militia now. Activist and actress Susan Sarandon read the names of Keith Porter, Heber Sánchez Domínguez, and all nine people killed by ICE, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in the first month of 2026.

Other speakers included student organizers from Brooklyn Tech High School, Women’s March organizer and Palestinian community member Linda Sarsour, Donna Lieberman of the New York Civil Liberties Union, and a representative of the Palestinian Youth Movement.

Those who gave more militant talks got the most enthusiastic response from the crowd. Whenever congressional Democrats, especially New York Sen. Chuck Schumer, were mentioned, they



were passionately booed and hissed for their collaboration with the Trump regime and for funding ICE.

Many signs called for justice for Renee Nicole Good and Alex Pretti, legal observers who were killed in cold blood by ICE this month in Minneapolis. Others featured the distinctive blue bunny hat of 5-year-old Liam Conejo Ramos, who was kidnapped by ICE agents in Minneapolis and used as “bait” to detain his

father. Both Liam and his father were held in Texas detention camps before being released.

As darkness enveloped the square, the marchers stepped off, chanting, “Minnesota makes us proud, general strike, shut it down!” They chanted “Shame!” outside a Home Depot location, denouncing the company’s collaboration with ICE. The march concluded at Washington Square Park with calls for people to stay in the streets. #



Red Lake Nation bars ICE, asserts sovereignty

By Gary Wilson

On Jan. 13, the Tribal Council of Red Lake Nation voted unanimously to restrict ICE and other federal immigration agents from entering Red Lake lands without a court order signed by a judge with jurisdiction. The resolution became public Jan. 28, as tribal leaders warned that federal agents were already “moving north.”

Under the new protocol, ICE must obtain a valid court order, present it to the Red Lake Department of Public Safety director, submit to a Red Lake officer escort at all times, and leave immediately after the order is served.

The council did not soften its language. Members said they were “ashamed and disgusted at the obvious violations of constitutional rights that are routinely being directed at United States citizens by ICE officers.”

Chair Darrell Seki Sr. also notified Minnesota’s congressional delegation that tribal officials had been told federal officers would soon “turn their sights north,” after ICE agents apprehended a member of the Leech Lake Band near Walker in northern Minnesota.

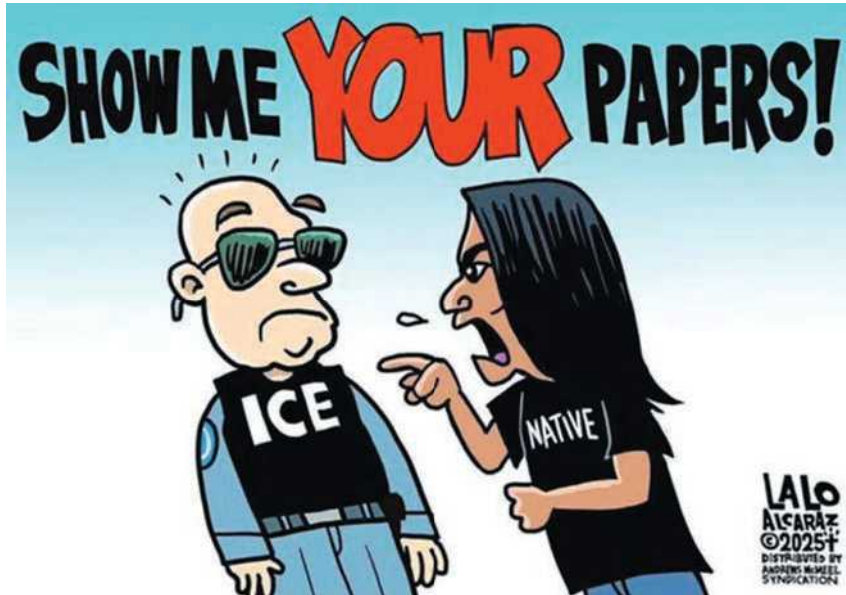
Red Lake’s action carries particular force because it is Minnesota’s only “closed reservation” – its land was never allotted, remains held in common, and the tribe retains authority over who may enter. Red Lake is also exempt from Public Law 280, meaning state courts have no jurisdiction on tribal lands. Together, these conditions preserve Red Lake’s sovereign control over its territory.

The impact reaches far beyond the reservation. Tribal officials estimate roughly 8,000 Red Lake people live in Minneapolis, placing thousands of Indigenous community members inside ICE’s expanding enforcement zone.

From Bdóte to Minneapolis: detention returns to familiar ground

Red Lake’s move comes amid a wave of Indigenous detentions in Minneapolis.

In early January, four tribal members were detained under a bridge near the Little Earth housing complex in East Phillips. Three were transferred to an ICE facility at Fort Snelling – a site Dakota people remember as a concentration camp at Bdóte, where the U.S. military imprisoned about 1,700 Dakota in 1862 as part



of a broader campaign of genocide and forced removal. Families were held there behind military lines, exposed to disease and hunger, before being driven from their homelands into exile.

For Dakota communities, Fort Snelling is not a historic landmark. It is a site of mass detention. Families were confined there while the U.S. government carried out mass executions of Dakota men, before survivors were expelled from their homelands into exile. That same ground is now being used again to cage Indigenous people.

President Frank Star Comes Out of the Oglala Sioux Tribe confirmed that three of the detainees were taken to Fort Snelling.

“The irony is not lost on us,” he said. “Lakota citizens who are reported to be held at Fort Snelling – a site forever tied to the Dakota 38+2 – underscores why treaty obligations and federal accountability matter.”

The Dakota 38+2 refers to the 38 Dakota men publicly hanged by the U.S. government in Mankato on Dec. 26, 1862 – the largest mass execution in U.S. history – and two additional Dakota leaders, Sakpedan and Wakan Ozanzan, who were executed at Fort Snelling in 1864.

When the tribe requested information about its detained people, federal officials said it would need to enter an “immigration agreement” with ICE. The tribe refused.

“We will not enter an agreement that would authorize, or make it easier for, ICE or Homeland Security to come onto our tribal homeland,” Star Comes Out said.

One detainee has since been released.

Another case involves Jose Roberto Ramirez, a 20-year-old man of Red Lake Anishinaabe descent who was detained after ICE agents reportedly punched him during his arrest. His mother brought his passport and birth certificate to a federal building in Minneapolis, but was turned away.

Legal advocates note that ICE has no jurisdiction over Indigenous people in immigration matters. Federal law imposed U.S. nationality on tribal people in 1924, but treaties recognize Native nations as self-governing. As Star Comes Out wrote in a memo to mem-

bers, “Tribal people are not aliens.”

Yet on the ground, those legal facts are being overridden by armed enforcement.

In Minneapolis, ICE is operating as a roaming detention force – stopping Indigenous people in public space, demanding documents, and transferring people into federal custody.

This is urban removal: surveillance first, seizure second.

Communities organize as ICE expands north

Indigenous communities across Minnesota have begun building rapid-response networks to intervene when ICE appears. Rachel Dionne-Thunder, co-founder of the Indigenous Protector Movement, narrowly avoided arrest Jan. 9 after neighbors and organizers converged when agents surrounded her vehicle.

Red Lake officials say such organizing has become necessary because ICE tactics are widening geographically and intensifying operationally. The Tribal Council cited reports of agents moving north out of the Twin Cities, signaling a broader regional push.

Similar confrontations with federal immigration agents have occurred in other states. In November, Indigenous actress Elaine Miles, a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Oregon, said ICE agents in Washington state questioned the legitimacy of her tribal identification, calling it “fake” before allowing her to go.

From Minneapolis streets to reservation borders, the first peoples of the Americas are being pulled into an enforcement dragnet that treats them as deportable bodies. #

'When one of us is struck down, thousand rise' – voices from Minneapolis

By Melinda Butterfield

Keith Porter. Parady La. Heber Sánchez Domínguez. Victor Manuel Diaz. Luis Beltran Yanez-Cruz. Luis Gustavo Núñez Cáceres. Geraldo Lunas Campos. Renee Nicole Good. Alex Pretti.

Some names you know. Others you may not have seen before. All were killed by federal agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in the first weeks of 2026.

People are fighting back, most visibly in Minneapolis, where a citywide general strike – dubbed “Day of Truth and Freedom: No Work, No School, No Shopping” – took place on Friday, Jan. 23, including a massive march in subzero weather.

Struggle-La Lucha spoke with people who were on the ground during those events and the aftermath, including the retaliatory murder of union nurse Alex Pretti on the morning of Jan. 24.

Mira Altobell-Resendez is an organizer with the Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee (MIRAC), a group at the forefront of the local fight against the federal siege. Bryan G. Pfeifer, a Steelworkers union member and activist with WI Bail Out the People Movement, traveled from Madison, Wisconsin, to support the general strike. Ava Ball is a trans woman who recently moved to Minneapolis as part of the “Pink Wave” of LGBTQIA+ refugees fleeing far-right-controlled states.

Struggle-La Lucha: What was your impression of the turnout on Jan. 23? What was the mood of the crowd?

Mira Altobell-Resendez: The turnout on Friday was incredible! Well over 100,000 Minnesotans took off work and school and braved those ridiculously low temps to demand “ICE out!”

Bryan G. Pfeifer: After a march at minus 20 degrees, marchers filed into a downtown arena for a mass rally, thousands strong. The composition was very multinational, with many unions participating. The Minnesota AFL-CIO endorsed the march, as did the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation and other labor federations statewide.

Numerous community and faith-based organizations, LGBTQIA+ organizations, and Indigenous communities also participated and built for the Jan. 23 action. Participants came from many cities in Minnesota and from across the country, representing a rainbow of unions and community organizations.

MAR: The crowd was very spirited and full of righteous anger.



Mass march in downtown Minneapolis during the citywide shutdown on Jan. 23.

Photo: Brad Sigal

A large indoor rally followed the march on Jan. 23.

Photo: WI Bail Out the People Movement



BGP: The mood was a mix of sadness but defiance against ICE. Immigrants and workers of many nationalities spoke about the daily cruelty, brutality and outright terror of ICE agents working on behalf of the rich. They also spoke of the courage and creativity of everyday workers and community members fighting back against ICE terror – neighborhood patrols, dispatch systems to enable workers to get to work, school and medical appointments, mutual aid networks in many forms, and a variety of protest actions.

April Verrett, the first Black woman to serve as national president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), stated that in her view, Minneapolis was the Selma moment for the United States and ground zero for people’s resistance. She concluded that serious social justice organizing, rooted in the working class and in unions, must be a priority in the coming period.

MAR: Since Friday’s shutdown, ICE has killed again in south Minneapolis. This time, it was 37-year-old ICU nurse Alex Pretti, who had been defending a fellow community observer from federal brutality.

The National Guard has arrived to protect agents and property in Minneapolis and at the Whipple Federal Building. They’ll be weaponized against the people of Minnesota rather than protecting us, as they claim to. We foresee their deployment to escalate as ICE agents continue to agitate our communities with state-sanctioned violence.

Vigils for Alex Pretti

SLL: Vigils were held around the city for Alex Pretti on Saturday evening. What was it like, and what did people have to say about the latest atrocity?

Ava Ball: The vigil I attended Saturday was solemn but uplifting. There was a bonfire on my street corner, with approximately 20-30 people coming out to connect. Some neighbors brought food, hand warmers, and firewood for anyone to use. It was frigid, but everyone was eager to be there.

We held candles and talked about the death of Alex, and expressed our grief and upset. We also got to know each other better, talked about our community, and discussed what we can do to help each other feel more prepared and ensure our neighbors are taken care of.

After a while, we walked two blocks down to where another bonfire was happening, with just as many people or more. From there, we could see another bonfire further down the street. My understanding is there were similar small gatherings every few blocks across the city.

SLL: Ava, can you describe what it’s been like for you, as a queer newcomer to Minneapolis, living through the siege of the past month? How are you and your friends and neighbors coping?

AB: It’s been intense living through the siege. We (me, my partner, and their other partner) just finished fleeing the increasing persecution of trans people in Oklahoma and moved to Minnesota seeking a safer place. Unfortunately, we arrived right as the invasion was occurring, making it difficult to find work, get to know the area, or connect with people.

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Minneapolis under occupation: the war machine comes home

By Gary Wilson

Jan. 24 – Early Saturday morning in south Minneapolis, masked federal paramilitary agents surrounded Alex Pretti outside Glam Doll Donuts, wrestled him to the ground, and beat him. Then, while he lay motionless beneath them, one agent stood up and fired his pistol repeatedly – more than 10 shots over five seconds. Pretti died at a hospital.

He was a 37-year-old U.S. citizen who worked as an ICU nurse at the VA hospital. The final act of his life was trying to help a woman who was being physically assaulted by the masked agents, who would then kill him.

It had been just over two weeks since ICE agents killed Renee Nicole Good, a 37-year-old U.S. citizen, in the same city. Less than 24 hours earlier, tens of thousands of workers, community members, and youth had flooded downtown Minneapolis to protest the federal occupation of their city.

In the same city, five-year-old Liam Ramos was seized from his home and allegedly used as bait to lure other family members out into the open. He ended up at a detention camp in Dilley, Texas.

A 79-year-old citizen had his ribs broken by ICE agents. A pregnant woman was tased.

This is what nearly a trillion dollars buys. Congress approved it. Both parties voted yes.

The numbers tell the story

The scale of what's happening is difficult to grasp. In 2025, ICE doubled in size from 10,000 to 22,000 agents, offering \$50,000 signing bonuses to new recruits. Training was slashed to just eight weeks. Some agents were deployed before their background checks were even completed.

The results: 2.5 million people have left the country, including 605,000 deportations. Arrests exceeded 595,000. Detention capacity has increased 83%, with more than 73,000 people held on any given day. Thirty-two people died in ICE custody – the highest number since 2004.

The administration plans to expand further, aiming for 120,000 to 150,000 detention beds using converted warehouses and military bases. Around 100 new detention facilities were built in 2025.

This expansion didn't happen by executive fiat alone. Congress provided the money.

The bipartisan consensus

The defense spending bill passed the House 341-88, providing \$839 billion – \$8.4 billion more than the administration even requested. Nearly two-thirds of House Democrats voted



Demonstrators gather near the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building, which houses an immigration court, during protests over ICE paramilitary operations in Minneapolis, January 2026.

for it. A separate bill allocated \$64.4 billion to the Department of Homeland Security, with roughly \$10 billion for ICE.

The 2025 “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” added another \$75 billion for ICE over four years. The administration is now publicly demanding a \$1.5 trillion military budget for 2027.

Where does this money go? The \$839 billion defense allocation prioritizes nuclear modernization and high-tech weapons: \$27.2 billion for 17 warships, including nuclear ballistic missile submarines. Another \$7.6 billion for 47 F-35 fighter jets and \$3 billion for the sixth-generation F-47. Full funding for the Sentinel ICBM. And \$4.5 billion for hypersonic weapons.

Democrats didn't just fail to stop this. They voted for it.

Inside the secret detention sites

Investigative reporters have documented what happens inside the detention system that this money built.

At the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building in Minnesota, agents reportedly take “trophy pictures” with shackled detainees. Women have been forced to use toilets while male agents watch. Detainees with life-threatening skull fractures and contagious conditions like scabies have been denied medical care. U.S. citizens have allegedly been held in secret cells.

Judges have issued court orders to prevent ICE from removing certain detainees from their jurisdictions. ICE has defied those orders.

In Florida, a facility workers have dubbed “Alligator Alcatraz” holds people in chain-link cages under extreme heat, with mosquito infestations and lights that never turn off.

The administration has also sought to move detention offshore.

The global dimension

The domestic crackdown is one front in a broader offensive. The U.S. military kidnapped Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores, who remain hostages – prisoners of war – and seized the country's oil resources. A carrier group has been redeployed toward Iran following the 2025 bombing of Iranian nuclear facilities. The administration has publicly demanded the annexation of Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland), a territory of NATO ally Denmark.

Trump calls it “America First.” But what's being built is a military machine that projects force across the planet while turning that same force against people inside the United States.

Resistance is growing

Within hours of Saturday's killing, a large crowd gathered at the scene demanding the agent be arrested and all ICE personnel leave the city. Residents began blocking streets with dumpsters and furniture. Police responded with tear gas. The confrontation follows Friday's march of tens of thousands through downtown Minneapolis – one of the largest demonstrations against federal immigration enforcement in U.S. history.

Nationally, more than 1,000 protest actions have taken place since Renee Nicole Good's killing.

What Minneapolis makes unmistakably clear is this: ICE's deployment is not an accident and not a local exception. It is funded, authorized, and politically shielded by both Republicans and Democrats. Ending it will require movements that match that scale – rooted in workplaces, in communities, and in sustained mass resistance capable of breaking the bipartisan consensus for militarized enforcement, detention, and deportation. #

ICE now has more funding than the militaries of most countries

By Gary Wilson

As protests continue in Minneapolis following the killings of ICU nurse Alex Pretti and lesbian mom Renee Good, and with another government shutdown looming at the end of this week, many are asking whether Congress will finally put the brakes on ICE.

The short answer is no. Here's why.

The Big Beautiful Bill changed everything

Ten years ago, ICE operated on less than \$6 billion a year – a footnote compared to other agencies in the Department of Homeland Security. That changed dramatically when Trump signed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act on July 4.

ICE now has \$85 billion at its disposal – making it the highest-funded law enforcement agency in U.S. history.

The Big Beautiful Bill gave ICE a \$75 billion supplement on top of its regular budget, broken down as follows:

\$45 billion for expanding “detention capacity” – meaning new ICE prisons, including family detention centers where children can be held indefinitely alongside their parents.

\$30 billion for hiring, bonus pay, vehicles, facilities, legal staff, and “enforcement and removal operations.”

The critical detail: This money remains available through September 2029. It is multi-year mandatory funding outside the annual appropriations process – effectively a four-year slush fund.

Add in ICE's base budget of around \$10 billion, and the agency has nearly \$29 billion on hand each year. That's essentially triple what ICE operated on just two years ago.

To put that in perspective: The Trump administration's entire 2026 budget request for the Department of Justice – including the FBI, DEA, Bureau of Prisons, and all federal prosecutors – is about \$35 billion. ICE's annual operating budget would now rank in the top 15 military budgets worldwide.

Built by both parties

The Big Beautiful Bill itself passed on party-line votes last July – Democrats unanimously opposed it in both chambers. But that doesn't mean the Democratic Party's hands are clean.

The deportation machine Trump is now supercharging didn't appear from nowhere. It was constructed over decades with bipartisan support.

ICE was created in 2003 under George W. Bush as part of the post-9/11 “homeland security” apparatus – with broad Democratic backing.



Demonstrators protest ICE in Minneapolis after DHS agents killed Alex Pretti and Renee Good. ICE now operates with a budget that rivals global militaries – and Congress won't cut it.

The agency's powers expanded steadily under both parties. Barack Obama deported more people than any previous president, earning the title “Deporter-in-Chief” from immigrant rights activists who watched his administration carry out over 2.5 million deportations while Democrats controlled Congress.

Private prison companies have made money off immigrant detention under every administration. Congress created bed quotas to guarantee that a minimum number of people are always locked up. It allowed ICE to turn local police into immigration agents. It expanded fast-track deportations that strip people of due process. None of this happened by accident. Democrats and Republicans voted for every piece of this system.

Democrats in Congress have repeatedly funded ICE at requested levels, approved expansions of Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), and rejected calls to abolish ICE when that demand surged in 2018. The party that now expresses outrage at ICE killings in Minneapolis spent years normalizing the agency's existence and growth.

Trump's Big Beautiful Bill didn't create the deportation-industrial complex. It turbocharged a machine that both parties spent two decades building.

Senate Democrats are threatening to block the House-passed funding package over ICE's recent killings in Minneapolis – where federal immigration enforcement agents shot and killed Alex Pretti and, just weeks earlier, Renee Good as part of a wider Department of Homeland Security operation in the city. But even if the government shuts down on Jan. 31, ICE operations will continue largely unchanged for three reasons:

First, ICE agents are classified as “excepted” workers. Under DHS shutdown protocols, they're required to keep showing up. They won't be paid during a lapse in funding – joining TSA agents and federal workers forced to work without a paycheck – but they won't stop working.

Second, that \$75 billion was already approved in a separate vote. It's not part of the yearly budget Congress is arguing over now. Lawmakers gave ICE this money in advance, and it stays available for years. So even if Congress lets the regular budget lapse, ICE can keep operating – and even expand – using funds it already has.

Third, another temporary funding deal would actually make things easier for ICE. When Congress can't pass a real budget and kicks the can with a stopgap measure, DHS is allowed to keep spending at existing levels and move money around internally. That gives the department more freedom to support ICE operations, not less.

The shutdown fight is largely symbolic when it comes to actually restraining ICE. The Big Beautiful Bill deliberately structured ICE funding to be immune from the normal appropriations process and the ability of Congress to withhold money.

Democrats can refuse to vote for the DHS funding package. They can point to the killings in Minneapolis. They can demand accountability. But none of that touches the \$75 billion war chest already in ICE's hands – and it doesn't undo the decades they spent helping build the very apparatus now terrorizing immigrant communities.

The deportation machine was built to run no matter what happens in Congress. #

ICE adopts “Amazon Prime” model

By Gary Wilson

The Department of Homeland Security is transforming immigration detention into an industrial logistics operation – warehouses, transport routes, and processing centers linked like a delivery network – that treats human beings as freight.

ICE Director Todd Lyons made this explicit at the 2025 Border Security Expo when he described the new operational model as “like Amazon Prime, but with human beings.”

The “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” allocated \$45 billion for detention construction inside a \$76.5 billion ICE budget – nearly 10 times the agency’s typical annual funding. The money is flowing into 800,000-square-foot mega-warehouses positioned near major airports, designed to hold 5,000 to 10,000 detainees each.

ICE plans to convert at least 23 industrial warehouses into detention centers capable of holding up to 80,000 people at a time, organized in a hub-and-spoke network meant to move detainees from processing sites into large facilities near highways and airports.

DHS is invoking federal preemption to override local zoning laws to establish these sites, often without the knowledge or consent of local officials.

These facilities are built for throughput – moving people in, warehousing them, and pushing them out – not habitation. They lack climate control, adequate ventilation, running water, and medical care. Most are vacant industrial shells – concrete floors, bare walls, and ceiling beams – never designed for human habitation. DHS is proceeding with the buildout anyway.

DHS has already bought warehouses for detention – paying about \$102 million for a site in Williamsport, Maryland and \$70 million for one in Surprise, Arizona – with plans to begin housing detainees as early as April.

DHS’s detention expansion isn’t limited to Maryland and Arizona. Federal planning documents and local filings show the former Pep Boys auto parts warehouse in Chester, New York – a 401,000-square-foot industrial site just over an hour from New York City – is being targeted as part of the national network of processing facilities.

Local officials in other communities warn that the planned sites will overwhelm basic infrastructure. One proposed New Jersey facility draws from groundwater already near daily limits. Another sits in a floodplain. At ICE’s Everglades detention camp, drinking water already arrives by tanker truck.

Overseeing this transformation is David Venturella, a former executive at GEO Group – the largest private prison corporation in the United States, whose detention centers have been linked to medical neglect, preventable deaths, and abuse while company executives

boast of “unprecedented” profits from Trump’s deportation campaign. Venturella received more than \$6 million from GEO before being granted an ethics waiver to manage the very contracts now enriching his former employer. Kaiser Permanente is also a GEO shareholder, tying the health care giant to an industry built on cages and deprivation.

To staff this apparatus, DHS launched a “Defend the Homeland” recruitment drive offering \$50,000 signing bonuses and student loan forgiveness, with age limits removed. More than 200,000 applications poured in. DHS plans to hire 10,000 new armed enforcement troopers – a domestic paramilitary force for raids and detention.

To fill these warehouses, ICE has gutted constitutional protections against unreasonable search and seizure. A May 12 internal memo signed by Lyons directs agents to use “administrative warrants” – documents signed by ICE officials rather than judges – to forcibly enter private residences.

Supervisors reportedly show the memo to agents and immediately take it back, keeping the policy largely verbal and untraceable. This secrecy has already led to home raids and forced entries. In Minneapolis, agents used a battering ram to breach a home without judicial authorization. In St. Paul, they broke down the door of Scott Thao, a U.S. citizen.

Agents entered homes with battering rams and administrative warrants signed by ICE supervisors rather than judges.

On Jan. 7, 2026, ICE agent Jonathan Ross fatally shot 37-year-old Renee Nicole Good in her vehicle during a coordinated federal paramilitary raid in Minneapolis. The Hennepin County Medical Examiner ruled her death a homicide.

The killings of Good and ICU nurse Alex Pretti are flashpoints because they are visible. Inside detention, there are no phones or cameras to document what federal agents are doing. The violence continues.

In Minnesota this January, Chief U.S. District Judge Patrick Schiltz documented that ICE violated at least 96 court orders in 74 different cases – a tally he warned was almost certainly an understatement. Schiltz said ICE “has likely violated more court orders in January 2026 than some federal agencies have violated in their entire existence.”

On Nov. 26, 2025, six-year-old Yuanxin’s father, Fei, was arrested during a routine check-in at 26 Federal Plaza in New York City and transferred to a jail in Orange County. His son disappeared into an undisclosed location for over a week. DHS later claimed Fei had “abandoned” his child – a charge witnesses deny.

In Minnesota, five-year-old Liam Ramos was reportedly used as bait to arrest his father. Both were seized from their driveway and transported to a detention center in Tex-

as. School superintendents report ICE circling schools and following buses to apprehend children. The Deportation Data Project estimates that at least 151 minors have been detained since January.

Kin punishment returns

In a break with even bourgeois due-process standards, DHS is holding entire families in detention based on last names and family ties.

Habiba Soliman, 18, and her four siblings – including four-year-old twins – have been held at the Dilley detention facility in Texas for seven months.

Their crime: sharing a last name with their father, Mohamed Sabry Soliman, who carried out a firebombing in Boulder in June 2025. The family condemned the attack and had no prior knowledge of it. They remain imprisoned anyway. “We are six innocent people – including four-year-old twins – trapped in a nightmare we didn’t create and punished for our father’s actions,” Habiba said.

Inside immigration courts, detainees are increasingly abandoning their cases rather than remaining in custody. Court observers report detainees withdrawing asylum claims, requesting “voluntary departure,” or signing deportation orders because detention has become unbearable. Since fall 2025, voluntary-departure filings have surged more than 1,300%, with people selling homes or signing papers directly inside detention centers.

The administration has paired warehouse detention with cash incentives for people who agree to leave. ICE now advertises payments of up to \$2,600 for those who agree to leave – money reportedly diverted from refugee programs. Many never receive it. Some are held for months after accepting “voluntary departure,” only to end up deported anyway because ICE failed to schedule flights in time.

The drive for industrial “efficiency” made 2025 the deadliest year in immigration detention in two decades, with 35 confirmed deaths – nearly triple the annual average during Trump’s first term and more than five times the rate under Biden.

In El Paso, the death of 55-year-old Geraldo Lunas Campos was ruled a homicide after witnesses reported guards slamming him to the ground.

Deaths have continued in 2026. At Camp East Montana, a detention facility on the grounds of Fort Bliss in Texas, two people have already died. Victor Manuel Martinez’s Jan. 14 death was labeled a “presumed suicide” by DHS, but his family disputes that account. His autopsy was assigned to an Army medical facility rather than a local medical examiner, raising alarm about federal control over the investigation. ICE’s own inspectors documented 60 violations of federal detention standards at Camp East Montana last

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‘Not welcome’: Italy rejects ICE role at Winter Olympics

By Sharon Black

The Trump administration’s plan to embed agents from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) within the security detail for the U.S. delegation at next month’s Winter Olympics in Italy has triggered international outrage, uniting officials, activists, and ordinary Italians in protest.

The scandal broke after the Italian daily *Il Fatto Quotidiano* reported that ICE agents would operate alongside the State Department’s Diplomatic Security Service at the Milan-Cortina Games, supposedly “to vet and mitigate risks from transnational criminal organizations,” according to a Department of Homeland Security statement.

The agents being sent are technically from Homeland Security Investigations, ICE’s transnational crime unit, not the Enforcement and Removal Operations paramilitary units. The distinction is meaningless to Italians who have watched ICE agents gun down U.S. citizens and threaten journalists on live television. The brand is the brand; ICE is ICE.

But the announcement struck like a hammer blow given ICE’s bloody record. The agency’s name evokes terror across working-class communities in the U.S. – its hands soaked with the blood of Renee Nicole Good and Alex Pretti, shot by agents in Minneapolis; Keith Porter Jr., shot to death on New Year’s Eve in Los Angeles. Dozens of people have died in ICE custody amid allegations of denied medical care, including diabetics whose insulin was delayed or withheld; others have died after use of Tasers during arrests, or by suicide in detention centers that advocates describe as torturous.

The agency has stormed homes without warrants, used 5-year-old Liam Conejo Ramos as bait to arrest his father in Minneapolis, and harassed off-duty police officers of color. Its lawlessness exposes a paramilitary force – now poised to extend its reach onto European soil.

Italian rejection

The reaction in Italy was swift and furious. Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi initially waved off the controversy, claiming foreign delegations could choose their own security. Hours later, as public rage swelled, he reversed himself: “ICE, as such, will never operate in Italy.” Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani confirmed that ICE agents would be barred from Italian streets, bluntly stating that public order “belongs only to the Italian police.”

ICE is not a neutral “security partner.” It is a domestic paramilitary arm of the Department of Homeland Security, built to carry out raids, arrests and deportations and to operate

a sprawling detention system aimed squarely at immigrant workers and their families. It functions alongside police and federal task forces to raid workplaces and homes, detain immigrant workers, and tear families apart – enforcing a racist border regime that protects employers through raids, detention and deportation.

Deploying ICE abroad under the banner of “delegation security” blurs that line and normalizes immigration enforcement as a component of U.S. imperialist enforcement. The U.S. already exports policing through FBI legal attachés and DHS offices that train foreign police, screen travelers and share intelligence.

What is new is ICE’s open insertion into a global spectacle – treating migration control as Olympic security – exporting U.S. border repression into another country’s public space and advancing the idea that policing displaced workers is a legitimate function of international diplomacy.

Italians understood exactly what was being proposed. Outrage continued to build.

Milan’s Mayor Giuseppe Sala denounced the plan as “unacceptable,” declaring, “Say no to Trump. We will not welcome a militia known for its crimes – one that kills, that raids homes, that terrorizes with impunity.” Elly Schlein, leader of Italy’s center-left Democratic Party, echoed his warning, calling ICE “an armed body that has shown contempt for law on U.S. soil” and questioning how such forces could be trusted to respect Italian sovereignty.

Trump’s Olympics plan marks an unprecedented escalation. ICE has never before been dispatched abroad in this capacity. Its deployment represents the export of domestic repression – the raids, shootings, and detentions inflicted on immigrants, workers, and Black and Brown communities – onto a global stage intended for athletic competition rather than militarized policing.

As Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio prepare to attend the Games’ opening ceremonies, 232 U.S. athletes, symbols of human aspiration, will be shadowed by agents of fear. The stain of ICE threatens to follow them onto the ice, snow, and podium.

ICE violence part of the war machine

This latest provocation unfolds amid a surge in U.S. aggression worldwide – the kidnapping of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores; Pentagon seizures of



A memorial in Minneapolis honors Renee Good and Alex Pretti, killed by federal paramilitary agents this month. Italian officials cited the shootings in rejecting ICE’s role at the Winter Olympics.

Venezuelan oil and ships; renewed threats to occupy Greenland; intervention on the African continent; open talk in Washington of war with Cuba and the DPRK; covert intervention and ratcheting up the possibility of bombing Iran; furthering the genocide in Palestine and the continuing war both cold and hot on China and Russia. The same imperialist machine that cages migrants and brutalizes refugees at home will impose its terror internationally.

Across Italy, the response is clear: from the streets of Milan to the halls of Parliament, people are drawing a line against this transnational repression. ICE will not march unchecked through Italy.

This is a clash between national sovereignty and imperialist enforcement. The message to Trump is direct: U.S. immigration police are not welcome on Italian streets.

Growing resistance across Europe

Italy is not alone. From the docks of Piraeus, where Greek port workers have refused to load U.S. and NATO weapons bound for wars in Gaza and Ukraine, to British activists who have blocked deportation flights and surrounded immigration detention centers, resistance is spreading across the continent. In Germany, France, and Spain, tens of thousands have taken to the streets against racist border policies, mass drownings in the Mediterranean, and the deadly “Fortress Europe” regime.

These struggles are not separate. The same system that sends ICE to terrorize migrants at home, that tries to sneak them into Italy under Olympic cover, also arms Israeli bombs, blockades Cuba, and threatens Venezuela and Palestine. When Italian workers and students say no to ICE, they are rejecting the same enforcement machinery that cages migrants in the United States, carries out raids and deportations in working-class neighborhoods, and traps refugees in deadly crossings across the Mediterranean. #

15,000 NYC nurses hold the line: safe staffing and no ICE in hospitals

By Gary Wilson

On day 23 of the strike, nearly 15,000 nurses with the New York State Nurses Association are still holding picket lines across New York City – at Mount Sinai Hospital, Montefiore Medical Center, and NewYork-Presbyterian – in the largest nurses' strike in the city's history.

This walkout is about more than contracts. It is about whether working-class communities get safe care, whether nurses can do their jobs without being pushed past exhaustion, and whether hospitals will remain places of healing – or become another arm of federal repression.

Management is trying to claw back staffing gains won in 2023. They are dragging their feet on workplace violence protections and health benefits. Weekend negotiations produced revised proposals but no breakthrough on staffing. Mount Sinai has begun advertising temporary contract positions starting mid-February, a direct threat to striking workers. Meanwhile, NewYork-Presbyterian's CEO Steve Corwin pulled in \$26.3 million last year, even as administrators claim there is no money for safe patient ratios.

Nurses answered with action – marching across the Brooklyn Bridge to New York City Hall, holding speak-outs over unpaid health and pension benefits at Brooklyn Hospital Center, and keeping lines strong in freezing weather.

And as this fight has deepened, another demand has moved to the center: keeping U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement out of hospitals.

What started as a battle over staffing and safety has become a broader confrontation over who hospitals serve – corporate executives and federal enforcers, or patients and the workers who care for them.

Not politics – patient care

And this is where the fight over ICE comes in.

Nurses did not set out to make immigration enforcement a contract issue. They were forced there. For more than a year, they tried to get hospital management to voluntarily protect patients from ICE. Administrators refused. So nurses brought it to the bargaining table.

They did it because they see the consequences every day.

When ICE enters hospitals, patients disappear. Appointments are missed. Conditions worsen. Nurses are left treating emergencies that never had to happen. This is not politics. This is patient care.

Hospital executives call the demand a “distraction.” Nurses call it reality.

Training staff on how to disengage from law enforcement does nothing to stop agents

from entering facilities – and does nothing to restore trust among patients who are afraid to walk through hospital doors.

You cannot treat chronic illness, pregnancy complications, or cancer if people are too afraid to seek care.

Nurses warned about is already happening

The conditions New York nurses are fighting are already unfolding nationwide.

At Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis, doctors and nurses have used encrypted group chats to warn colleagues about ICE activity near entrances. Plainclothes agents have stopped patients and staff, demanding documentation. In one case, an officer shackled a patient receiving care.

In Portland, Oregon, the Oregon Nurses Association documented incidents in which ICE pressured clinical staff to discharge patients early – even when physicians recommended continued hospitalization.

The human cost is immediate.

In Minnesota, a pregnant woman skipped prenatal appointments because she feared encountering ICE. A nurse later found her at home in labor. A patient with kidney cancer was taken into detention without his medication. Diabetic patients went without insulin. Treatable wounds progressed into medical emergencies requiring intensive care.

In Southern California, nurses report declining patient numbers as immigrants stay away from hospitals and clinics altogether.

Hospitals are workplaces. When immigration agents walk corridors or wait outside doors, patients stop coming. Workers become afraid to report for shifts. Nurses are left managing more advanced illness, more preventable complications, and more crisis care.

This is what ICE inside health care actually looks like. As the strike has continued, nurses have increasingly connected their labor fight to the broader wave of federal repression targeting immigrant communities.

That convergence has been visible at Foley Square, where striking nurses rallied near the federal building where ICE agents have been abducting immigrants during routine court check-ins. Health care workers spoke out not only against hospital strikebreaking, but in defense of the same communities they care for on the job.

On Jan. 29, NYSNA members also held a vigil at the VA New York Harbor Healthcare Center for Alex Pretti, a Minneapolis ICU nurse killed by federal agents. The action was organized with National Nurses United, the Canadian Federation of Nursing Unions, and the American Federation of Government Employees.

Pretti's death made the stakes unmistakable: Health care workers are confronting the same enforcement machinery that is terrorizing their patients.

Twenty-three days in, the lines are clear. This strike is about safe staffing and workplace safety. It is about whether nurses can care for patients without being pushed past exhaustion. And it is about whether hospitals will remain places of healing – or allow fear and enforcement to drive people away from care. From staffing ratios to ICE in hospital corridors, nurses are fighting for the same thing they always have: the right of working-class communities to receive care without intimidation, and the right of health care workers to do their jobs with dignity. #

Voices from Minneapolis

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Thankfully, our neighbors have been welcoming and friendly, making it less isolating and easier to find a sense of belonging. Gradually, we've also been connecting with other queer folks, which has helped make us feel more at home. Still, it has been a difficult and overall isolating time.

SLL: Besides Renee Good and her wife Becca, there have been several instances of queer couples being targeted by ICE for their solidarity with the immigrant community. What have you observed that would be helpful for queer people in other cities that may be targeted next?

AB: Coming from somewhere where we often felt targeted for being visibly queer, we were very concerned about how federal agents and agitators have been targeting queer people.

Initially, we limited going out in general, but we collectively decided that wasn't sustainable. Instead, our polycule made it a rule that none of us go out alone, unless it was for work or volunteering. While this only does so much, it helped us feel a little more safe and allowed us to get back to living our lives in spite of the crackdown.

My best advice to queer people living in cities that may soon see heightened ICE activity is to do your best to travel together and look out for your queer friends. Carpool, walk together, and don't hesitate to give each other rides to ensure no one is left vulnerable.

'People show up and demand justice'

SLL: What are the next steps for the movement in Minneapolis?

MAR: Trump and his ilk have shown time and time again that they don't care what it

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Trump moves to cut pay for home care workers

By Gregory E. Williams

The Trump regime wants to roll back Obama-era wage protections for about 3 million U.S. home care workers. Home care is an industry that continues to grow as the U.S. population ages. These workers are essential but hard-pressed by low wages and high costs. Like other service and precarious jobs, the industry is plagued by high turnover at 80% a year.

The protections Trump wants to steal from the people who care for our parents and grandparents include rights to overtime and at least the federal minimum wage. Most U.S. workers have benefited from these protections since the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938, when the labor movement was strong enough to win such things.

The extension of these protections to home care workers, proposed in 2013 and implemented in 2015, was not a gift from the capitalist government but the result of further struggles by home care workers, who are disproportionately women, people of color, and immigrants.

The rights were hard-won. Unions like SEIU locals across the country fought for this legislation. The home care agency bosses tried unsuccessfully to stop it. The Home Care Association of America – which today represents 4,300 home care agencies – sued to stop the rule from going into effect. They lost and only delayed it.

Home care workers have bills to pay just like every other worker. Why should they get less?

The Trump administration claims they are going after home care workers' rights (pushing

down wages) to address the affordability crisis – a crisis that Trump continues to downplay. It's the same message he tells the people all the time: Times are tough, so you need to make some sacrifices.

While they stoke war, murder people in the street, and do nothing real to push down the price burden for working people, they find another easy target: home care workers.

It is undeniable that home care is so expensive as to be out of reach for many working-class people. Workers are paid too little, families are charged too much, and the agencies make money on both ends.

Home care, like child care, is increasingly unaffordable. Many people lack savings, retirement and pensions from a job. The capitalists continue to get richer by shifting the burden of the economy's deep problems onto the working class. High prices at the grocery store are part of this. Trump's cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and other social programs are making a bad situation worse.

Access to home care or quality nursing home care should be a right. It should not be a privilege that only some can afford. However, access can be expanded while also fairly compensating home health workers. The money is there. The working class creates so much wealth – all the wealth of society – but most is suctioned off by the capitalist class, with the backing of their government.



Home care workers rallying in Lansing, Michigan, March 13, 2024.

Instead of enabling billionaires to buy their third, fourth, or fifth mansion – or using billions to bomb Palestinian children or surround sovereign countries with naval armadas – the government could actually provide people with the support they need. At the very least, they could cover working-class people's bills. The U.S. government will drop many billions without discussion when it comes to bombing people somewhere. That's a giveaway to the weapons manufacturers, yet they say there is no money to help the people they claim to represent.

But billionaire Trump doesn't care about affordability. If he did, he would never support a "solution" that involves squeezing a whole sector of already-vulnerable workers even more. Born into wealth and continuing to serve his own class, he represents the blood-sucking capitalist system.

He has no solutions for working people. Momentum to solve affordability and other problems will come as a result of people's movements, like that of the home care workers. #

Voices from Minneapolis

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takes – they will do anything to remain in power and keep their pockets full. We know that the people of the Twin Cities will show up and demand justice at every turn. Every time one of us is struck down, a thousand rise in their place.

BGP: The Somali community is a pillar of organization, discipline and resistance in many ways and for many communities, as are the Hmong and other people of Asian descent in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. In Little Earth, an Indigenous stronghold in the city, there are neighborhood defense networks organized, food pantries and much more. The American Indian Movement (AIM) – formed in Minneapolis in the 1960s – plays an important role in these networks.

Unions such as SEIU Local 26 are very multinational, with many of its leaders being women, LGBTQIA+, and from various nationalities. A few of the leaders of this local, who've helped win many concessions for workers, have been kidnapped and been de-

ported or are in concentration camps.

Women Against Military Madness (WAMM), with many independent organizations in its building its network, is also making many contributions to the people's resistance. The Veterans for Peace chapter in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area is one of the largest in the U.S. and assists in many ways, including defense work.

Many who can't be in the streets are making food and providing much-needed assistance to the people in many forms. Due to ICE terror, thousands in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area and beyond are not going to work (some for weeks now), so there's a variety of networks fundraising for basic needs such as groceries, rent, mortgage and car payments. Many city and suburban supporters are assisting.

Many people remember the role of police and National Guard over the decades of people's battles, from the 1934 general strike to the rebellion in response to the police murder of George Floyd and today's battles against ICE. Whether consciously or unconsciously,

the general feeling seems to be that the people of Minneapolis-St. Paul must continue to organize together and as independently as possible, with unions as a base but also much broader and deeper, with support from national and international networks.

MAR: We will keep hitting the streets for justice for all of those who have had their lives stolen by ICE and other federal thugs.

Events are unfolding rapidly. Since these conversations, Border Patrol head Gregory Bovino has been demoted and left Minneapolis as the Trump regime finds itself on the defensive after Alex Pretti's videoed murder. But the ICE assault continues, with community members reporting increased attacks on parents and children outside schools and at bus stops. Mira Altobell-Resendez has been targeted by the FBI after an online hate campaign.

At the initiative of Somali student groups, a call has gone out for a U.S.-wide national shutdown and day of protest on Friday, Jan. 30. Readers are urged to join local actions and visit Struggle-La Lucha for updates.

Annie Jump Vicente Case(s) NOT A CAUTIONARY TALE

By Tsukuru Fors

On Feb. 15, 2024, Annie Jump Vicente, an extremely visible and outspoken trans rights advocate in WeHo (West Hollywood), was involved in an altercation with a Block by Block Ambassador. [Editor's note: The Ambassadors are a civilian auxiliary to the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. The city-funded, uniformed guards conduct patrols on foot and bike.]

Annie Jump says that the Ambassador sexually assaulted her by grabbing her breasts, and that she acted in self-defense. Annie Jump's defending herself against the attacker resulted in her arrest and a subsequent felony charge for "an assault with a deadly weapon" (pepper spray), which she has been fighting for the last 24 months.

I will begin this article by stating that Annie Jump and I are co-founders/co-directors of a non-profit org. I was out of the country when the incident happened so I have no direct knowledge of it; however, based on my personal relationship with Annie Jump, I have first-hand and intimate insight into Annie Jump's activities as a citizen auditor in WeHo and occasional antagonism/harassment that she suffered at the hands of Block by Block employees, leading up to the incident on Feb. 15, 2024.

This article is very deliberately subtitled "NOT A CAUTIONARY TALE," where another title such as "Our Right to Self Defense" would have been a more obvious choice. By choosing this rather counterintuitive subtitle, I wanted to draw attention to my and many others' suspicion that there is a malicious intent surrounding her cases to make an example out of Annie Jump.

The authorities want to discourage others from being as vocal, unafraid, and persistent as she has been when it comes to advocating and defending the rights of queer people, the poor, and unhoused. She has never been someone who reserves their activism only for weekend "permitted" protests.

Annie Jump was seen engaging in conversations with Block by Block Ambassadors almost daily; she had very specific objectives of questioning them about the nature of their job. (Pushing the unhoused out of public spaces in the name of anti-loitering and calling cops on them is not "de-escalation.") The interactions sometimes spawned uninvited hostility accompanied by open displays of transphobia; misgendering Annie Jump was a common behavior amongst Block by Block Ambassadors. Once, Annie Jump says, an Ambassador even went so far as to threaten to kill her four-legged companion, Sweet Dee.

Before adding historical and political contexts to the cases, what needs to be empha-



West Hollywood resident and trans activist, Annie Jump Vicente, shown here in this file photo, speaking before the WeHo City Council.

sized here is that Annie Jump maintains, and her defense argues, that the physical aggression was initiated by the Ambassador when he grabbed her breasts. Annie Jump was wearing a bodycam at the time of the incident; the footage was seized by the LASD upon her arrest and later entered into evidence at the request of her legal counsel. Her defense contends the footage clearly establishes that she acted in self-defense.

There is security camera footage that shows the altercation from afar, only from one angle, without sound. The footage was released right after the incident to the media and has been circulating on the internet.

I've received messages from perfect strangers claiming that "it is clear from the footage that Annie Jump was the aggressor." I find this extremely disturbing and problematic because of the dangers of the media's influence on pre-trial public perceptions.

It seems to me that some people have already made a judgment against Annie Jump, despite the principle of the presumption of innocence.

I highly recommend that people check out the New Jersey Four (as told in a 2014 documentary film "Out in the Night") legal case, where a group of Black lesbians were labeled in the media as a "Gang of Killer Lesbians" and sentenced to prison for defending themselves from a homophobic sexual assault. (Their names were later substantially cleared, but not till after some in the group had served eight years in prison.)

Lastly, I would like to address an accusation that has been made against Annie Jump that she is a racist and that her "attacks" on Ambassadors were racially motivated. Nothing is further from the truth. Annie Jump has always engaged all Ambassadors equally, regardless of their race. It is true that Block by Block Ambassadors are disproportionately made up of Black and

Brown folk. If we were to discuss the racial dynamics, as Annie Jump, a person of Puerto Rican descent, has often pointed out, we need to acknowledge the fact that the system is structured so people of color are often made to do white people's bidding: namely, harass/abuse/criminalize fellow POCs.

Annie Jump asked many difficult questions, which made WeHo's liberal establishment extremely uncomfortable. They succeeded in pushing out the most vocal trans activist from the city, and now are attempting to

lock her away where her voice can no longer be heard. In the political climate where the federal government speaks of its desire to put bounties on the heads of us trans activists, Annie Jump's cases should be closely watched.

As a trans person, a trans rights activist, a parent of a trans child, an immigrant, a child of Hiroshima where more than 300,000 civilians were subjected to the grossest form of state violence in 1945, I cannot allow us to live in a world where we can be silenced and disappeared for being bold and fearless fighters for human rights.

Author's Note: Annie Jump has three cases that she is fighting: one felony and two misdemeanors. This article focuses on her felony case. The third case was added to the list very recently. I am calling it "a phantom case" because the LASD claims they arrested her in June 2024, which Annie Jump says she has no knowledge of or recollection of. Annie Jump's next pre-trial court date is Feb. 19, 2026.

Minneapolis on strike

Continued from page 3

These lessons didn't come out of nowhere. They grew out of the George Floyd rebellion, the Black Lives Matter uprisings, last summer's anti-ICE actions in Los Angeles, and fall mobilizations in Chicago. Each fight passed along tactics, confidence, and networks. What began as a protest has carried forward as organized resistance – preparing people to shut things down when it mattered.

Despite its strength, the movement hit a ceiling.

Why organization matters

Spontaneity carried the movement forward. It couldn't carry it through to stop ICE or force federal agents out. Workers can shut things down. Without organization, they can't keep them shut.

History shows that moments like this do not automatically turn into lasting victories. They

NYC rally demands freedom for Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores

By Jace Carter

New York, Jan. 31 – A spirited crowd gathered in the afternoon in Times Square for a rally and march demanding the immediate release of President Nicolás Maduro and First Combatant Cilia Flores from the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn. The action marked the concluding day of a broader Week of Resistance in Solidarity with Venezuela.

This action, endorsed by over 20 organizations, was called as part of the Week of Resistance in Solidarity with Venezuela (Jan 23-31), with organizers demanding an end to U.S. imperialist war and sanctions against Venezuela, the demilitarization of the Caribbean, and the withdrawal of U.S. military forces surrounding Venezuela and Cuba.

A cohort from the Baltimore branch of the Struggle for Socialism Party made the 200-mile trek to New York, braving bitter cold in solidarity with protesters. They brought large banners reading, “Trump out now! No war on Venezuela – Free Palestine!” and “Free President Maduro and Cilia Flores!”

It has been more than one month since the Trump administration illegally kidnapped President Maduro and Cilia Flores as part of a targeted bombing campaign against Caracas, and imprisoned them on sham narco-terrorism and gun-related charges. Their first hearing is scheduled for March 17.

It's no secret that this deliberate violation of international law is nothing more than another attempt at regime change in Venezuela, fully



SLL photo

Demonstrators fill Times Square on Jan. 31 demanding the release of Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores, linking their U.S. detention to Washington's sanctions war abroad and the kidnappings of immigrants and activists at home by ICE.

funded by the U.S., aimed at seizing the country's oil and imposing neocolonial control.

Speakers at the opening rally included representatives from Diaspora Palante Collective, the Puerto Rican Independence Party, the All African People's Revolutionary Party, Workers World Party, and the Bronx Anti-War Committee. Anti-Maduro hecklers who passed by attempted to interrupt some of the speeches but were unsuccessful. Speakers highlighted the resilience of the Venezuelan people despite

the kidnapping of Maduro and Flores, and that millions continue to stay in the streets every day demanding their return.

The march stepped off to energetic chants of “Maduro, amigo, el pueblo está contigo!” (“Maduro, friend, the people are with you”) and “Maduro aguanta, el pueblo se levanta!” (“Maduro, hold on, the people are rising”). Signs reading “USA hands off Venezuela,” “Free President Maduro and Cilia Flores now!” and “Abolish ICE! End raids and racism” were held alongside large Venezuelan flags.

During the first leg of the march, protesters attempted to enter the street to shut down traffic but were stopped by NYPD officers riding alongside the route on bicycles. The march continued on icy sidewalks. At a second rally point between 49th and 50th streets near the former Exxon building, representatives from Arm the Dollz, Code Pink and Brooklyn Against War spoke, emphasizing how U.S. imperialist grabs for oil are driven by bloodthirsty corporations such as Exxon and Chevron.

The march continued up Sixth Avenue, concluding at the southern entrance to Central Park near the José Martí and Simón Bolívar statues. Representatives from Black Alliance for Peace, Friends of Swazi Freedom, Compás de la Diáspora and the Struggle for Socialism Party delivered closing remarks. This author connected the kidnapping of Maduro and Flores to ongoing ICE kidnappings of immigrants and activists in the United States and invited attendees to join a car caravan from Baltimore on Saturday, March 7, to free Maduro and Flores from illegal detention. #

Minneapolis on strike

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require conscious working-class leadership – leadership rooted in workplaces and communities, capable of turning shutdowns into a unified force.

Minnesota has to be understood in the wider context of U.S. imperialist decline.

Abroad, Washington is starving Cuba by blocking oil deliveries – a move that could leave the island without power within weeks – while pairing sanctions and military pressure against Venezuela and Iran. At home, it expands ICE, builds detention camps, and occupies working-class neighborhoods.

Domestic repression is how the ruling class tries to hold things together as prices rise and public services collapse.

Minnesota showed what happens when that strategy collides with organized communities and workers who refuse to comply.

A rehearsal for what's coming

The Minneapolis general strike was not an ending. It was a rehearsal.

We're entering a period of upheaval. General strikes are returning. Federal violence is becoming routine. The legitimacy of capitalist institutions is breaking down.

The question is no longer whether the capitalist system will be challenged. It will.

The question is whether workers will build the organization needed to shut things down again – and keep them shut.

Minnesota clarified what is possible. It also clarified what is missing.

The working class has begun to rediscover its collective strength. The task now is to match that strength with disciplined organization – not after the next eruption, but before it.

Things are moving fast. Power is being contested through struggle, not polite debate. #

Reflections from the Harriet Tubman Center: STANDING WITH VENEZUELA

Report with John Parker and Dozthor Zurlent, moderated by Liz Antonio Hernandez, in Los Angeles

By Onyinye Alheri

Feb. 2 – This past weekend, I attended a crucial report-back session featuring John Parker, a community and international solidarity activist and coordinator of the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in Los Angeles.

John recently returned from Venezuela, where he participated in an international anti-war solidarity conference in December 2025. During his time there, he met with representatives from local communes and grassroots organizers from around the world. He also had the remarkable opportunity to meet and speak directly with President Nicolás Maduro. The insights he brought back offered a perspective rarely heard in mainstream discourse.

The report focused on the recent U.S. invasion of Venezuela and the kidnapping of President Maduro and First Combatant Cilia Flores, who are married.

John was joined by Dozthor Zurlent, a Venezuelan professor, activist, and Strategic Analysis Director for the Simon Bolívar Institute, who previously served as an advisor to the late President Hugo Chávez.

Together, they shared their experiences on the ground and spoke about how everyday



At the the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in Los Angeles, Jan. 31.

SLL photo: Scott Scheffer

They emphasized that these are not isolated incidents but part of a broader pattern of U.S. intervention aimed at undermining socialist movements and popular governments throughout Latin America and beyond. The

discussion made clear how international solidarity is essential to confronting these interconnected struggles.

The event closed on a powerful note, with John and Dozthor sharing concrete ways to join the campaign to free Maduro and Flores and support the Venezuelan people. They concluded with a video tribute honoring the 32 Cuban revolutionary fighters who were killed by U.S. forces as they defended the Bolivarian Revolution and the Venezuelan presidential residence. This moving tribute underscored the human cost of resistance and the profound internationalist commitment that continues to bind revolutionary movements across borders. #

ICE adopts 'Amazon Prime' model

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fall, months before those deaths.

At the Dade-Collier Training and Transition facility in the Florida Everglades – which detainees call “Alligator Alcatraz” – warehouse detention has created conditions for disease to spread. Attorneys report a respiratory outbreak affecting most detainees. Showers are allowed once or twice a week.

When Venezuelan detainee Luis Manuel Rivas Velásquez spoke out about conditions, guards confiscated his poetry and letters and forbade him from writing. After he collapsed, fellow detainees performed CPR because staff had denied him medical care for 48 hours.

People are responding on the ground.

Minneapolis-St. Paul: On Jan. 23, more than 100,000 people took part in a general strike – shutting down businesses, skipping work and school, and marching in bitter cold against ICE and DHS. Neighbors have built rapid-response networks to track raids and warn targeted families. School workers document ICE activity near buses and campuses. Detainees and loved ones gather testimony and medical records while risking retaliation.

Chicago: Immigrant defense groups and family members packed hearings and organized outside detention centers, pushing federal officials into court and aiding the release of 615 detainees. Organizers continue mobilizing around detention sites and hearings.

Kansas City: Residents organized against proposed ICE warehouse sites, and the city council passed a five-year ban on new detention facilities.

Baltimore: Hundreds joined a Unity March in solidarity with Minneapolis’ “No Work, No School, No Shopping” general strike, rallying against ICE and federal enforcement while local justice coalitions organized demonstrations outside federal buildings calling for an end to ICE operations.

New York City: Large groups assembled in public spaces to protest federal immigration enforcement actions, joining the national wave of demonstrations.

Boston: Hundreds marched through downtown streets in anti-ICE protests.

Philadelphia: Community groups, including activists associated with historic movements, held demonstrations against ICE, and local

lawmakers introduced proposals to curb ICE operations.

Detroit: High school and college students led walkouts as part of coordinated actions opposing ICE enforcement.

Seattle: Hundreds rallied downtown in anti-ICE protests, chanting and calling on lawmakers to reject ICE funding. Demonstrators marched through Seattle neighborhoods.

Portland, OR: Protesters took to the streets and faced arrests during demonstrations against ICE following federal shootings.

Los Angeles and Southern California: Community members organized rallies and street protests in response to ICE raids and shootings.

San Francisco Bay Area: Workers, students, and organizers joined coordinated demonstrations as part of nationwide anti-ICE actions.

New Orleans: High school students staged a walkout against ICE. On Jan. 23, protesters marched down Freret Street and blocked St. Charles Avenue to oppose federal immigration operations.

South Texas (Dilley): Demonstrators gathered outside the South Texas Family Residen-

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The NFL's priorities: protecting genocide, punishing conscience

By Lev Koufax

Another week in the capitalist sports-industrial complex, another stark lesson in its political priorities. This time, the lesson comes smeared in eye black and delivered by Houston Texans linebacker Azeez Al-Shaair.

On Jan. 12, Al-Shaair took the field with a simple, humanitarian message written across the grease beneath his eyes: "STOP THE GENOCIDE." For this act of conscience – for daring to remind a watching nation of the ongoing, U.S.-funded slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza – the NFL's machine of conformity swung into action. The league fined Al-Shaair \$11,593, a punitive measure designed not just to punish one player, but to silence all who might consider speaking truth to power.

Let's be perfectly clear about what this fine represents. It is not about "avoiding controversy" or "sticking to sports." The NFL is drenched in politics – from its relentless militaristic pageantry to its owners' deep financial ties to the war machine. No, this fine is a direct political statement from the billionaire ownership class. Their message is unambiguous: Solidarity with a people facing annihilation is a punishable offense.

Racist double standard laid bare

The racist, reactionary character of the league's enforcement is exposed when this fine is held up to the light of recent history. Just a

Amazon prime model

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tial Center to protest the detention of a father and child transferred from Minnesota, facing off with state troopers in visible clashes.

Austin, TX: Organizers held multi-day protests against federal immigration enforcement following Minneapolis shootings.

Nationwide: Organizers report actions in more than 300 cities – from marches and walkouts to packed council meetings, courthouse rallies, and residents confronting ICE officials during warehouse tours and documenting inspections with phones and cameras.

These are practical acts of defense.

The warehouses, the budgets, the recruitment drives, the deaths ruled homicides, the children taken from classrooms – these warehouses and raids exist because Congress funded them, DHS built them, and ICE enforces them. The general strike in Minneapolis on Jan. 23 shows how the working class confronts repression. #



Azeez Al-Shaair – linebacker for the Houston Texans – stood up for Palestine during the Jan. 12 game with the Steelers by wearing eye black that read 'STOP THE GENOCIDE.'

States. Further, the NFL has selected six private equity firms to acquire up to 10% minority stakes in NFL franchises. These firms include Blackstone and Carlyle Group – both of whom are heavily invested in the U.S. war machine.

The league's stadiums are temples to military recruitment, wash in flags and flyovers paid for by the public to glorify perpetual war. To allow a player to disrupt this carefully curated narrative of nationalist unity with a call to stop a U.S.-armed genocide is an intolerable breach of protocol.

Meanwhile, the league had no real issue with Nick Bosa's MAGA hat because the politics of Trump, while grotesque, do not fundamentally threaten the profit streams of NFL owners and the broader capitalist class. In fact, they often serve to divide the working class along racial and national lines, a useful tool for those at the top.

Azeez Al-Shaair's "crime" was one of international solidarity. He connected the struggle on the field to the struggle in Gaza. He used his platform not for self-promotion, but for collective awakening. This is the ultimate threat to a league that commodifies Black bodies for profit while expecting those same Black players to remain silent on global issues of justice.

The NFL hopes this fine will end the conversation. We must ensure it is only the beginning.

Al-Shaair said, "At the end of the day, it's bigger than me ... if [the stop the genocide message] makes people uncomfortable, imagine how those people (in Gaza) feel. I think that's the biggest thing." Our duty as anti-racists, as anti-imperialists, as workers and fans, is to amplify his message, not let it be drowned out by the NFL corporate machine. Every time the league tries to silence a cry for Palestine, we must make that cry louder.

This is not just about one player or one fine. It is about whose politics are sanctioned and whose are criminalized in the arena of popular culture. The NFL has shown its hand: it will attack conscience and protect fascist symbology.

We must stand unwaveringly with Azeez Al-Shaair. We must expose and oppose the NFL's complicity in silencing dissent against genocide. And we must recognize this moment for what it is: a clear sign that in the struggle for justice, from Gaza to the gridiron, there can be no neutrality.

Lev Koufax is an anti-Zionist Jewish activist.

couple seasons ago, the NFL had to address another player's political statement. San Francisco 49ers defensive end Nick Bosa appeared on national television in January 2023 wearing a hat with the slogan of Donald Trump's fascist "Make America Great Again" movement.

What was the NFL's response to a player promoting a political figure whose movement is founded on racist birtherism, anti-immigrant hatred, and the Jan. 6 insurrection? A fine of \$11,255.

Do the math. Azeez Al-Shaair was fined \$348 more for saying "STOP THE GENOCIDE" than Nick Bosa was for endorsing fascist, racist, xenophobic Trump.

Let no false equivalence be drawn here. This is not a "both sides" issue. On one side is a call to end the mass killing of civilians, a statement of basic human solidarity recognized by international courts and global consensus. On the other side is open support for a U.S. political movement explicitly aligned with white supremacy, xenophobia, and exploitation. The NFL's accounting is a moral ledger: It has deemed a plea against genocide slightly more offensive than a hat promoting fascism.

This is the hierarchy of the capitalist sports-industrial complex. Statements that challenge the pro-war status quo are met with financial penalties and smear campaigns. Gestures that align with the reactionary, racist undercurrents of the ruling class are treated with a relative slap on the wrist. It is a perfect reflection of capitalism's priorities: Palestinian lives are worth less than Trumpist feelings.

Al-Shaair, Bosa, and the NFL's pro-war politics

The punishment of Al-Shaair cannot be divorced from the material interests of the NFL's owners – a cabal of billionaires with deep investments in the very system he criticized.

NFL owners like Robert Kraft (New England Patriots) and Stephen Ross (Miami Dolphins) are among the most vocal and financially committed Zionist donors in the United

José Martí: Building a revolutionary movement for Cuban independence

By Sharon Black

José Julián Martí Pérez (Jan. 28, 1853 – May 19, 1895) is often sanitized in bourgeois histories as a gentle poet or a generic patriot. To understand Martí, however, is to recognize him as a revolutionary internationalist whose life's work was the forging of a unified, anti-racist, and sovereign Cuban nation. His legacy is not a museum piece but a living tradition rooted in anti-colonial struggle across the Americas.

The colonial crucible: a conscience forged in childhood

Martí's revolutionary consciousness did not emerge in a vacuum; it was forged in the harsh crucible of colonial Cuba. Born in Havana to a Spanish artillery sergeant and a Canary Islands native, he witnessed from his earliest years the brutal contradictions of the slave-owning colony. His humble family moved from the city to the countryside, where the young Martí saw firsthand the inhumanity of the plantation system. This direct, visceral exposure to the violence of chattel slavery planted the seeds of his lifelong, uncompromising abolitionism.

He was a brilliant student, but his education was inextricably linked to the political ferment around him. His primary school teacher, Rafael María de Mendive, was not merely an instructor but a fervent patriot who became Martí's political mentor, nurturing his literary talent and his hatred of colonial oppression.

Youthful defiance and political baptism by fire

Martí's adolescence was a period of rapid political acceleration, coinciding with the rising revolutionary tide on the island. At only 15, he was already publishing fiercely patriotic poems and newspapers. His defining moment came in 1869, at the age of 16, in the fiery aftermath of the Grito de Yara that launched the Ten Years' War.

In a fearless act of defiance, Martí and a friend penned a letter condemning a fellow student for joining the Spanish Volunteer militia – the repressive paramilitary force of colonial loyalists. For this act of political sedition, the colonial regime sentenced the teenage Martí to six years of hard labor in a prison quarry. The chains cut into his ankles, the sun blistered his skin, and the experience marked his body and mind indelibly.

After several months of this brutalization, his sentence was commuted to exile to Spain – a deportation meant to break him, which instead globalized his struggle.

This early baptism by fire meant that Martí's political consciousness was fully formed in the prison yards and exile ships of the empire. His

The José Martí Memorial in Havana's Plaza de la Revolución, where generations of Cubans have gathered for mass mobilizations and political commemorations.



subsequent decades abroad – particularly in the belly of the beast, New York – provided him with a dialectical understanding of modern empires. He saw the Gilded Age's brutal inequalities and recognized the “monster” of U.S. expansionism, understanding that Cuban independence had to be won against Spain but also in defiance of the northern colossus.

His genius was as an organizer of the oppressed and exiled. He did not simply write; he built. Among the exploited tabaqueros (cigar workers) in Florida and New York, Martí found a disciplined, class-conscious base. In 1892, he fused disparate exile groups into the Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC), a political instrument unique for its time.

It was not a vehicle for a caudillo, or one-man rule, but a disciplined party with a clear program: full independence, the abolition of all racial privilege, and the establishment of a republic “with all and for the good of all.” This was a program for social revolution, not merely a change of flags.

Indivisibility of national and social liberation: abolition as revolutionary strategy

To separate Martí's nationalism from his radical social vision is an error, a lesson rooted in those early years witnessing the plantation. For Martí, the liberation of Cuba was inseparable from the destruction of the slaveholding plantation system. He understood, with crystal clarity, that the colonial power rested on the social division between enslaved Africans,

exploited peasants, and a creole elite often compromised by economic ties to Spain.

His analysis of the failed Ten Years' War (1868-1878) was a masterclass in revolutionary strategy. That earlier struggle faltered because it failed to fully unleash and unite the most oppressed sectors – particularly the enslaved Afro-Cuban population – behind a program of total emancipation. Martí corrected this. He declared that to win, the revolution had to dismantle the very economic and social foundation of Spanish rule. “Man cannot be held in perpetual servitude to man,” he wrote, framing abolition not as a future concession but as a prerequisite for victory.

Martí's legacy: Fidel and the Cuban people resurrect its vision

Martí died in combat at Dos Ríos in 1895, a martyr to the cause he built. The republic that emerged after 1902 was a bitter betrayal of his vision, falling under the neocolonial dominance of U.S. capital and perpetuating deep social inequalities. The bourgeois regimes that followed paid lip service to his name while gutting his program.

It was the Cuban Revolution of 1959, led by Fidel Castro, that consciously resurrected the revolutionary Martí from the mausoleum of official history. Fidel declared the revolution to be the fulfillment of Martí's unfinished work, asserting, “I believe in Martí, and I believe in Marx.”

The revolution's radical literacy campaigns, its internationalist missions in Africa, the Henry Reeve brigades of Cuban doctors, and its defiant stand against U.S. imperialism are all part of a continuation of Martí's anti-colonial, unifying project.

For socialists, Martí represents the essential link between the struggle against imperialism and the deeper fight for social justice – a thinker who understood that true independence is impossible without a fundamental transformation of social relations.

José Martí's significance, therefore, is not merely historical. He stands as a titan of anti-colonial thought and practice, a revolutionary whose conscience was tempered in the prisons of his youth, and who grasped the necessity of uniting the oppressed of all nationalities in a disciplined party to destroy the old state and build a new one.

His struggle continues wherever people fight against the empire and for a world where, as he dreamed, the first law of the republic is the “cultivation of human dignity.”

The lyrics of the ballad “Guantanamo” are drawn from Martí's poetry, linking his love for Cuba with his commitment to the poor and the oppressed. #

Britain's Suez moment – and what it means for U.S. workers

By Michel Shehadeh

History rarely announces itself when it turns. Empires do not collapse in a single dramatic moment; they erode over time, often unnoticed, until one crisis exposes what has long been true. For Britain, that moment came in 1956 during the Suez Crisis. For the United States, the warning signs are already visible – and working people are the ones most likely to pay the price.

In 1956, Britain still appeared to be a global power. Its flag flew across continents, its navy dominated key sea lanes, and its political leadership acted as though empire had merely paused, not ended. Then, in the span of 11 days, that illusion collapsed. Not because Britain lost a war – it did not – but because it discovered that it no longer controlled the economic foundations of its power.

When Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal, Britain joined France and Israel in a military intervention to reclaim what it viewed as a strategic asset. British forces performed well on the battlefield. But military success proved irrelevant. The United States, now the world's dominant financial power, opposed the invasion. Washington threatened to sell off its holdings of British pounds, block emergency loans from the International Monetary Fund, and allow the currency to collapse. Britain's foreign reserves drained rapidly. Within days, the government faced economic disaster and was forced to withdraw.

This was not a loss of confidence in the abstract, but the use of financial power to enforce political compliance.

The message was unmistakable: Britain could no longer act independently of its creditors, because the economic foundations of its power had shifted away from production and toward finance and debt. The empire was not defeated by an enemy army – it was constrained by debt and financial pressure.

What followed is the part labor should pay closest attention to.

Britain's decline did not begin in 1956. For decades, it had been living on borrowed prestige. In the 19th century, the pound sterling was the world's reserve currency. That status allowed Britain to borrow cheaply, run persistent trade deficits, and finance empire without immediate consequences. But by the early 20th century, the United States had surpassed Britain economically. British industry lagged, productivity fell behind, and investment increasingly flowed toward finance and empire rather than rebuilding domestic production. The system continued not simply out of habit, but because the existing structure still served



Troops of the British Parachute Regiment escort a captured Egyptian soldier at Port Said during the Suez Crisis of 1956.

financial and imperialist interests even as it stopped serving working people.

World War I accelerated this process. Massive borrowing transformed Britain from the world's leading creditor into a debtor nation. Rather than restructuring its economy around rebuilding productive capacity and protecting employment, the British state prioritized defending financial credibility. In 1925, it returned to the gold standard at an unrealistic exchange rate, placing the burden of adjustment on the domestic economy.

Gold has never brought stability in times of crisis. Tying a currency to gold limits how governments can respond when the economy is under strain. In Britain, defending the pound in this way meant raising interest rates, cutting spending, and forcing wages down, leading to prolonged unemployment and hardship for working people while banks and creditors were protected. The United States operates under a different monetary system today, but the pattern is familiar. When stress builds, those with wealth are shielded first, while workers are asked to absorb inflation, austerity, and sacrifice in the name of stability.

The consequences in Britain were severe. High interest rates strangled growth. Unemployment surged, especially in industrial regions. Exports collapsed. When the pound finally broke free of gold in the 1930s, adjustment came abruptly and harshly. Wages stagnated, imports became more expensive, and living standards declined for decades. The reckoning was swift precisely because it had been delayed—and because workers had already absorbed years of sacrifice.

The Suez Crisis revealed how far that process had already gone, exposing the gap between Britain's imperialist posture and its economic limits.

This history matters because the United States now occupies a similar position in the global system.

The dollar remains the world's reserve currency. That status allows Washington to borrow cheaply, run chronic trade deficits, and maintain a vast global military footprint. But the foundations beneath that privilege are under strain. U.S. debt continues to rise, and interest payments consume a growing share of the federal budget—resources that could otherwise fund health care, housing, infrastructure, and education. At the same time, deindustrialization and financialization have hollowed out large sections of the economy, leaving workers more exposed to shocks.

As with Britain, political leaders promise that global power will compensate for economic imbalance at home. But imperialist reach cannot resolve the contradictions of an economy increasingly shaped by financial extraction, military spending, and declining productive capacity.

Reserve-currency status is treated as a guarantee rather than a condition sustained by material power. In reality, that status depends on sanctions, military reach, control over credit, and the ability to enforce compliance. When pressures mount, the system does not adjust evenly. Capital finds protection first, while workers face rising prices, reduced services, and demands for restraint.

Nowhere is this contradiction clearer than in U.S. policy toward Palestine, Venezuela, and Iran – three cases where militarism and economic coercion impose costs abroad while draining resources at home.

In Palestine, U.S.-backed military campaigns, including the destruction of Gaza, have devastated infrastructure and livelihoods, pushing entire working populations into poverty and dependence. While Palestinians bear the immediate human cost, U.S. workers also pay indirectly, as billions in military aid flow outward while domestic needs go unmet.

Militarism abroad is not separate from scar-

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The world's \$5,000 bet against

By Gary Wilson

Jan. 28 – The lines at the grocery store in early 2026 tell a story that the evening news tries to hide. While officials in Washington brag about a rising Gross Domestic Product, the person ahead of you is putting back a carton of eggs because the price on the shelf changed twice since Monday.

In the high-rise offices of Manhattan and London, the mood is frantic. Gold has shattered every record, climbing past \$5,100 an ounce this January. The surge signals a loss of confidence in the U.S. dollar. But the rush into gold didn't start this crisis – it reflects a deeper breakdown in profitable production.

For decades, the billionaires who run this country have treated the dollar like a magic wand, printing money to fund wars and bail out banks. That trick is wearing thin.

Last June, gold officially overtook the euro as the world's second-most important reserve asset. Countries like Poland, China and Egypt are reducing their exposure to U.S. Treasury IOUs and bringing physical gold back onto their own soil. Central banks are responding to a simple reality: Washington has frozen the assets of entire countries – from Russia's central bank reserves to the \$2 billion in Venezuelan gold held in London. The lesson is material, not ideological: Any wealth parked inside the dollar system can be seized overnight.

The wall of physical reality

Finance capital is facing a problem it cannot solve with a press release. The capitalists who control the big banks have flooded the world with paper tokens – dollars – that are losing their connection to the real world of work and production.

Gold isn't valuable because it's shiny; it's valuable because it takes an immense amount of human labor to find, mine, and refine it. But gold doesn't create wealth – it stores it. Capital only runs toward gold when it can no longer find profitable places to invest in real production. The surge in gold prices is not driving the crisis; it is exposing it. It signals that surplus capital is piling up with nowhere productive to go.

As profits fall, capitalists pull back from productive investment and rush to park their wealth in gold. This is what we are seeing now: a crisis of overproduction. Warehouses are full of goods that workers can't afford to buy because wages have been squeezed for years – a permanent feature of capitalism that becomes explosive when profits fall and investment stalls. Capitalists won't cut prices because doing so would force them to absorb losses and devalue their capital.

The Federal Reserve is trapped – not by bad decisions, but by the limits of the system itself. If it prints more money to keep banks and markets afloat, it inflates asset bubbles and drives more capital into gold, speeding the dollar's decline. If it raises interest rates, it crushes already weak profit margins, makes federal debt unpayable, and triggers bankruptcies across the economy. Either way, there isn't enough surplus value being produced to support the mountain of debt and speculation that has built up over decades.

This didn't start with gold or the dollar. It started when corporations stopped making enough profit by producing things people actually use. For years, they shifted money out of factories and into speculation, debt and stock buybacks instead. Now mountains of debt and stock market bets outweigh what workers really produce. So capital is turning back to physical resources – oil, land and labor – and using the federal government, the military and police agencies to take them by force.

From trade wars to direct seizures

Because the U.S. can no longer dominate the world through simple bank transfers, the military is being sent in to take what the banks can't buy. The capture of President Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores in Caracas on Jan. 3 wasn't framed as a mission of mercy or a diplomatic correction. Trump's Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth, openly framed the operation as a profit-making venture. He complained that past U.S. wars cost lives without delivering economic returns. This time, he said, Trump intends to “flip the script” – seize assets, sell oil, and make the intervention pay.

The administration has already seized seven

oil tankers, begun selling Venezuelan crude, and deposited the first \$500 million in U.S.-controlled accounts. Trump announced that U.S. oil companies will “go in, spend billions of dollars” and declared he will “run” Venezuela and “indefinitely” control its oil sales. “Let's start making money for the country,” he said at his Mar-a-Lago press conference.

That is the language of taking a country's oil, cash and sovereignty by force.

By treating the sovereign resources of the Americas as a private U.S. gas station, Washington is trying to restart accumulation by force. Venezuela sits on 303 billion barrels of proven oil reserves – 17% of the global total. When profits dry up at home, imperialist capital turns outward, seizing land, energy and labor to restore revenue streams it can no longer generate through normal production. U.S. energy corporations and the finance capital behind them need that oil priced in dollars and flowing through channels they control. When Maduro refused to surrender, they sent in Delta Force.

The occupation at home

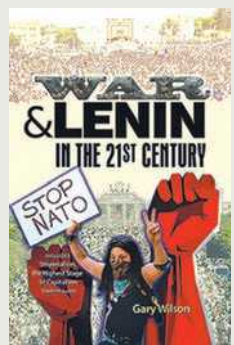
The violence in Caracas and the violence in Minneapolis are not separate stories. They share institutional roots.

Since the early 2000s, ICE agents and executives have trained alongside Israeli military and police forces. The surveillance technology on the U.S.-Mexico border comes from Elbit Systems, the same Israeli defense contractor that builds the walls around Gaza. The tactics used against Palestinians – checkpoints, mass surveillance, shoot-first escalation – are now deployed against working-class communities in the United States.

The same security agencies that train ICE and supply its weapons also shape the language used to justify the violence. When Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem labeled Good and Pretti “domestic terrorists” to justify their killings, she was borrowing from the same playbook that Israel uses to criminalize Palestinian resistance. Since Oct. 7, 2023, the Palestinian resistance has inspired millions around the world to confront the Israeli state and its U.S. backers through mass protests, boycotts, and direct actions led by students and workers. That movement survives despite being demonized as “terrorist” and targeted with assassinations. Now the same language is being used against people in Minneapolis who stood between ICE agents and their neighbors.

On Jan. 6, the Department of Homeland Security announced what it called the largest immigration enforcement operation ever carried out, sending 2,000 paramilitary troopers to Minneapolis. ICE troopers have kicked in doors without warrants, surrounded schools, and shot three U.S. citizens in three weeks,

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WAR & LENIN in the 21st Century

Included in Gary Wilson's new book is VI Lenin's pamphlet:

'Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism'

Vladimir Lenin, the revolutionary leader of the Soviet Union and a key contributor to Marxist theory, wrote “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism” in 1916, more than a century ago. It remains an influential critique of imperialism. As in Lenin's time, the conclusion is that socialist revolution will end imperialist war, enabling workers to meet their own needs.

Paperback or kindle at tinyurl.com/LeninAndWar



the dollar

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killing two. None of the troopers responsible have been arrested.

Renee Nicole Good, a 37-year-old lesbian mom, was killed on Jan. 7 when an ICE agent fired three shots into her car. Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old intensive care nurse at the Minneapolis VA, was killed on Jan. 24 while filming agents and trying to help a woman who had been shoved to the ground.

The monopoly is broken

The reason the capitalists are so panicked is that they've lost their edge. For a long time, the U.S. and Europe had a monopoly on the tools of the trade – the high-tech machines and computers used to make everything.

That monopoly is gone. China has moved from making cheap products to dominating the world in electric vehicles, batteries and green energy. Its advantage comes from higher productivity, coordinated planning and production at a scale Western firms can't match. They aren't just competing; they are making it impossible for Western corporations to charge the massive markups they've enjoyed for a century. When U.S. automakers realize they can no longer extract super-profits because someone else can make a better product for less, they don't innovate – they turn to Washington for tariffs and military protection.

Ford and General Motors show what that looks like in practice. In the final months of 2025, Ford and GM took a combined \$27 billion in restructuring charges to write down their failing EV programs. Ford's Model e division has lost more than \$13 billion in less than three years. GM discontinued its BrightDrop electric van and paid \$4.6 billion in contract cancellations to suppliers who had expanded capacity based on sales projections that will never materialize.

These companies aren't retreating because they lack the technology. They are retreating because they cannot make a profit competing with more efficient production methods. Instead of innovating, they have turned to the state for a protectionist shield. The 100% tariffs on Chinese EVs, first imposed in September 2024 and maintained by both administra-



Masked paramilitary troopers conduct an ICE operation in Minneapolis in January 2026, part of a massive enforcement surge that left two U.S. citizens dead. As Washington seizes oil abroad, it deploys armed agents against working-class communities at home.

tions, aren't about saving jobs. They are about creating a captive market where the Big Two can continue to sell high-priced, high-margin trucks to a working class that is being denied cheaper alternatives.

At the same time, Trump moved to end federal EV subsidies, pulling support from electric vehicle buyers just as U.S. automakers were retreating from their own EV commitments. The message was clear: Instead of competing with China on efficiency or planning, Washington chose to shield failing manufacturers and push consumers back toward gas-powered vehicles and oil.

No way back to 1979

Wall Street economists and austerity advocates say we need a "Volcker Shock," referring to 1979 when the Fed raised interest rates so high it broke the back of inflation – and the back of the labor movement. But 2026 is not 1979.

In 1979, the U.S. was the world's biggest lender. Today, it is the world's biggest debtor. A massive rate hike today wouldn't just hurt workers; it would cause the U.S. Treasury to default. The system is shaking because profits are collapsing and the limits of accumulation have been reached. Capitalists can no longer pretend that mountains of debt and stock market bets can replace real production.

This violence – in Caracas, in Minneapolis,

in the "Big Beautiful Bill" that gutted Medicaid and SNAP in July 2025 – reflects how capitalism actually works. When the dollar falters, capitalists reach for the gun. When workers organize, DHS and federal police agencies send in armed agents trained in occupation tactics. When a country refuses to hand over its oil, the military captures its president and calls it law enforcement.

Where hope lies

Hope doesn't lie in the next election or a change in Federal Reserve policy. It lies in understanding what this moment actually is.

The same forces driving war abroad are being turned on communities at home. In Minneapolis, federal agents kill with impunity. In Caracas, U.S. forces seize a country's oil and call it law enforcement. These are not excesses. They are how capital responds when profit collapses and mountains of debt and stock market bets outrun what workers actually produce.

From Venezuela's oil fields to Minneapolis hospital wards, working people are paying for this crisis through layoffs, repression, rising prices and debt. The capitalists answer crisis with seizure. The government supplies the guns. Nothing in this arrangement can be reformed. It can only be dismantled – and replaced with an economy organized for human need, not imperialist extraction. #

LOVE IS THE LAW

Cuba's Queer Rights Revolution

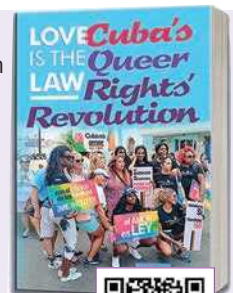
Gregory E. Williams

What you'll find in this book

- A chronicle of Trump's return. This is the government that cruelly keeps Cuba on the terrorist list and under economic blockade. Together with its Zionist appendage, it is committing genocide against the Palestinian people. Cuba doesn't bomb anybody. Cuba sends doctors.
- The process of winning approval of the Families Code referendum. Cuban writers are included and a webinar discussion on: 'What We Can Learn from Cuba's 'Code of Freedom' for Families;
- Reports from the U.S. Friends Against Homophobia and Transphobia delegation to Cuba;
- Reports from Cenesex – the National Center for Sex

Education / Centro Nacional de educación Sexual director Mariela Castro Espín

- Cenesex has been at the center of gender and sexual liberation in the country, an international hub, facilitating exchanges between activists, academics, researchers and progressive religious groups.
- The full text of Leslie Feinberg's 'Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba'



tinyurl.com/Cuba-LoveisLaw tinyurl.com/Read-LOVEistheLAW

Washington's war on Iran Sanctions

By Gary Wilson

Jan. 29 – For decades, the United States has tried to starve the Iranian people into submission. From banking bans to the assassination of scientists, Washington has used sanctions, sabotage, and covert force to break Iran's hard-won sovereignty.

Now, the warships have arrived to try to do what the banks could not.

As of this week, the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier and its fleet of destroyers have taken up strike positions in the waters off Iran, from the Strait of Hormuz into the Arabian Sea. This move is the military muscle behind the failed "Snapback" sanctions of late 2025 and President Trump's recent Jan. 12 ultimatum – a threat to impose a 25% tariff on any nation on Earth that dares to trade with Tehran.

When the U.S. can no longer control the world through the dollar, it sends the carriers. The presence of this "massive armada" is a physical blockade – a desperate attempt by a declining empire to choke off Iran's oil routes and reassert dominance over a region that is increasingly looking toward independent trade with China, Russia, and India for a future without Washington's permission.

Carrier strike groups appear when economic pressure fails

For more than 40 years, the U.S. military and financial centers have surrounded Iran. Since the 1979 Revolution, every U.S. administration – Republican and Democrat alike – has tightened the noose.

Iran's real "crime" was the revolution itself.

In 1979, the Iranian people overthrew a U.S.-installed dictator, the Shah, who had been placed on the throne by a CIA-led coup

in 1953 to ensure that Iranian oil enriched foreign corporations rather than the Iranian people. By reclaiming control over their own resources, Iran crossed a red line the imperialist system cannot tolerate.

It existed outside Washington's control.

That is why Iran has faced decades of sanctions, sabotage, assassinations, and military encirclement. What is unfolding now is not a new conflict. It is the continuation of a siege that began the moment Iran broke free from U.S. domination.

For years, Washington tried to break Iran by cutting it off from global banking and trade. Sanctions crushed wages, drove up food and fuel prices, and gutted public services. They were meant to break the population and force political surrender.

It didn't work.

Iran rerouted its trade, strengthened direct ties with Beijing and Moscow, and integrated its economy into the Eurasian Economic Union. By using national currencies and independent banking networks, Iran learned how to operate outside the dollar system.

Today, nearly 90% of Iran's oil exports go to China, settled in non-dollar currencies. New transport corridors now link Russian industry and Indian markets directly through Iranian territory, bypassing the traditional shipping lanes that the U.S. Navy has controlled since 1945.

Washington's Jan. 12 tariff threat was a desperate attempt to break these chains. But when the world refused to stop trading, the U.S. responded with the only tool it has left: The Carrier Strike Group. The USS Abraham Lincoln isn't there to protect "freedom of navigation" – it is there to try and physically dominate the energy routes that the U.S. Treasury can no longer control with a keyboard.

Iran is not Iraq – and Washington knows it. When the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003, it attacked a country that had been systematically disarmed and weakened by a decade of genocidal sanctions. Washington expected a "cakewalk." Iran in 2026 is a different reality.

Iran is a nation of over 90 million people with a unified state and a military doctrine built for one purpose: to survive and repel an imperialist assault.

The most telling sign of U.S. weakness is the refusal of Washington's traditional "partners" to join the fight. Just days ago, on Jan. 26 and 27, 2026, both the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia issued official, high-level statements explicitly forbidding the use of their territory, airspace, or waters for any hostile military action against Iran.

When the U.S. invaded Iraq, it used the Gulf monarchies as an uncontested staging ground. In 2026, that launchpad has been pulled out from under them.

This is a seismic shift. It shows that even the Gulf monarchies now view a U.S.-led war as a threat to their own survival. After the June 2025 conflict, they realized that a U.S. war would turn their own cities and oil fields into front-line targets for Iranian missiles and drones. They see that Washington's "Maximum Pressure" has failed to isolate Tehran, forcing a realignment where even former enemies prefer diplomatic survival over a regional fire that would consume their own cities.

Resistance is social – not proxy chess

Washington creates the misery in Iran through sanctions, then cites the resulting social unrest as a reason to intervene – all while ruthlessly crushing dissent within its own borders.

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Trump orders naval armada toward Iran

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personnel. When officials like Mike Huckabee lament that Iran "didn't get the full message," and Trump promises consequences "maybe more powerful than the last time," they are describing a deliberate campaign of terror meant to bomb a nation into submission.

That intent is, and has always been, about control. The official litany of concerns – nuclear programs, regional militias, human rights – is merely a convenient pretext. The fundamental crime of the Islamic Republic, in the eyes of Washington, was its 1979 revolution that overthrew the U.S.-installed dictator and forever ended Iran's status as an U.S. client state.

Its enduring sin is its continued sovereignty: its trade with U.S.-sanctioned nations, its support for resistance movements across the region, and, most critically, its pivotal

geographic role in the emerging multi-polar world. Iran sits at the heart of China's Belt and Road Initiative and Russia's International North-South Transport Corridor – infrastructure projects that promise trade routes and financial systems outside of Wall Street's and the Pentagon's control. An Iran that is strong, stable, and integrated into these alternative frameworks weakens U.S. control over energy routes, financial clearing systems, and regional transport infrastructure.

Trump's threats and the movement of his armada are a response to the failure of sanctions and regional proxy wars to produce regime change.

Faced with a nation that has resisted four decades of pressure and is now deepening its alliances with other major powers resisting U.S. diktats, the empire is reaching for the

only tool it has left: overt, unilateral aggression. The danger is catastrophic. A full-scale war would kill millions, devastate the global economy, and risk a confrontation that could spiral beyond any control. But for a ruling class addicted to profits at all costs and facing the inexorable erosion of its unipolar moment, even this risk is preferable to accepting a world it does not command.

The lie is transparent. This has nothing to do with freedom, security, or the rights of protesters. It is the old, blood-soaked logic of empire: If a nation cannot be controlled, it must be broken. The warships are not sailing to save anyone. The warships are there to protect shipping lanes, energy markets, and U.S. financial dominance – and to signal that any country attempting to build outside those structures risks being met with force. #

and warships

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ders. In January 2026, the same paramilitary federal forces being celebrated by the White House as “patriots” have turned U.S. streets into combat zones. Under “Operation Metro Surge,” thousands of masked agents have descended on the Twin Cities, leading to the killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti.

Washington points a finger at Tehran, but it is overseeing conditions at home where working-class dissent is met with lethal force.

The currency collapse and price shocks that have contributed to unrest inside Iran are the direct, intended results of the U.S. financial siege. When working-class Iranians protest the skyrocketing cost of bread and fuel, they are protesting conditions created by the U.S. “Maximum Pressure” campaign – the very same campaign now being used to justify military escalation in the Persian Gulf.

The “proxy” myth

U.S. officials also continue to describe movements in Lebanon, Yemen, and Iraq as mere “Iranian proxies.” This language is designed to strip these groups of their local roots. These forces did not emerge from a Tehran boardroom; they grew out of decades of war, occupation, and economic destruction imposed by the West. Communities shattered by imperialist intervention organized to defend themselves.

The coordinated warnings from these groups in late January – stating they will re-



The aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln sails through the Strait of Hormuz in 2019 with Britain’s HMS Defender and the U.S. destroyer USS Farragut. The narrow waterway is one of the world’s most important oil-shipping routes. Photo: US Navy

spond to any attack on Iran – are not “orders” from a foreign power. They are the calculated response of a regional front that understands that a strike on Iran is a strike on the entire region’s sovereignty.

A system in decline reaches for war

The confrontation in the Persian Gulf is driven by imperialist decline. Washington faces a world where sanctions no longer guarantee obedience, where energy trade increas-

ingly bypasses the dollar, and where regional powers like Saudi Arabia and the UAE are publicly refusing to play their assigned roles.

When financial pressure fails, military force takes its place. The USS Abraham Lincoln is not in the Gulf to “protect human rights.” It is there to try and enforce energy dominance for a failing financial order. A weakening imperialist system is deploying these warships because its economic dictates are being ignored – leaving it with no tool but warships and armed force. #

Britain’s Suez moment

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city at home; it helps produce it. Billions in military aid flow outward as a matter of priority while domestic needs go unmet – not because resources are scarce, but because militarism remains central to sustaining U.S. imperialist power.

Venezuela offers a parallel example through economic warfare. Years of sanctions, asset seizures, and financial isolation have inflicted severe damage on the country’s ability to trade and invest, with devastating effects on workers. These measures are often presented as cost-free tools of pressure, but in practice they work by cutting off trade and finance, driving up prices, limiting access to fuel and supplies, and costing working people their jobs – both in the targeted country and at home.

Iran demonstrates the long-term effects of this approach. Decades of sanctions targeting banking, oil, and trade have fueled inflation and job losses that hit Iranian workers first. At the same time, U.S. workers are told there is no money for universal health care, debt relief, or rebuilding infrastructure, even as vast sums are allocated to weapons systems, military

readiness, and the permanent war economy.

These are not abstract foreign policy debates. They are material choices about who bears the costs of sustaining empire.

When imperialist systems overextend or monetary arrangements come under strain, the effects are not shared equally. Those with wealth and mobility are better positioned to protect themselves. Workers are not. Inflation erodes wages and savings. Governments respond by cutting social programs and labor protections, insisting there is no alternative. Britain followed this path. Its working class paid the price.

The most dangerous similarity between Britain then and the United States now is not simply denial, but the belief that past dominance guarantees future security. By the time Britain’s limits were openly exposed at Suez, adjustment could no longer be managed gradually. It was imposed through crisis.

The United States has not yet reached its Suez moment. But many of the conditions that made Britain vulnerable – industrial decline, reliance on finance, overextended military commitments, and political refusal to con-

front systemic limits – are increasingly present. When confidence finally gives way, it will not do so gently.

For labor movements, the lesson is clear. Imperialist decline is not an abstract geopolitical issue. It shapes whose schools are funded, whose hospitals are built, whose jobs are protected, and whose communities are abandoned. If working people do not organize around an alternative – one centered on rebuilding productive capacity, reducing militarism, and prioritizing human needs over global dominance – they will once again be asked to absorb the shock.

Britain believed it was too big to fail. That belief proved costly. U.S. workers would be wise not to share it.

Michel Shehadeh is a Palestinian American writer and activist. He immigrated to the U.S. in 1975 and was a defendant in the landmark “Los Angeles Eight” case, a 20-year deportation battle that ended in a major civil rights victory. A former director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) and the Arab Film Festival, his work has appeared in Al Mayadeen, Electronic Intifada, the Middle East Eye, Rai Al-Youm, Al-Adab Magazine, and others.

Maltrato infantil en Puerto Rico

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Como decía Nelson Mandela, *“El verdadero carácter de una sociedad se revela en el trato que da a su niñez”.*

Pues aquí, en esta colonia, el comienzo de este nuevo año ha sido muy doloroso para nuestra niñez y por extensión, para todo nuestro pueblo consciente, amante de nuestra infancia. Los casos de maltrato infantil no solo han aumentado comparado a los años anteriores, sino que la naturaleza de estos actos revelan un grado inmenso de crueldad, actos atroces, difíciles incluso de describir. Basta con mencionar que nuestra niñez está sido objeto de asesinatos, trata humana, vivir en casas en condiciones deplorables y otros crímenes impensables. Sólo durante este pasado mes de enero se refirieron 1,466 casos al Departamento de la Familia. Y eso son sólo los que llegan a la atención de dicho departamento. Sabemos que existe una mayoría que no se reporta, ya sea por miedo a las consecuencias, por vergüenza, o por otras razones.

1,466 casos en una población de poco más de 3 millones de personas. Una población donde las niñas, los niños y la juventud son menos cada día porque somos un país envejecido donde los adultos mayores de 65 años superan por mucho a los menores de 18 años. Donde más del 50 por ciento de esta infancia y juventud vive bajo el nivel de pobreza, y en familias donde la mujer es el único sustento.



La niñez puertorriqueña merece un futuro libre de la pobreza y el abandono colonial.

Diríamos entonces que este país es un estado fallido, porque no puede garantizar los servicios básicos a su población. Porque el maltrato infantil tiene muchas causas, sobre todo, la falta de trabajos con buena remuneración, viviendas dignas y accesibles, educación y servicios de salud. Pero, ¿qué se puede esperar de una administración local que prefiere privatizar servicios y privilegiar a la clase más rica y sobre todo, a intereses extranjeros?

Además, ¿puede una colonia sin soberanía ser un Estado fallido? Desde luego que admin-

istración tras administración le han fallado al pueblo. Pero sobre todo, nuestra condición colonial, a manos del imperio más devastador del mundo, los Estados Unidos de América, es nuestro problema principal. Sólo bajo la independencia con soberanía podremos erradicar de raíz no solo el maltrato infantil, sino sentar las bases para una sociedad más justa y solidaria.

Desde Puerto Rico, para Radio Clarín de Colombia, les habló Berta Joubert-Ceci.



Trump orders naval armada toward Iran

By Lev Koufax

Donald Trump has issued a direct threat of all-out war against the Islamic Republic of Iran, while ordering a naval armada into the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea.

This is not a policy shift or a strategic recalibration. It follows four decades of sanctions, proxy war, and military buildup that have failed to break Iran's economy or its government.

The pretext, as always, is paper-thin and reeks of hypocrisy. Pointing to internal protests within Iran – protests born from an economic crisis engineered in Washington – Trump postured as a liberator, declaring the U.S. “locked and loaded and ready to go” to “rescue” the Iranian people.

It takes quite the imagination to cast the world's foremost expert in domestic militarized police violence as a humanitarian savior. This is the same federal government whose masked paramilitary agents have beaten and shot protesters in the streets of Minneapolis.

Even so, the imperialists still have the nerve to appoint themselves the arbiter of protest



The aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln sails through the Strait of Hormuz in 2019 with Britain's HMS Defender and the U.S. destroyer USS Farragut. The narrow waterway is one of the world's most important oil-shipping routes. Photo: US Navy

rights in a sovereign nation 7,000 miles away. The offer is a sick joke, a cynical ploy to weaponize the suffering its own sanctions created.

For decades, the United States has waged relentless economic warfare against Iran through a sanctions

regime designed not for diplomacy, but for collective punishment. This is a policy of deliberate strangulation, targeting oil exports through insurance bans, cutting banks off from international payment systems, and seizing tankers to deter third-country trade. The goal of this assault is to make the country ungovernable, to turn population against state, and to either force a return to client status or reduce a historic civilization to a failed state.

The armada steaming toward West Asia is not a defensive measure. It is the sharp end of the economic spear, the logical culmination of a 40-year campaign to break Iranian sovereignty. Recall that just last year, U.S. and Israeli bombers launched a coordinated, 12-day assault on Iranian nuclear facilities, killing thousands of civilians and Iranian military

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