

November: A Storm Is Coming

On November 21st, 2025, President Trump takes to social media to unleash a barrage of racist attacks against Minnesotans and accuse the state of being overrun with government fraud. Days later Trump escalates these attacks calling Somalis living in Minnesota “garbage.”

Just as Trump sent his hordes of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to Los Angeles and Chicago earlier in 2025 as part of his plan to both terrorize immigrants and assert control over sanctuary cities, he is now putting the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul in his crosshairs. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officially announces Operation Metro Surge on December 4th.

This comes at a critical juncture in Trump’s presidency. The two main issues that propelled him into his second term were the economy and immigration. However, by late 2025 the economy is at best a mixed bag as uncertainty over tariffs threatens inflation and trade wars and the supposed benefits of the AI build-out are not felt by most Americans. Additionally, the drama around Trump’s place in the Epstein files and the unpopularity of Trump’s recent intervention in Venezuela threatens his hold on his base and his appeal with the broader electorate. Therefore, Trump bets that conducting another ICE surge as his premier domestic initiative is the best way to shore up his support ahead of the mid-term elections in 2026.

Much of the fate of Trump’s presidency depends on the success of this gambit. What follows is a months-long, mutual escalation of hostilities between the Trump administration and the residents of Minnesota. By January, the DHS is calling it the “largest immigration operation ever.” But rather than retreat into submission, the Twin Cities mounts a grassroots resistance unlike anything I have ever experienced.

This is my personal story and critical reflections on Operation Metro Surge as a rank-and-file member of a K-12 educator union and as a resident of South Minneapolis under federal occupation.

December: The Terror Surge Builds

Prior to becoming the focus of Trump's deportation campaign, there were 150 ICE agents in Minnesota. Then on December 2nd, 100 more ICE agents are sent to the Twin Cities, nearly doubling their presence. South Minneapolis is targeted because of the large Somali community that lives here.

The Twin Cities has a Somali population of 80,000, the largest in the world outside of Somalia, many of whom left their country because of the wars back home in recent decades (which US policy has played a significant role in instigating and exacerbating). Cities are made of people, and the Somali people of Minneapolis have immeasurably enriched its culture and politics.

I know the Somali community through the school I work at, which serves many Somali families, and the efforts to improve public education that I'm involved with through my union. When my school district threatened to cut more than 100 special ed positions last year, Somali families and staff were at the forefront in fighting the cuts and saving more than half of the positions. One Somali student I saw at a Palestine rally a couple years ago chants whenever he sees me in the school hallway, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!"

My union is just coming off an exhausting contract campaign that concluded mid-November. Over 91% of members vote to strike, but union and district leadership strike a controversial deal right before our strike date. In any case, the agreement is approved by the membership, and I am hoping to lay low and recuperate for a while.

A "Deportation Defense Committee" (DDC) of union members across my district was created in Trump's first term and is re-activated when Trump is elected again. As Operation Metro Surge starts to ramp up, the DDC begins to meet almost weekly. Despite my desire for a break from organizing and my initial encouragement that others take leadership in getting a deportation defense committee going at my school, it becomes clear that this is an all-hands-on-deck moment.

what happened and the kind of people we became in these few short months. We will never be the same again.

The fascists came clutching their guns with their fingers on the triggers. They muttered, "Long live the king." We confronted them in the streets, linked arm in arm, and yelled, "Long live Minneapolis."

February: Is this the Eye or the End of the Storm?

Now what? I'm hearing that the SEIU 26 coalition is unsure about calling another city-wide day of action. The relatively small showing on the 30th has many other unionists hesitant about calling for another strike. While the energy in the movement is strong, exhaustion is beginning to seep in from the weeks upon weeks of nonstop organizing.

Although the local movement has blossomed beyond my wildest dreams, ICE. IS. STILL. HERE. The abductions, the murders, and the deportations continue. What if it never ends?

Then, on February 12th, Trump relents. Newly appointed border czar Tom Homan announces the end of Operation Metro Surge. By late February only 500 federal agents remain in Minnesota, which is still three times as many as before the surge but an 83% decrease from the peak of 3,000. It's a partial victory. While we successfully kick most ICE out of town, 3,700 people were abducted, many ending up in torturous conditions in Texas detention centers, many others deported.

We successfully stop Trump from achieving his primary political goal of using Operation Metro Surge to solidify his base and broader electoral appeal ahead of the 2026 mid-terms. According to aggregate polling data, Trump's net approval rating drops from -16 in early December to -18 by mid-February. One national poll finds the disapproval of Trump's handling of immigration increases from 46% at the beginning of his term to 59% near the end of Metro Surge.

But the fight is far from over. Trump's weakening public position means now is the ideal time to press our advantage, continue taking action, and impose as high a political cost as we can before he has time to cut his losses and come back stronger later. The story of the continued fight against ICE in the Twin Cities in the ensuing months will be told in upcoming blog posts.

The battle of Operation Metro Surge briefly made Minneapolis the unlikely epicenter of global resistance to US hegemony for the second time in six years. Many of us will spend the rest of our lives reflecting back on

By December 13th, the DHS claims that 400 immigrants have been arrested, inaccurately attempting to smear the bulk of detainees as "pedophiles, rapists, and violent thugs." Over the course of the month, an additional 450 federal agents are sent to Minnesota, bringing the total to 700.



(A crowd gathers to protest ICE activity near the Somali Karmel Mall in South Minneapolis. ICE then assaults people and throws them to the ground. Scenes like this become increasingly common. One protestor says, "We basically have secret police on our streets. They don't identify themselves. They don't observe the basic kind of protocols..." Image taken from CBC News video.)

News stories of ICE abuse avalanche through my social media feed, including instances of pointing lethal weapons at observers, assaulting and pinning a pregnant woman to the ground, and shackling and cutting off the clothes of legal observers after detaining them. A video is leaked of Metro Surge ICE commander Greg Bovino telling Border Patrol agents in a previous surge, "Less lethal [munitions], we're going to look into shipping tractor trailers of that shit in here. You catch what I'm... It's all about us now," and "This is our fucking city."

Everyone is on edge. Some of my students stop coming to school. Some families reach out to the school asking for help with groceries as they are too afraid to go out themselves or have lost income as parents are too terrified to go to work.

"I understand folks are upset about this movement and with teachers calling out. But if we don't stand up now, we wouldn't be doing our job to protect our students ... Arizona is next. What is happening in Minneapolis will happen here. It's already happening. We have to speak out."

I connect with a union steward in Tucson Public Schools who shares their story. In response to the national call for a general strike on the 30th, the union president sent out an email with a survey asking if union members would be interested in participating. This led to many rank-and-file members responding yes to the survey and then autonomously organizing their schools and coordinating through their informal networks to call in sick. On the 30th, 21 out of 88 public schools in Tucson closed due to sickouts. They held a rally that afternoon that saw 5000 people attend, which was one of the largest protest rallies in the city in years.

I ask if any of them are members of PSL or connected to any other organizations that are responsible for calling the action in the first place. They say no. They elaborate that there's a large immigrant population in Tucson and a lot of immigrant allies in the unions, so this seemed like the logical opportunity to join a national militant action against ICE. They remind me that educators conducted a statewide wildcat strike in Arizona in 2018 over wages and school funding, so educators are already comfortable with wildcat strikes as a tactic.

I come across this quote from cultural critic Joshua Clover, "The general strike is the name for when the riot, the strike, and the commune all happen at once." Even if January 23rd was not a literal general strike, this evocative definition captures what is taking place in the Twin Cities: the riot is the street confrontations that people have with ICE; the strike is the temporarily disconnected from the school community I'm organizing through. The worst part of nightmares in your sleep is not knowing when they're going to end. How many more of the families at my school will be torn apart? What happens to a city that's on perpetual high alert for not just weeks, but months? Is this the new normal?

Educators at my school begin meeting regularly. Overwhelmed, we draft extensive response plans for what to do if ICE gets into the school or shows up at school dismissal or at school bus stops.

Some of these plans are helpful, but most are ultimately not. What turns out to be more useful as Metro Surge continues to escalate are the networks of people and the communication infrastructure we build early on. We reach out to staff about getting involved, reach out to immigrant families asking what they need, and reach out to parents who had been organizing alongside the union for smaller class sizes. We hear about school watch patrols and mutual aid systems being set up at other schools and begin replicating them for ourselves.

Sometime in mid-December I first hear of a parent at my school being detained by ICE and sent to detention in Texas. Even though the specifics are not shared among the staff to maintain privacy, this is when it first hits home for me. I try to imagine what it's like to be a kid and have my mom or dad detained by ICE and sent away. The teachers and social workers who know the family work to support them.

Across the Twin Cities, immigrant rights groups are hosting hundreds of "know your rights" and "legal observer" workshops that ultimately train 30,000 people over the course of the surge. Parents at my school set up a training the day before winter break to learn about how to video record ICE, how to use whistles to alert others about ICE presence, and how to respond to situations where ICE is detaining someone. They discuss the rapid response Signal group messaging chats that have begun popping up in neighborhoods all over the city.

Then starts the two-week winter holiday break for schools, and I become temporarily disconnected from the school community I'm organizing through. The worst part of nightmares in your sleep is not knowing when they're going to end. How many more of the families at my school will be torn apart? What happens to a city that's on perpetual high alert for not just weeks, but months? Is this the new normal?

We look to other cities like Chicago and Los Angeles to see what lessons they have for us as well as insight on how our federal occupation might

tempered and defiant over the next week. On the 26th, Bovino is demoted and removed from his post.

Several student groups at the University of Minnesota, including the Somali, Ethiopian, and Black student associations, call for a general strike on Friday, January 30th, a week after the day of No Work, No School, No Shopping on the 23rd. The Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) has close ties with these groups and spreads the call through its local and national networks. PSL notably doesn't reach out directly to other unions and left organizations beyond the university to join the call. Many people, myself included, feel the need for more bold action but are uneasy about joining a call that appears to be directed mostly by a single organization and without sincere efforts at coalition-building.

Independent of the call for a general strike on January 30th, for weeks educators at some schools in the Twin Cities had been considering sickouts as another form of action to take against ICE. The challenge with sickouts is that official unions will not endorse them and employers may come down hard in disciplining participants, but they can also be powerful weapons when workers at some workplaces are highly agitated around an issue and ready to fight back. The pain felt by the ICE occupation is very uneven school-by-school depending on the proportion of immigrants on staff and among the students. In the days before the 30th, a student at my school and at another school in my district are abducted by ICE. Without much central coordination, some educators see the call to action on the 30th as an opportunity to bring their sickout ideas to fruition.

A few more orgs sign onto the action, but it quickly becomes clear that this does not have the institutional backing that had made the 23rd so big. No K12 educator unions sign on but sickouts at a handful of schools across the Twin Cities are successfully carried out on the 30th. The march downtown attracts 25,000, which is still large by normal standards but is a fraction of the size of the mobilization that took place on the 23rd.

The most exciting thing to happen on the 30th is the surprise and much larger sickouts that take place in school districts across Arizona and Colorado, shutting down dozens of schools. One teacher tells a reporter,

end. Those surges lasted two to three months before tailing off some, but this time feels different. Trump attempts to shut off federal funding to Minnesota for food stamps, school lunch programs, and Medicaid. Trump is using the full force of the federal government to bring Minnesota to heel. While my activist friends are not optimistic that this is going to be over soon, none of us expect what comes next.

January: The Whirlwind of Grassroots Resistance

When I return from break it's a relief to see my coworkers and students again. We try our best to make our classes welcoming and safe amidst the violence outside. The kids I work with are too young to understand, but teachers in older grades tell me how their students know exactly what's going on.

I see the headline that Trump is sending another 2,000 federal agents to Minnesota on top of the 700 already here. I can't even imagine what that will be like. This would bring the number of federal agents here to nearly three times the combined number of officers of the Minneapolis and St. Paul police departments.

On the morning of Wednesday, January 7th in South Minneapolis, an ICE agent shoots and kills Renee Good while she is observing an immigration raid and then attempts to drive away. Multiple video angles are released to news media and circulated online almost immediately. Thousands of people show up to the street where she was killed to tell ICE to fuck off. Agents unleash teargas, mace, and rubber bullets on the crowds. The chopping sound of helicopters fills the sky.

That afternoon, federal agents pursuing a car end up in front of Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis as students are dismissing. Agents tackle students and educators and fire crowd control rounds at bystanders.

Up til this point, Operation Metro Surge had felt more like what I had seen on the news in other cities like Chicago and Los Angeles. But Renee Good's murder changes everything. Against the evidence in the video footage, Trump accuses Good of being violent and a professional agitator and claims that the ICE agent shot her in self-defense. It appears like

rhetoric Trump used in a speech to military leaders in September is now being applied on the ground in Minneapolis. While talking about crime and immigrants in liberal cities, he said, "They're very unsafe places, and we're going to straighten them out one by one," "We're under invasion from within ... no different than a foreign enemy," and "we should use some of these dangerous cities as training grounds for our military..."

Like countless others, I start making personal risk assessments about protesting. Will most people be scared back into their homes, leaving the few die-hard activists isolated and easy targets for repression? The Twin Cities comes to feel like a war zone, but apparently none of us are in the mood to lose a war.

The city suddenly undergoes the kind of spiritual-political metamorphosis that it experienced during the George Floyd Uprising in 2020. The legacies of all past struggles breathe life into the resistance, from the Minneapolis Teamsters general strike of 1934 to the American Indian Movement community patrols of the 1970s. Activists of all stripes drop everything else and put all they have into this fight. Normally liberal and apolitical segments of the population rapidly mobilize and radicalize.

Democrat Governor Walz and Democrat Mayor Frey display a lot of bluster but do very little to directly confront the ICE occupation. They spend most of their energy telling protestors to calm down. They are taking a page from the liberal playbook of passive resistance, hoping that if we're respectful and quiet enough, public pressure will mount, and ICE will leave on its own accord. But this severely misunderstands the logic of fascism, which seeks to impose spectacular violence and celebrate masculine aggression and white chauvinism for political gain. Letting federal agents ravage our neighborhoods unimpeded will only feed Trump's PR machine of supposedly endless victories and will embolden him to brutalize further cities.

The people of the Twin Cities take matters into their own hands. They become increasingly emboldened and confront ICE more directly. Contrary to national narratives that protesters here are always "peaceful," when ICE descends on a target, throngs of protestors appear as if out of

Someone shares a story about the short-lived autonomous zone created in South Minneapolis around where Renee Good was murdered. The night after the murder, after all police had left and community activists were patrolling the area and keeping ICE and police out, a bunch of Somali teenagers showed up unannounced, blasted music, and threw a spontaneous dance party in the street. While the sorrow from Good's murder was still thick in the air, the violence being directed at the Somali community was overall much greater. These youth came to participate in collective grief and celebrate resistance and resilience in their own way.

The discussion concludes that short-term grassroots control over key areas, like during and after ICE abductions and murders, is useful for contesting ICE activity and creating temporary spaces for grief and community gathering. But expending long-term activist resources trying to hold these areas for many days distracts from the primary fight against ICE.

The next day, Sunday the 25th, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce publishes an open letter calling on all sides to "deescalate." This is a validation of the theory that the corporate class is feeling the pressure to restore calm and that they are subsequently willing to put pressure on the federal government to cease its assault. What causes this panic among elites is not the federal government's actions by themselves but the social disruption by the people of Minnesota who threaten to tear everything apart if the murderous occupation is allowed to continue.

While the upheaval has not yet reached the point at which corporate profits are being significantly threatened, the mass strike on the 23rd, the murder of Alex Pretti, and the explosive response mark big steps in that direction. Corporate elites are getting jittery and are eager to head off any further movement.

Not everyone in Trump's coalition goes along with the administration's messaging. Perhaps sensing the public backlash to the Pretti murder, Tucker Carlson, Joe Rogan, and Mike Pence speak out against it. Rather than consolidating Trump's coalition, Operation Metro Surge and the resistance is fracturing it further. Trump's own rhetoric wavers between

serve?” The lack of political and tactical unity between local police and federal agents is a weakness the resistance repeatedly targets.

Soon police reinforcements come from above the perimeter on the north side, and the protest line breaks and retreats to the alleys to avoid being surrounded. Many of us move back to the west side of the perimeter. Down the street I can see thick clouds of teargas accumulating on the south side, which has the disadvantage of being downwind from the police.

After a few hours of this, I figure I’ve inhaled enough teargas for one morning and go home to shower and wash my clothes. An hour or so after I leave, I see on social media that federal agents and police evacuate the area, leaving full control of the block to the residents of the neighborhood and the rapid responders from across the city. It’s a small victory amidst a terrible tragedy within a larger war. Control over the area is repeatedly contested by protestors and police in the coming days. A memorial of flowers and candles to Pretti soon covers the pavement.

That night, some local activists discuss how to best focus our efforts. There’s much to compare and contrast about what’s going on now against Trump and ICE versus what happened in the George Floyd Uprising. The days-long confrontations in the streets between ordinary people and the state feels like *deja vu*.

But there are notable differences that we strive to understand. The George Floyd Uprising was directed against the Minneapolis Police Department and the Minneapolis government. Grassroots control over key areas, like the multi-block autonomous zone called George Floyd Square, was strategic. Precisely because it is the city government’s mission to maintain a monopoly of control and violence within the city, it is effective to apply pressure against the city government by contesting that territorial control through the establishment and defense of autonomous zones.

But in the fight against ICE, we’re mainly fighting the federal government. What does ICE care if we take over a few blocks in the middle of the city? ICE will just send its goons to abduct people in the rest of the city.

thin air. Some stand a distance away and observe, but many get closer than ICE agents want. There is no training that tells people to do this, but this is the natural instinct of people defending their city.

These rapid response protests are enabled by the Signal chats that had emerged in December and are now bursting. My neighborhood covers a 7x20 block area, and its Signal chat soon has more than 3,000 people on it reporting ICE sightings and telling people when to come out into the streets. Complex protocols are developed for administering these chats and many separate chats are spun off for specialized functions (coordinating mutual aid, organizing neighborhood assemblies, verifying ICE vehicle license plates, federating neighborhood chats into interconnected systems of communication across the city, etc.). It’s hard to overstate how much organizing is happening over these chats. The layers upon layers of chat infrastructure and parallel in-person activism transforms the city’s daily life and redirects it against the invading forces.

While protests in the streets are the most visible front of resistance, much of the organizing conducted by immigrant communities is intentionally concealed from public view. These efforts are no less essential or heroic. Many stay home to keep their families safe, support each other emotionally while in physical isolation, help those who had family members abducted, and find the courage to remain in their city despite the campaign of terror designed to scare them away. As an outsider to immigrant communities I catch only glimpses of the internal solidarity they maintain, but I feel its pulse in the movement.

After a call-in campaign by parents, my school district cancels all classes for the rest of the week. On Friday, it’s announced that an online option for attending school will be made available for students. Schools with high numbers of immigrant families see in-person attendance drop by 50% or more. Educators have flashbacks to early in the covid pandemic, driven this time not by biological pathogens but by the social disease of ICE.

(Disclaimer: After Good’s killing triggers an intense escalation on both sides, the strategies and tactics we use may no longer be directly relevant to other cities resisting an ICE presence that is less concentrated and more

The next morning on January 24th, while observing an immigration operation union nurse Alex Pretti is shot and killed by Border Patrol agents in the Whittier neighborhood of South Minneapolis. No matter how big our strikes and riots, federal agents are apt to prove they can still shoot people down in the streets. I first hear about it on my neighborhood ICE watch Signal chat, which covers the area a mile from my apartment where Pretti is killed. I bike over not more than 40 minutes after the murder. Already neighbors are in the streets in large numbers. Lines of federal agents and riot cops create a block-long perimeter around where the murder occurred.

Protesters gather on three sides of the perimeter to attempt to retake control of the block. Dumpsters are rolled into the streets on the west side. Tables and chairs are taken from restaurant patios to create a blockade on the north side. Targas starts flying, and notices to disperse are blasted over loudspeakers.

Lines of police advance numerous times on the crowds. The fearlessness with which neighbors defend their streets is burned into my memory. Some protestors--often half the size of the police and wearing none of the gas masks or body armor, to say nothing of batons and handguns--line themselves up directly opposite the police lines, link arms, and hold their ground to stop the police advances. I can tell they've developed these tactics over the preceding weeks through repeated confrontations with law enforcement.

I wonder whether I should be doing the same, but I choose to stand a little farther back. Maybe it's because I'm not in my 20s anymore, or because I've been focusing my efforts on labor organizing and not honing street tactics, but mostly it's because my courage has limits. We each have our role to play, but holy shit these people don't back down.

After sufficient numbers of local police and state law enforcement arrive, they enforce the perimeter and federal agents mostly stand behind the police lines, ready to act if ordered to do so. The police and federal agents have totally separate and somewhat opposed chains of command. Some of the chants directed at the police say, "Who do you protect? Who do you

cover. The number of immigration arrests for the two-month period of highest activity in the Twin Cities, around 3,700, is similar to the total arrests in the two-month periods of highest activity in Chicago and Los Angeles in 2025. The main difference is that the Twin Cities metro area has less than half the population of the Chicago metro and a third that of the Los Angeles metro.)

The union stewards and parents at my school decide to activate daily ICE watch patrols before, during, and after arrival and dismissal. When kids come back, 20 parents and neighbors fill the patrols, some standing watch at intersections, others on bikes and in cars circling the area. What had been the "family room" at my school is transformed into a mutual aid command center soliciting, gathering, bagging, and delivering thousands of pounds of food and supplies. A mix of staff, parents, and neighbors keep it running day-in and day-out.

On Tuesday, January 13th, an educator at my school sees an SUV idling in the school parking lot before buses arrive. She takes down the license plate number and tells a school administrator about the car. The administrator goes up to the car and asks what they're doing there, and the car drives away. Someone then looks up the license plate in a database and confirms the vehicle as one used by ICE. Federal agents are doing stuff like this all over the city, creeping, intimidating, trying to scare people into paranoia and submission. It only makes the staff at my school more involved.

Later on the 13th, a number of unions, religious groups, and immigrant rights organizations hold a press conference to announce a day of No Work, No School, No Shopping on January 23rd to shut down the city in protest. The primary demand is ICE out of Minnesota. SEIU Local 26 represents custodial, security, and building services staff for many of the skyscrapers and main building complexes around the city. They are the flagship union that has coordinated joint union campaigns and coalitions in years prior and is the main labor organization pulling together this action.

not so harsh. I feel my individual fears and anxieties dissolve into the river of togetherness. While some comrades are quick to point out the lack of true political alignment underlying the liberal and left bases of resistance to Operation Metro Surge, the momentary grassroots unity in fighting ICE is a source of strength. A poll finds that 83% of Minnesotans know of the action and as many as 383,000 participate by not going to work that day.

As large as the action is, it does not shut down the primary profit-making centers of the Twin Cities and thus is not really a general strike. While participation by airport workers does significantly slowdown airport operations and thus impacts one major hub of capital flow, the main concentrations of unions and workers who participate work in the service and retail industries and the public sector. Despite not being a gut-punch to capital, the day of No Work, No School, No Shopping is precisely the kind of action that is needed to build up our working class capacity to potentially conduct real general strikes in the years ahead.

Part of what helps the action achieve broad engagement is the cooperation between groups who had previously been at odds. SEIU 26 leads a progressive-liberal coalition of unions and nonprofits called Tending the Soil. Freedom Road Socialist Organization is a Marxist-Leninist group with a large presence in the Twin Cities and close ties with unions and social issue organizations. A loose collection of other socialist, communist, and anarchist groups in the Twin Cities have worked together recently in a coalitional space called the Workers Solidarity Circle (made up of the Twin Cities DSA, Black Cat Workers Collective, Red Pine Revolutionary Collective, and Ray Rainbolt Gun Club).

These three larger groupings have not collaborated much in recent years and have at times been in sharp conflict. But Operation Metro Surge by necessity brings everyone to the same conclusion for January 23rd: We need to cooperate to pull off the largest mass action we can to go on offense against ICE and Trump. The survival of the city as we know it depends on it. The fate of the country as a whole depends on whether or not Trump can keep invading and overpowering cities.

This is a welcome development. As amazing as the mutual aid and rapid response organizing are, they are mostly a form of movement defense. Mutual aid and rapid response alone won't directly impose the political costs on ICE or the Trump administration that might force them to call off the surge. Congress has gifted ICE virtually unlimited funding, so waiting them out or bleeding their financial resources is not a viable long-term strategy to defeat ICE. We need to start going on offense.

Trump's fascist state project is dependent on the active and passive support of corporate elites who really control the vast amount of resources and institutions in the US. As long as the CEOs and investors donate millions to Trump's inauguration and ballroom, continue to visit the White House, and benefit directly from Trump's enormous tax cuts, then Trump has full license to carry out all of the extremist policies Stephen Miller puts in his ear and which his far-right base cheers for.

The best strategy to split the corporate class away from Trump is to build grassroots social movements that take collective action against Trump's policies to disrupt the status quo. If social disruption starts to hurt profits, damage the legitimacy of the ruling class, and embolden civil society to rise up, only then will elites question whether Trump is the best figure to advance their material and political interests. The Twin Cities is host to a disproportionate number of corporate headquarters of Fortune 500 companies (Target, 3M, United Healthcare, Cargill, General Mills, etc...), which represent a pressure point for local movements seeking to apply pressure to Trump's actual and potential allies. When the corporate class starts to peel off from Trump and look for other coalitions and politicians to ally with, then the institutional support Trump needs to carry out his foreign wars, mass deportations, election theft will disintegrate. Whether a day of No Work, No School, No Shopping succeeds in coalescing a big disruptive action to this effect is uncertain.

During an immigration raid on January 14th, ICE shoots North Minneapolis resident and Venezuelan immigrant Julio Cesar Sosa-Celis in the leg. Federal agents swarm the area and neighbors flood the streets in protest. The same day Victor Manuel Diaz, a Minneapolis resident abducted and sent to detention in Texas, dies in custody. ICE descends on

is heavily guarded, periodic protest mobilizations have occasionally obstructed ICE vehicles from being able to get in or out, disrupting the ability of agents to roam the cities.

Later that morning 100 clergy are arrested during a civil disobedience to shut down the airport and draw attention to airline corporations' cooperation with ICE. In the afternoon, a group of educators occupies the rounda at city hall to conduct a teach-in about the history of colonialism and resistance in Minnesota.

After the teach-in I run from city hall to the street corner downtown where my coworkers are meeting up for the big downtown march. It happens to be one of the coldest days of the year, with the temperature at the beginning of the march hitting -8 Fahrenheit and the windchill -25. I'm layered up but still have to jump up and down every few minutes to maintain the feeling in my fingers and toes.

The 2-mile march through the city center is invigorating. I believe the higher estimates of 100,000 participants in the march that day are likely accurate, and it easily could have been twice as large if the weather was



local hospitals, stoking resistance from healthcare workers. The instances of extreme brutality are too numerous to keep up with. Throughout mid-January, Trump repeatedly threatens to invoke the Insurrection Act and readies 1,500 active-duty troops from the 11th Airborne Division for deployment.



On Tuesday the 20th, ICE detains 5-year-old Liam Cango Ramos and ships him and his father to a detention center in Texas. Liam becomes a national symbol of ICE's brutality. His suburban school district has numerous kids abducted by ICE and holds press conferences calling out ICE's violence against children. Most school districts, including my own, cowardly stay silent about these abductions despite also having many kids taken away.

Early in the week there are worrying signs that the day of No Work, No School, No Shopping is not gathering the necessary momentum. Many unions are reluctant to endorse out of concern over legality of a work stoppage outside of contract negotiations. My union signs on a few days after the initial press conference, and an emergency meeting for all members of my union is called.

Union leadership and staff speak very cautiously at the meeting, claiming this isn't a "strike," declaring that merely not shopping is one way people can participate, and going over technical minutia instructing members how to use a personal day as protected in our union contract. There's no celebration of this action or fiery speeches like there usually is. All union leaders had to say was, "We're participating in a day of action against ICE and fascism!" and all of us would have been eager to cheer. The rank-and-file is ready to fight but our leadership appears timid. The tone feels like a session at a small claims court where a bunch of details are rushed through

video on social media of Bovino striking a pose before throwing a smoke grenade at the crowd. Some of the grenades emit an eerie green smoke.

An older woman, who appears to be a random neighbor out for a walk, ends up in the middle of a growing cloud of teargas enveloping the sidewalk. Her eyes and mouth are clenched shut and her arms are out, as if to catch herself if she falls, and she's frozen like a statue. A number of protesters run into the cloud to take her hands and guide her out.

Some of the agents get back in their vehicles and some stay on foot as they recommence their ghastly procession through the community. The crowd is catching their breath and flushing their eyes, but many of us are too wired with adrenaline to let the teargas slow us down.

I end up at the front among the pursuers and stop ten paces from one of the agents. The agent looks at me, I look back, and we both just stand there awkwardly for a few seconds. He then shrugs and tosses a grenade at my feet. In the moment I don't know what to expect, so I just stand there as the grenade bounces off the ground and then explodes right next to me with a flash and bang. Luckily, I'm not hurt besides a little ringing in my ears. Realizing I probably shouldn't be by myself, I wait for more to catch up before pursuing again. The caravan soon turns onto a busy street and finally speeds off.

Scenes like this have been playing out across the city for weeks. These are the kinds of interactions liberal politicians urge people not to engage in and tell us to be more peaceful and stand farther away. But the neighborhoods disagree. Only by meeting the agents face-to-face in the streets, and by outnumbering them by the hundreds each time, do we properly defend our communities. The momentary sense of victory, which countless others across the city had also experienced, that comes from throngs of ordinary people repelling attacks from masked and heavily armed agents demonstrates that we can win these skirmishes. But bigger battles lie ahead.

On the morning of the big day of action on the 23rd, there's a protest blockade set up at the federal Whipple Building where agents are dispatched from and where detainees are temporarily held. While the site

and as if we had all done something wrong. Over the next few days, I'm dismayed at the lack of energy and anxious that the action is going to fall flat.

But then the tone shifts. The day of No Work, No School, No Shopping starts to catch fire on social media as more people start to see it as a vital part of the resistance to ICE. The city as a whole, including parts of the city not normally reached by unions and community groups, adopts the action as its own. The district-wide action team for my union holds a meeting on Sunday the 18th to coordinate turnout for the 23rd. By this time union leadership had gotten the memo, re-discovering the urgency of the moment and emphasizing the important role our union can play in the fight against ICE.

On Tuesday, January 20th, the union stewards at my school hold our monthly member meeting in our auditorium to prepare for the big action on the 23rd. Operation Metro Surge has been the main topic of conversation among staff since it started, but we hadn't yet sat down together as an entire school to talk about it. By this point, a handful of parents at our school had been kidnapped and everyone knows someone at the school whose family is shattered. Hearing the fear, grief, and rage in our colleagues' voices brings us together.

On Wednesday, January 21st, I clock out of work at 2:15pm, am out the door, and am walking home when I hear the faint but shrill sound of car horns half a mile away. It can only mean one thing. ICE observers had developed and perfected the art of driving around the city and following ICE vehicles with their cars. While following, observers honk their horns to alert people to ICE's presence and communicate with ICE watch dispatchers who share information about the location of ICE to neighborhood Signal chats around the city (this following is made possible by Minneapolis Police taking a hands-off approach, but police in more suburban and conservative municipalities aggressively tamp down on this tactic). Rather than carrying out targeted operations, to reach their quotas during Operation Metro Surge ICE has just been rolling up on black and brown people on the sidewalk, asking for ID, and detaining them.

However, it's hard to sneak up on people when there's a lot of honking and whistling.

Still carrying my backpack and pink lunch bag, I run back. Kids are outside getting on buses and picked up by their parents. Just as I get to the school, a caravan of five ICE SUVs drives by with three honking cars following right behind. The ICE patrollers standing around the school are blowing their whistles. The ICE caravan drives right up to the line of parent cars, including many immigrants, waiting to pick up their kids. I hold my breath and shiver at the thought of ICE attacking our families. I exhale as the ICE caravan drives past. I run around to the other side of the school where the ICE vehicles are headed, wanting to track them and make sure if they stop and get out there is a crowd of protestors there to confront them.

The caravan drives past the school parking lot but then turns into the Speedway gas station that's right next door. I run over and see the agents get out of their vehicles. The observer cars park on the street and wait to follow; a crowd of protestors arrives on the scene instantly. Thousands of people on the local Signal chats have been alerted that federal agents are here.

I see a face I recognize among the agents. It's Greg Bovino, the "commander-at-large" of US Border Patrol and the leader of Operation Metro Surge. Border Patrol has a reputation for being more aggressive than even ICE under Trump. The agents go into the Speedway but are denied service by the cashier, as they apparently had been at two other Speedways that day.

Now the agents are just standing in the gas station parking lot as the crowd of protestors swells around them. Bovino seems to be relishing this little standoff, and there's a rightwing streamer with them getting in people's faces and provoking them. Border Patrol is using this as a photo-op to show how brave their agents and how crazy Minneapolisians are. Dozens of people have their phones out recording, the roar of car horns and whistles is deafening, and the crowd is yelling at them. Many people are

I am seething with rage. For agents to hang out in MY neighborhood right next to MY school while carrying out their murderous ethnic cleansing campaign is not something I can just let happen. I can't stop yelling at the agents at the top of my lungs, "BYE. BYE... GOODBYE." Some of them make and hold eye contact with protestors. When agents look me in the eye I don't look away and just continue yelling.



(Border Patrol leaves the Speedway with protestors in tow. Photo by me.)

After 15 or so minutes of this, the agents hop back in their SUVs and start slowly driving through the neighborhood. The protest crowd and honking cars follow them. A few blocks from the gas station the agents again exit their SUVs. This time they stop by a neighborhood park, incidentally the one I went to regularly when I was a child growing up just a few blocks away. It's also the same park classes at my school go to for casual end-of-year field trips. I recognize a lot of neighbors and friends in the crowd as we cluster together at the park, adjacent to the playground and the swing sets. The familiar faces inject me with warmth and determination amidst the fascist fever dream unfolding around us.

It appears the agents want a little more action in this photo op and they start firing teargas canisters and pepper balls at the protestors. I later see a