

Bruce Springsteen denounces ICE “Gestapo tactics” in Minneapolis occupation

Ed Hightower
19 January 2026

The murder of Renée Nicole Good on January 7 in Minneapolis, like the US invasion of Venezuela four days before, has proven to be a critical turning point in popular consciousness. There is a deep and profound feeling that things cannot go on like this. Something has to give.

Veteran singer-musician Bruce Springsteen’s public dedication of a performance this past weekend to Good—declaring that “ICE should get the f-ck out of Minneapolis” and framing her killing as an attack on “democracy” and the rule of law—is politically significant in this regard. It underscores the increasing revulsion over the Trump administration’s paramilitary assault on immigrant communities.

At the Light of Day Winterfest in Red Bank, New Jersey—an annual benefit for Parkinson’s Disease and other neurological disorders—Springsteen made these remarks before playing his song *Promised Land*. The audience replied with sustained applause.

Now, right now, we are living through incredibly critical times. The United States, the ideals and the values for which it stood for the past 250 years, is being tested as it has never been in modern times. Those values and those ideals have never been as endangered as they are right now. So as we gather tonight in this beautiful display of love and care and thoughtfulness and community ... if you believe in democracy, in liberty ... if you believe that truth still matters, and that it’s worth speaking out, and it’s worth fighting for ... if you believe in the power of the law and that no one stands above it ... if you stand against heavily armed masked federal troops invading American cities,

and using Gestapo tactics against our fellow citizens ... if you believe you don’t deserve to be murdered for exercising your American right to protest ... then send a message to this President. And as the Mayor of that city has said, ICE should get the f-ck out of Minneapolis. So this one is for you, and the memory of the mother of three and American citizen Renee Good.

Springsteen represents something genuine in American popular music. As we said in a 2003 review of the Manchester, England stop on *The Rising* tour, “his songs have traced in an honest manner the trajectory of numerous social layers and ongoing themes in US society—the worker burdened with the monotony of life in the factory, the laid-off workers and their anxieties, the desperate hardships faced by immigrants who struggle in the face of constant adversity, police brutality, disenfranchised young people in gangs and those with family trouble and personal problems, and the problems people confront in cultivating meaningful relationships.”

This aesthetic approach is tangible in the song *Promised Land*. The second verse proclaims,

I’ve done my best to live the right way
I get up every morning and go to work each day
But your eyes go blind and your blood runs cold
Sometimes I feel so weak, I just wanna explode
Explode and tear this whole town apart
Take a knife and cut this pain from my heart
Find somebody itching for something to start

Briefly said, the same artistic sensitivity to the conditions of masses of people that made Springsteen “the Boss” in popular music drives him to decry the brutality of ICE and the Trump administration.

Springsteen’s words resonate because they amplify a truth now apparent to millions: the federal occupation of Minneapolis, the murder of Good by an ICE agent and the deployment of thousands of federal officers are not isolated outrages but are expressions of a ruling class lurching toward authoritarian rule. The scale of the domestic repression—from masked DHS operatives to National Guard soldiers placed on alert—radicalizes ever newer layers of the population, drawing them into political struggle. The battle lines of mass social upheaval are being drawn in Minneapolis.

Springsteen has consistently supported the Democratic Party and its presidential candidates. Despite these mistaken positions, it is important that he placed the tyranny of the Trump regime in the context of the 250-year history of the United States, a nation born of a mighty democratic revolution whose traditional hostility to unaccountable power finds expression in the “No Kings” protests, some of the largest demonstrations ever recorded in the country.

The genuinely plebeian, anti-authoritarian content of his remarks expresses deep democratic traditions and the moral indignation of wide layers of the US and world population.

Last May, Springsteen, also at a concert in Manchester, referred to the Trump administration as “corrupt, incompetent and treasonous.” He added:

In America, the richest men are taking satisfaction in abandoning the world’s poorest children to sickness and death. This is happening now. In my country, they’re taking sadistic pleasure in the pain they inflict on loyal American workers. They’re rolling back historic civil rights legislation that has led to a more just and plural society.

In response, the reactionary imbecile in the White House lashed out against Springsteen, calling him “highly overrated.” Trump termed the performer a “pushy, obnoxious jerk,” and warned him to “keep his

mouth shut until he gets back into the country ... then we’ll see how it goes for him.” Trump was inciting his fascist followers against Springsteen, implicitly threatening physical attacks.

It is a welcome development that prominent artists continue to speak out against the fascistic dragnet of ICE. This continues, or deepens, a trend of cultural figures opposing the genocide in Gaza, including rap trio Kneecap, rapper Macklemore and more recently, singer Lorde. More is certainly in store.

As we wrote last week in Singers Billie Eilish, Dave Matthews, Neil Young denounce ICE murder:

The concerted corporate effort to chloroform the public and suppress criticism from within the entertainment industry is running up against objective limits. It is increasingly impossible to conceal the aggressive fascistic nature of the Trump administration, as it carries out kidnappings and bombings of foreign cities, piracy on the high seas and murder on the streets of US cities.

Since this was written Trump has threatened to impose martial law domestically and tariff war on countries opposing the plunder of Greenland. A video meme on Tik Tok, “Democrats right now,” satirizing the party’s pathetic response to dictatorship, is garnering hundreds of thousands of views.

At the same time, the question of a general strike has now taken root in the political life of the United States. It is hard to understate the seismic shift underway in all aspects of life, cultural included.



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact