Support grows for general strike in Minneapolis, as Trump escalates ICE terror campaign

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Anger and determination are growing among workers and youth in Minneapolis, as the Trump administration escalates its campaign of repression and state violence, spearheaded by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and backed by the threat of direct military intervention.

On Tuesday, protests continued across the city, with growing support for a general strike on Friday, January 23, to force the removal of Trump's paramilitary forces and the prosecution of the federal agent who murdered Renée Nicole Good. There were also protests Tuesday in Wisconsin, Oklahoma, New York, Ohio, New Mexico, California, Kansas, Virginia and other states.

At a protest outside City Hall, Audry, a young Certified Nursing Assistant, told the WSWS, "I'd rather see my family and my community happy and safe than go out and get a paycheck. I don't need to see people dying anymore. I don't need to see my family and friends taken away. That's not ok. I'm not going to work Friday. What Trump is doing is an act of terrorism. ICE are the real domestic terrorists," she concluded.

A young retail worker taking part in a demonstration in front of the governor's mansion said, "I'm opposed to the federal invasion of Minneapolis, people being slaughtered in our streets. We are here, letting our voices be heard, saying we are done with this. We are all coming together on Friday, a lot of people at my work, as many people as we can get for a general strike. We want to show that, we, the people, will not take it anymore."

She pointed out the ICE arrest of a 17-year-old Target worker who, despite being an American citizen, was thrown into a truck, beaten and thrown out in a Walmart parking lot seven miles away, bloodied as can be. "The Walmart workers helped him; and now we all have to help each other."

She added, "If we are not united as a working force, we have no power. The current political regimes of the Democrats and Republicans are not looking out for the people. They care more about their wealth than people being ripped from their homes and jobs."

Addressing herself to workers across the country and the world, she said, "We all need to be as one, right now. This is a struggle that we are impacted by. If we don't fight back now, it will be too late."

After a series of walkouts by high school students, the Minneapolis Public Schools announced that the district would be closed on Friday for "teacher record-keeping day." A student at Irondale High School told the WSWS, "Students organized a lot of walkouts. I'm Latino, so most of my family is a little worried, and I know a lot of people who are severely affected by it. They've been inside since it all started. They have their kids going, getting groceries for them. They're not allowed to go outside. They haven't been going to work. It's a terrible thing."

Pointing to the immense social inequality in America, his friend added, "No one should be a billionaire. With all that money they have you can solve world hunger."

A student at the University of Minnesota added, "The ICE occupation are terrorists roaming the streets, disrupting people that have no reason to be disrupted. I think it's an invasion on US citizens, and it's an invasion on, frankly, everybody. Everybody wants them gone." Her fellow student added that "'I was just following orders' didn't work before, and it won't work later," adding that she supported a general strike.

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The growing resistance comes amid explicit threats by President Trump to invoke the Insurrection Act and deploy federal troops, with approximately 1,500 soldiers reportedly on standby for use in Minneapolis.

During a White House press conference marking his first year back in office, Trump delivered a fascist tirade, boasting about his mass deportations and justifying the state murder of Renée Nicole Good.

His administration had deported "tens of thousands of illegal alien gang members, drug dealers, murderers, child predators, human traffickers, fraudsters and savage criminals," Trump claimed. "Why wouldn't you want them removed?"

Branding all political opposition as treason, he said, "The reason is because these are the insurrectionists that are doing this work." He denounced the thousands of neighborhood residents, workers, high school students and other defenders of democratic rights opposing his ICE paramilitary squads as "paid agitators" and "troublemakers." He specifically targeted Somali immigrants, repeating the big lie that they had stolen "$19 billion in government funding." The "people in Minnesota are fighting to keep the murderers there."

Governor Tim Walz and the Democrats are seeking to direct opposition to the courts and the midterm elections, but this will not stop a dictatorial president who flouts the law and threatens that any election, if held at all, will be under conditions of martial law.

Even as Trump escalates repression, the Democratic Party is actively financing it. Congressional Democrats recently voted for legislation providing $10 billion in additional funding for ICE, despite widespread public opposition.

Representative Rosa DeLauro, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, admitted that ICE is "out of control" while nonetheless justifying the funding. She warned that blocking the bill could disrupt other federal agencies, even as ICE continues operating without restriction due to tens of billions already allocated under previous legislation.

This cynical maneuvering exposes the Democrats' role as enablers of authoritarianism. Their complaints about Trump's methods serve only to obscure the reality that they support the same machinery of repression against the working class.

Equally revealing is the role of the trade union bureaucracy. The president of Teamsters Local 638 has issued statements nominally supporting a "state-wide community and labor action" on January 23, while simultaneously warning members that they are "not legally permitted to strike" due to no-strike clauses.

The Minnesota Nurses Association, whose members include 22,000 nurses and other healthcare workers, also claimed to support the "Day of Truth and Freedom" but has instructed its members to report to work since their contract includes no-strike provisions.

The situation in Minneapolis poses urgent strategic questions. Workers cannot allow their struggle to be strangled by bureaucratic obstruction. The fight against ICE repression, state violence and authoritarianism requires independent organization and leadership.

Rank-and-file workers must demand mass meetings in workplaces, schools and neighborhoods to democratically decide their own course of action not just on January 23 but beyond. Committees independent of the union bureaucracy should be formed to coordinate action across industries and cities, linking the fight in Minneapolis with workers nationally and internationally.

The defense of democratic rights is inseparable from the struggle against capitalism itself. The same ruling class that wages war abroad and enriches itself through exploitation is now deploying paramilitary forces and troops against the population at home.

Minneapolis workers and youth are confronting not merely an abusive administration but the advanced decay of American democracy. Their struggle is part of a broader movement of the working class to assert its own power and fight for a socialist alternative to dictatorship, repression and war.

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