

ICE targets Detroit

Socialist Equality Party (US)
18 February 2026

ICE activity is escalating sharply across the Detroit metropolitan area, marking a new stage in the Trump administration's nationwide rampage against democratic rights.

On Monday morning, ICE carried out an operation outside of Factory Zero in Hamtramck, a heavily immigrant enclave of Detroit. Agents deployed from four unmarked vehicles, stopping motorists on the roadway and making arrests near the facility. The operation provoked shock and outrage among workers at the plant, who expressed class solidarity with their immigrant brothers and sisters.

On February 2, a raid took place outside an Amazon facility in Hazel Park, where two Amazon Flex workers were arrested. Both men are asylum seekers with Temporary Protected Status, but this did not stop ICE from seizing them in full view of workers inside the building.

ICE is also reportedly purchasing a warehouse in Romulus and renting an office in Southfield. This is part of a \$38 billion program to convert warehouse space across the country into makeshift detention centers. The scale of this buying spree shows that the Trump White House is preparing for mass arrests on the scale of hundreds of thousands of people.

The year began with the rampage in Minneapolis, where ICE and CBP murdered two community members, Renee Good and Alex Pretti, and carried out violent attacks across the city, seizing immigrants, including children, who have been deported or sent to mass detention centers—in fact concentration camps—including the now notorious Dilley facility in Texas.

Lessons must be drawn from the experience in Minneapolis, where tens of thousands of people demonstrated against the outrages of ICE. However, the events in Detroit and the broader nationwide buildup expose as a fraud the claim by Democrats and the media that Trump is “de-escalating.” Immigration Gestapo agents and stormtroopers are not being withdrawn; they are being redeployed.

The organization of opposition in this next stage requires a more organized and conscious approach, and one that mobilizes the vast power of the working class.

The choice of Detroit as one of the next targets shows that the attack on immigrants is escalating into a terror campaign against the working class as a whole. Metro Detroit is a major industrial center of 4.4 million people and the historic heart of the US auto industry. Nearly 250,000 manufacturing workers live in the region.

The city has a rich history of class struggle spanning more than a century, which lives in the memory of workers whose families have labored in the plants for generations. This includes historic battles against Henry Ford, a notorious antisemite and Nazi sympathizer. His legacy finds its parallel today in the support for Trump among today's oligarchs.

The auto plants have diverse workforces spanning racial, ethnic and national backgrounds. Detroit is home to one of the largest Middle Eastern immigrant communities in the country. Hamtramck itself is a deeply diverse working-class city, with residents whose ancestry spans from Bangladesh to Poland. Dearborn—home to Ford's headquarters and the Rouge complex—has the highest concentration of Arab residents in the United States.

This is what Trump is going to war against. An admirer of Hitler, he is aiming at nothing less than establishing a dictatorship in the United States. Trump acts and speaks not as an individual, but as a representative of the corporate and financial oligarchy, whose interests are incompatible with legal and democratic forms of rule. The massive expansion of ICE operations is closely connected to the 2026 elections, which the Trump administration intends to hold under the barrel of a gun, if they are held at all.

The fundamental target of dictatorship is the working class. The operations began at Factory Zero and the Hazel Park Amazon facility, but agents will soon appear at factories and workplaces across the region unless they are stopped.

And it is the working class that must be organized in response, as in Minneapolis. There is deep hostility to Trump in the Detroit auto plants. During a visit to the Ford Rouge Complex in Dearborn, autoworker Thomas “TJ” Sabula made headlines when he angrily denounced Trump. He received widespread support after the company

suspended him, leading to his reinstatement.

Neighborhood groups have spontaneously begun to monitor and oppose ICE. Anger has already erupted at Town Hall meetings against the expansion of ICE operations in Michigan. High school students have staged walkouts at cities across Southeast Michigan in recent weeks.

The Socialist Equality Party and the *World Socialist Web Site* propose the following as the basis for the fight against ICE, to be advanced at Town Hall meetings and other forums:

First, the social force that must be mobilized is the working class, including autoworkers, educators, healthcare workers, Amazon workers, postal workers, technology workers and other sections of the working class. It is the working class that has the power to halt production and stop the operations of ICE and Trump's Gestapo agents.

Second, workers in the United Auto Workers and other unions should demand mass meetings in every local to pass resolutions rejecting any collaboration with ICE agents, as Amazon did when it opened its doors for two Amazon Flex workers to be seized in the plant. Workers should prepare strike action in response to any effort to seize their coworkers, and the unions must be committed to the defense of workers and youth.

The initiative, however, cannot be left in the hands of the union bureaucracy. In Minneapolis, the union apparatus worked consciously to prevent strike action, insisting that workers had to remain on the job due to contractual technicalities.

The UAW has said nothing about the Factory Zero raid, even though it took place only a few miles from its headquarters. It also said nothing about the mass layoffs at the plant, now down to one shift. UAW President Shawn Fain warns that the right to strike is at stake and that there will be attacks on picket lines. Yet he proposes no action to fight this, issuing only statements that commit the union to nothing.

Therefore, third, to coordinate and organize opposition, rank-and-file committees should be organized in every factory and workplace, union and non-union, along with committees in every neighborhood and school. A network of rank-and-file and neighborhood committees will create the framework for workers to monitor and respond rapidly when ICE attempts to abduct coworkers and family members.

There is precedent for this. In 2020, at the start of the coronavirus pandemic, wildcat strikes broke out in Detroit that forced the shutdown of the auto industry across North America within hours. Action by autoworkers against ICE would provide a lead and inspire confidence among workers across the United States.

Fourth, the development of opposition must be connected

to definite demands, including the removal of ICE from the city and state, and freedom for all those who have been detained.

The logic of the struggle of workers and young people is toward a general strike, a logic which arose organically in the development of the struggle in Minneapolis.

A similar struggle in Detroit will become the impetus for a coordinated nationwide movement of the working class, raising the demand for the abolition of ICE, the immediate end to the persecution of immigrants, the release of all immigrants held in concentration camps, and the resignation and prosecution of all members of the Trump administration responsible for the violation of rights guaranteed by the US Constitution.

In this fight, no confidence can be placed in the Democratic Party, a party of Wall Street. It recently voted to temporarily extend funding to the Department of Homeland Security, and is presently abandoning even its toothless proposals to permanently defund DHS. In Minnesota, local Democrats are now collaborating with ICE and the Trump administration.

The Democrats' main concern is not fascism, but the growth of opposition from below.

The fight against ICE and Trump's dictatorship depends on the independent action and initiative of workers themselves. Workers and young people should be on guard for any provocations staged by ICE. Opposition should be developed through collective action and social struggle.

Workers reading this must begin laying the groundwork now. Organize groups in your workplaces and neighborhoods. Hold meetings to discuss and decide what must be done. The working class is the most powerful force on earth, once it knows how to use that power.

The Socialist Equality Party (US) and the *World Socialist Web Site* stand ready to assist all workers in building this movement.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)