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USA

Lessons from Minneapolis

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Drawing lessons from Minneapolis and the day of protest on January 30, the Tempest National Committee argues that the only kind of action that can stop Trump is the kind that seriously impacts the economy: mass strikes. While workers in the U.S. currently lack the organizational capacity to launch mass strikes, campaigns in the here and now can help us develop and nurture that capacity. [1]

The murder of Alex Pretti—the day after workers shut down Minneapolis in protest of ICE's invasion of their city—has raised the stakes for those resisting the war on immigrants. Masked government agents violently attacked Pretti moments after he helped a fellow protester who had been pushed down by ICE thugs. He was maced, beaten, and shot in the back.

All of this was captured on video from multiple angles by eyewitnesses, and the world watched in horror. Kristi Noem's outlandish claims that the victim was a "domestic terrorist," who "wanted to do maximum damage and massacre law enforcement" stood in stark contrast to the video evidence watched by millions who learned that Pretti was an intensive care nurse for military veterans.

Coming just sixteen hours after a massive march in subzero temperatures—the culmination of a day of mass civil disobedience, work stoppages, school closures, and business closings—Pretti's murder left many wondering if it was in revenge for the Minneapolis resistance, and what it would take to defeat this kind of occupying force. As the movement confronts an entrenched and dangerous enemy, it is increasingly clear that protests and demonstrations are essential, but the only thing that will stop Trump is the kind of action that seriously impacts the economy: mass strikes.

No work, no school, no shopping

The mass actions of January 23 put tens of thousands in the streets in response to a call for "no work, no school, no shopping." Almost one thousand businesses closed their doors, even if only for a few hours, in solidarity. Workers called in sick or took a "mental health day." Some workplaces were forced to close by the collective will of employees. Even while labor unions stopped short of officially declaring a strike, many endorsed the day of action.

The protest was spurred by the murder of Minneapolis ICE resister Renee Good on January 7. The general strike, as it was widely referred to, was organized by a coalition of trade unions, faith organizations, and neighborhood rapid response networks. Some of these formations came together in 2011 around common bargaining demands. They also built on the long history of anti-racist mobilization in the wake of the George Floyd uprising. This organizational cross pollination combined with popular sentiment against ICE raids to produce a significant showing. One survey found that one in four voters in the state participated or had a loved one who did. This is all new territory for the movement.

When the administration sent 3,000 federal officials into Minneapolis—which, to put things in perspective, employs about 600 police officers—they declared war on the immigrant population. The Border Patrol officers who murdered Pretti were in pursuit of a delivery worker who was sheltering in a local business behind locked doors.

Immigrant unions and entire neighborhoods sprang into action to defend their community. Masked officers escalated

their violent attacks, entering schools and confronting students and educators. The image of five-year-old Liam Conejo Ramos, arrested on his way home from preschool in the Minneapolis suburb of Columbia Heights on January 20, became a symbol of the cruelty of ICE. This only added to the indignation many already felt and drove more to take action on the 23rd.

The people vs. the billionaires

Thirty-five people have died while in federal custody since President Donald Trump began this campaign in July 2025, and eight have been murdered in the field by ICE officials.

Almost all of the people killed and injured by these agents so far have been immigrants and people of color. These individuals include Keith Porter, an African American father of two in Los Angeles, and Silverio Villegas González, also a father of two elementary school children in Franklin Park, Illinois—a Chicago suburb. Renee Good and Alex Pretti were outliers in that they were both white.

The “domestic surge” has deployed thousands of heavily armed, armored and masked agents mostly to cities in blue states, regardless of the actual concentration of immigrants. ICE has been met with popular community resistance, from Los Angeles to Chicago to the Twin Cities. In each case the opposition has learned new lessons, which have been shared with protesters elsewhere. Minnesota is the latest link in the chain of learning how to resist.

Communities across the Twin Cities and beyond have stood up to these racist attacks on people who are just trying to live their lives and raise families. Their actions are inspiring as they show the depth of opposition to MAGA and the potential for an alternative.

The outpouring of protest and support for immigrants is a multiracial fightback based in the working class with anti-racist politics at its heart. It is a powerful antidote to Trump’s use of anti-immigrant scapegoating to divert attention from the billionaire class while it cuts SNAP benefits, health care, and funding for education.

National Nurses United, a health care union representing 225,000 workers, organized vigils across the country for Alex Pretti. At an event outside a Veteran Affairs hospital in Chicago, one speaker called on us to recognize the “state sanctioned violence” of unaffordable health care as well as targeted murder by government agents.

The administration attacks immigrants in the name of fighting crime. But the true criminals are the richest one percent and their hired help in Congress. They spend billions of our tax dollars terrorizing immigrants and billions more on regime change in Venezuela and Israel’s ongoing genocide in Palestine. They fund their imperial projects by cutting domestic services at home.

In order to get away with this blatant theft, the billionaire class suppresses individuals and organizations that defend our rights. They have decimated public unions, criminalized outspoken organizers like Mahmoud Khalil, and murdered people in the streets in an attempt to scare people away from protest.

They have not succeeded in stemming mass protest by students, neighborhood organizations and workers, but they are forcing us all to confront the daunting question of how we can stop these attacks.

The power of the mass strike

More people than ever are asking how we can stop the war on immigrants and also address the raft of economic problems known as the “affordability crisis.” The pledge by Democrats to reform ICE and Border Patrol to refocus on their mission only reveals their complicity. Some Democrats sense the political winds are shifting. One candidate for Senator from Illinois, Raja Krishnamoorthi, voted as a member of the House to express “gratitude” to ICE in June 2025, when they were arresting union leaders in Los Angeles. He is now calling for ICE to be abolished.

ICE should be abolished, and the priorities of our society should be thoroughly recalibrated. But as we argued in our January editorial, we cannot expect these changes to come from above. Our collective ability to redirect funding away from war and occupation (domestically and internationally), towards health, housing, and education should look instead to the lessons from Minneapolis.

Our greatest power is in our potential ability to organize mass strikes.

Recent years have seen political strikes globally, such as in South Korea when martial law was declared in December 2024, or in France in January 2023 when the retirement age was raised. While the U.S has seen strikes over contractual or safety issues, such as the tens of thousands of health care workers on strike in New York and against Kaiser Permanente, strikes over political issues are not common here.

When a call for a general strike on January 30 went out via social media following the murder of Alex Pretti, the Google search for the word “strike” increased dramatically, as people across the country attempted to educate themselves. In multiple cities, students demonstrated, small businesses shut down, and people gathered to rally and march in solidarity with the resisters in Minnesota. This shows tremendous potential, but until labor is far better organized, most workers cannot simply walk out without risking their jobs. Most unions are far from ready to launch the kind of coordinated, disciplined strike action that could really make a difference, and most workers lack a union, given that unionization rates are below 10 percent.

So the pressing question is how we can harness the collective strength on display in Minnesota, and everywhere that people are standing up against ICE, in order to make a significant economic impact.

What do we do next?

The U.S. workforce does not currently have the organizational capacity to launch a mass strike on the scale of those in South Korea. But with the vision of this goal, we can plan and build campaigns in the here and now that will help us build this organizational capacity and the infrastructure to nurture and sustain it. These campaigns will vary depending on the particular location and context, but there are many available options for both union and non-union workers.

We can hold strike schools that help unionized and non-unionized workers to become strike ready. We can build emergency response networks to move into action against ICE and CBP. We can form workplace-based emergency response networks, especially in schools, which are powerful sites at the intersection between the community and workplace and therefore of great strategic importance for a mass strike. We can agitate to make every workplace a Fourth Amendment zone which refuses access to ICE and CBP. We can push to force towns and cities to pledge non-compliance with ICE and CBP, even if that means defying federal law (even Minnesota, a so-called sanctuary state, does not have such measures).

In the upcoming months we should join local organizing efforts for the March 28th No Kings protest, with the explicit

plan of projecting mass actions for May Day—which is on Friday, a work day—including strikes and sickouts against the Trump regime.

Finally, we should join May Day Strong. 3,500 people participated in a virtual call on February 1, entitled “How We Build a General Strike,” where union leaders, organizers, and even the mayor of Chicago Brandon Johnson addressed this question. The focus of that meeting was building towards coordinated actions across the country on May 1, 2026.

We can draw inspiration from the anti-ICE movement and commit to building the kind of sustained, ongoing organizing in workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods that will increase our capacity and power. A better world is waiting to be born, and it will take all of us to help make that happen.

9 February 2026

Source: [Tempest](#).

PS:

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[1] Photo: Detroit: Peoples Assembly volunteers put together whistle kits designed to alert community members when ICE is nearby. (Jim West)
ATC.