



CLIMATE VANGUARD

A CONCRETE ANALYSIS

ICE and Amerikan Fascism

Image: John Locher. Associated Press.



On December 1st, 2025, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) launched “Operation Metro Surge,” which deployed an unprecedented 3,000 federal agents to the Minnesotan “Twin Cities” of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Over the next two months, agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) terrorised the people of Minnesota, arresting over 4,000 people as well as murdering Renée Good and Alex Pretti.

In this post, we analyse the siege on the Twin Cities as part of the US's steady march towards fascism →



Mass Deportations

During his re-election campaign, Trump vowed to carry out the “largest deportation operation in history.” In his first week as president, he set the tone by launching a nation-wide immigration crackdown, arresting 1,200 people.

Since then, Trump has authorised aggressive immigration operations in primarily liberal, racially diverse cities, including Portland, New Orleans, Charlotte, Chicago, and Los Angeles. These have been primarily carried out by ICE.

The History of ICE

ICE was established on March 1st, 2003, as part of George W. Bush's creation of the DHS. A product of the 'war on terror,' ICE was given the mandate to treat immigration as a matter of 'national security.'

This was enabled through the USA PATRIOT Act (2001), a piece of legislation that granted extensive surveillance powers to federal agencies. ICE gained access to enhanced immigration data by coordinating with the FBI, police forces, and local jails, allowing for more targeted deportations.

Although this "surveillance dragnet" began under George W. Bush, it was extended by the Democratic administrations of Obama and Biden, paving the way for Trump's escalation.





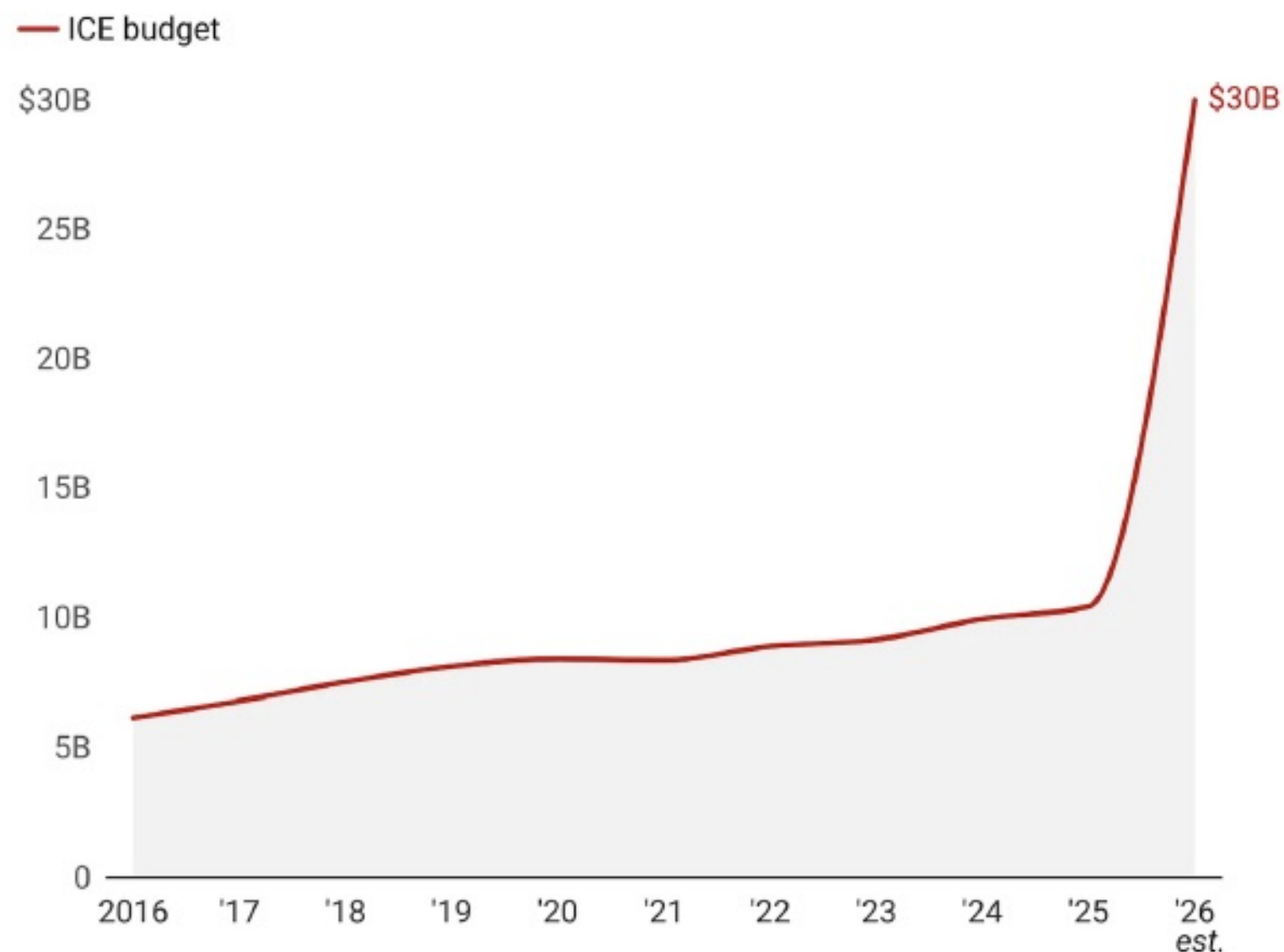
PROTECTING THE HOMELAND

ICE Unleashed

10 years ago, ICE's annual budget was \$6 billion, smaller than other DHS agencies. Now, thanks to Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill Act (2025), ICE's annual budget is \$29 billion, roughly the same as the entire annual military budget of Israel.

ICE budget set to triple to \$30 billion in 2026

Trump request: \$11B, plus est. \$19B from reconciliation bill



2026 estimate based on Trump's budget request and White House documents stating that 25% of reconciliation homeland security funding is for 2026. More: stephensemmler.com

Chart: Stephen Semler (@stephensemmler | stephensemmler.com) • Created with Datawrapper

This has allowed ICE to undergo a massive expansion. In 2025, it added 12,000 new agents, more than doubling its previous size. Starting ICE agent salaries range between \$51,632 and \$84,277, with signing bonuses up to \$50,000 (disbursed over five years) and \$60,000 in student-loan relief. This would put a fresh ICE recruit in the top 33% of income earners in the US.



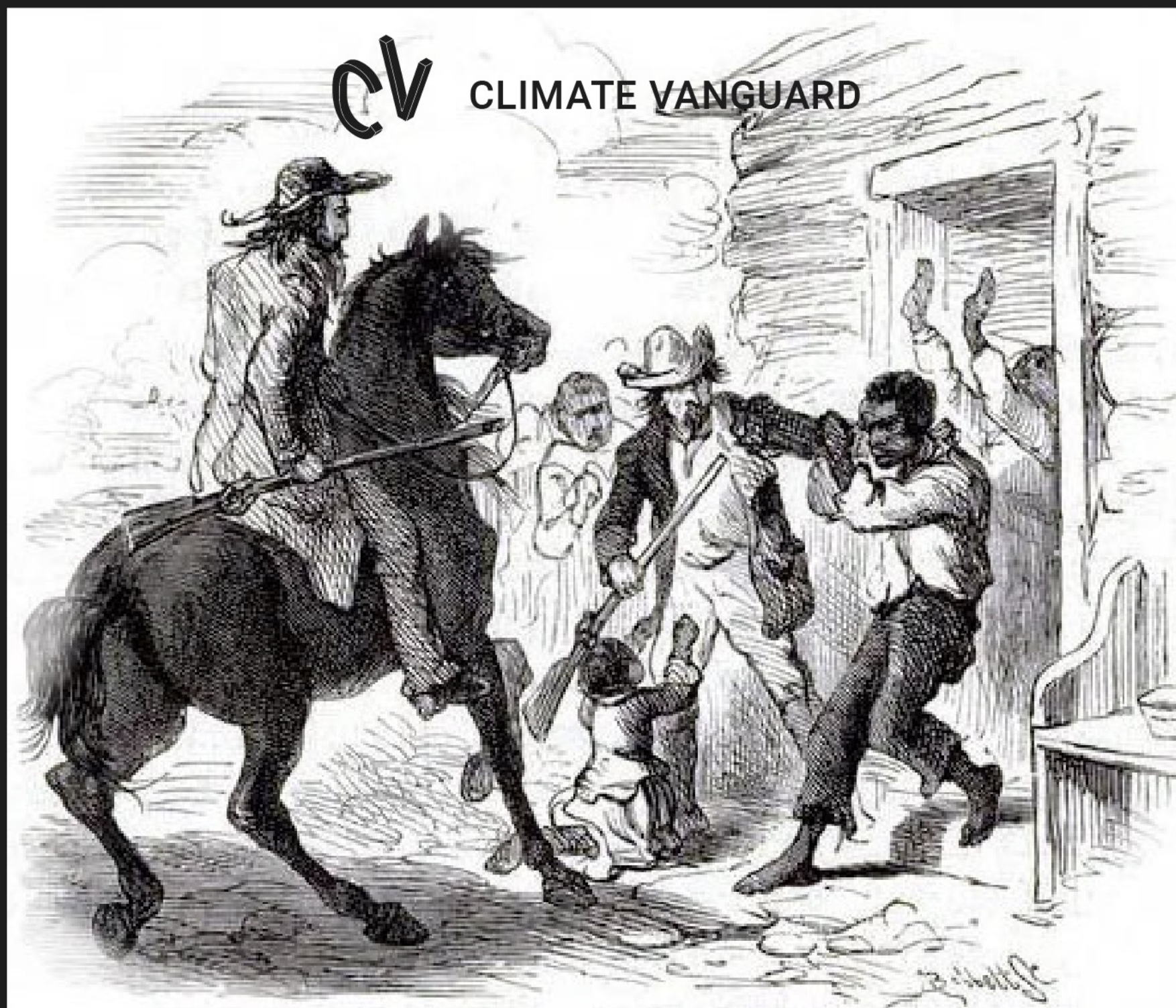
Fascism in Motion

ICE, and the MAGA movement more broadly, are constitutive of the US's descent into fascism. Contrary to the liberal claim that fascism is a departure from capitalism, fascism is a political system that *directly* emerges from capitalism, particularly in its monopoly-imperialist phase.

When capitalist hegemony comes under threat, monopoly capitalists* mobilise a mass of lower-middle-class (petit-bourgeois) supporters behind a powerful leader, who builds a popular movement by scape-goating marginalised populations. With mass support, fascists are able to achieve their core objective: the destruction of the liberal-democratic state and the (temporary) stabilisation of the capitalist order.

Let's examine ICE's role within this process →

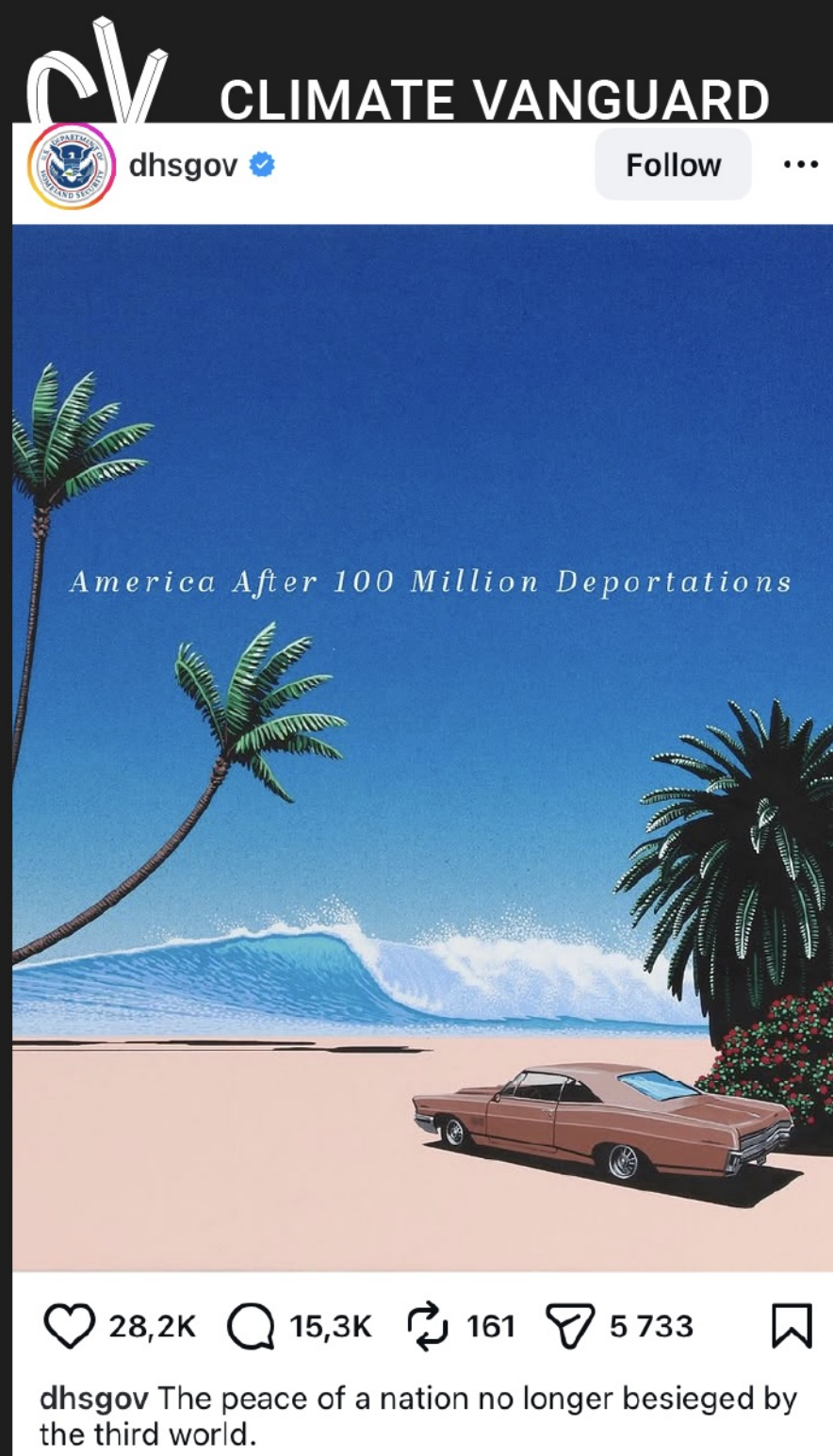
***Note:** Monopoly capitalists are capitalists that have investments in monopoly industries, like tech, fossil fuels, finance, and media.



Fascism with Amerikan Characteristics

An official information video by ICE states that “the functional history of ICE is rooted in our country’s earliest days.” Indeed, ICE is connected to a long lineage of US security agencies tasked with enforcing oppressive systems.

Slave patrols like the Charleston City Guard and Watch formed the basis of some of the US’s first professional police forces, while colonial police forces like the Texas Rangers perpetrated the settler-colonial genocide against Indigenous nations.



This three triangle tattoo is known as a "valknut," an old Norse symbol that has been appropriated by white supremacist groups.



This patch, containing a Norse eight-prong wayfinder, known as a "Vegvisir," has been associated with white supremacist organisations.

Continuing in this fascistic tradition, ICE is recruiting "homeland defenders" to "protect our sacred land" from being "besieged by the third world." Some ICE agents have been spotted with patches and tattoos linked to neo-Nazi, white-supremacist iconography.



Open Class War

The deportation of immigrants is not new. In fact, **Obama deported more people per year than Trump did in his first term**, earning the nickname “deporter in chief.” However, what is unique about ICE’s role under the current Trump administration is the inflammatory nature of the removal operations.

Masked agents in tactical gear roam neighborhoods in unmarked vehicles, snatching people at work, on school runs, or in their homes, often without a judicial warrant and in defiance of court orders, spreading a sense of terror among the people.

This carnival of violence, often turned into muscular ‘hype-edits’ for consumption on social media, embodies **MAGA’s purposefully confrontational political posture** (e.g. the renamed “Department of War” and “Gulf of America,” threats to seize Greenland).



MAGA Techno-Fascists

ICE's deportation efforts have been aided by surveillance technologies provided by Clearview AI (facial recognition) and Palantir (data location tracking), both of which have been extensively financed by Silicon Valley billionaire Peter Thiel.

Thiel helped mastermind Donald Trump and J.D. Vance's political careers. He has openly condemned liberal democracy and has funded far-right 'intellectuals' like Curtis Yarvin ("Mencius Moldbug"), who has argued for a "monarchical president" and "dictator."

Thiel represents the leading faction of monopoly capital backing Trump and the MAGA movement. The fusion of tech and military power is seen as essential in waging the fascist project at home and abroad, as was recently made clear in the AI-assisted genocide in Palestine and hyper-imperialist attack on Venezuela.

The People Fight Back

Working-class people have stepped up to resist MAGA's fascist project. In Minneapolis, communities have organised ICE watch patrols, barricaded streets, and coordinated food drop-offs and school carpools for immigrant families.

On Friday, January 23rd, the popular struggle against ICE escalated into a "general strike," in which up to 100,000 people took to the streets as part of a "no work, no school, no shopping" day of action.

Under conditions of intense repression, the opportunity is there to weld organic struggles against ICE to a broader programme for socialist transformation in the heart of the empire.