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USA

A Victory for the Resistance to ICE and Trump

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The resistance to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and to President Donald Trump's mass deportation program won a victory last week when Trump and Border Czar Tom Homan announced that they were ending the ICE surge in Minneapolis.

At its peak there were 3,000 ICE and Border agents conducting violent raids in the city, beating, gassing, and murdering two of the city's residents. ICE's violent tactics had led to a militant resistance as thousands rallied to challenge ICE, blowing whistles to alert people to the raids, shouting "ICE out!" at the officers, blocking streets and following their cars. The movement in the streets and the national reaction to the violence and violation of civil rights led to a national outcry and Trump was forced to retreat.

At the same time in Congress the Democrats, who have become notorious for their timidity in the face of Trump, have for once taken a firm stand against Trump and ICE. Democrats have demanded that ICE agents remove their masks, that they get warrants to arrest people, wear body cameras to record their actions, and avoid locations such as schools, churches, and hospitals. The Democrats and Republicans passed the majority of the budget, but the Democrats refused to pass the budget for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that includes ICE, and Congress adjourned. Last year, however, Congress voted about \$80 billion for ICE, so it will not be affected whatever the vote. And Trump and the Republicans are unlikely to accede to any of the Democrats' demands.

While Congress may be paralyzed, the people are not. Throughout the country protest demonstrations against ICE continue. I went to Southern California last week to visit family and friends in Imperial Beach where I grew up. At Mar Vista High School, my alma mater, students walked out of class, one boy holding up his skate board on which he had written, "Fuck ICE." Thousands of high school students have walked out at scores of high schools across the country. Friends told me there was not a city or town in San Diego County that hadn't had protests. While in Los Angeles, I accompanied a friend to the weekly protest being held in Culver City where a couple of hundred protesters gathered in front of city hall holding signs with slogans like "Abolish ICE, Protect Immigrants." Hundreds of passing cars honked their horns in support.

The government is also on the offensive. DHS has subpoenaed tech companies such as Meta, Google, and Reddit demanding that they provide information about people posting criticism of ICE, including their names, addresses, and their IP internet number. The government has gone after organizations and individuals posting alerts about the presence of ICE in neighborhoods. The government has the capacity to identify cell phones carried in demonstrations and to recognize faces from photographs. Clearly these actions threaten our rights to assemble, to protest, and to speak in opposition to the government.

In the last month, we forced Trump to back down. The withdrawal of ICE troops from Minneapolis is a victory for our movement, but those agents and others will be sent to other Democratic Party led states and cities and into other immigrant communities to continue to remove members of our communities. ICE agents will continue to kidnap people from our neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. Its agents, recruited for their rightwing politics and their brutality, are hardly likely to give up their vicious and brutal behavior. Our movement, already large and militant, has to become even bigger and braver, combining our street protests with political pressure.

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PS:

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