Resolution Condemning the FBI Raids on Trade Union, Anti-War, and Solidarity Activists

Whereas, in the early morning of 24 September 2010 in coordinated raids, FBI agents entered eight homes and offices of trade union and anti-war activists in Minneapolis and Chicago, confiscating crates full of computers, books, documents, notebooks, cell phones, passports, children’s drawings, photos of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X, videos, and personal belongings. The FBI also raided the offices of the Twin-Cities Anti-war Committee seizing computers. In addition, they served subpoenas to appear before a federal grand jury to 11 activists in Illinois, Minnesota, and Michigan; and, paid harassment visits to others in Wisconsin, California, and North Carolina;

Whereas, one target of the FBI was Joe Iosbaker, who is the chief steward and executive board member of SEIU Local 73 in Chicago. He is leading a struggle at the University of Illinois for employee rights and pay equity. Brother Iosbaker told “Democracy Now” that FBI agents “systematically [went] through every room [in our house], our basement, our attic, our children’s rooms, and pored through not just all of our papers, but our music collection, our children’s artwork, my son’s poetry journal from high school – everything.” He and his wife, a Palestine solidarity activist were both issued subpoenas. The earliest subpoena dates are 5 & 7 October;

Whereas, the majority of those targeted by the FBI raids had participated in anti-war protests at the 2008 Republican National Convention in St. Paul, MN which resulted in the police beating of hundreds of protesters and many arrests (N.B almost all charges were subsequently dropped). Many of those targeted in the September raids were involved in humanitarian solidarity work with labor and popular movements in Columbia, “the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist.” The US government supported government has been condemned by the AFL-CIO as well as human rights organizations world-wide for the systematic assassination of hundreds of trade unionist;

Whereas, the nationally coordinated dawn raids and fishing expeditions mark a new and dangerous chapter in the protracted assault on the Constitutional rights of every union fighter, solidarity activist, or anti-war campaigner beginning in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and the Congressional adoption of Bush Administration repressive legislation such as the USA Patriot Act. These raids came only four days after the release, through a Freedom of Information Act demand, of a 300 page scathing report issued by the US Department of Justice’s Inspector General that soundly criticized the FBI for targeting such groups as Greenpeace and the Thomas Merton Center between 2006 and 2008. The report highlights a report that in 2008 the FBI investigated a group of student activists in Iowa City, which included, following them to parks, libraries, bars and restaurants; and, went through their trash. The purpose of the raids has been to intimidate activists, and, the pretext has been the investigation of “terrorism.”

Therefore, Be It Resolved that the National Organization of Legal Services Workers through it’s National Executive Board denounces the 24 September
FBI raids and subsequent Federal grand jury subpoenas, and, demand:
1) the immediate quashing of the grand jury subpoenas;
2) the end to all FBI raids against trade union, anti-war, and international solidarity activists;
3) provide to the individuals the subject of the raids and subpoenas with support as is deemed appropriate;

Be It Further Resolved, That NOLSW
1) participate in the ongoing movement to defend the civil rights and civil liberties of the public from FBI infringement;
2) provide local bargaining units with copies of this resolution and other educational materials as appropriate, urge local units to adopt similar resolutions, encourage all it’s members to join with similar local anti-repression campaigns;
3) Forward a copy of this resolution to United Auto Workers IEB urging them to condemn the raids and issuance of the subpoenas and to engage in the solidarity campaign as is appropriate.

Adopted by National Executive Board of NOLSW/UAW Local 2320 on December 6, 2010