

On the ground in Arizona

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*** written with Will

SB 1070, and the white supremacist attacks on ethnic studies and “teachers with accents” is potentially sparking a new round of mass struggle for immigrant rights.

In Arizona, the fight for immigrant rights has been going on for some time. The Right has been mobilizing to capture state power in Arizona through the Tea Party mobilizations in the state legislature along with attacks against brown and undocumented peoples by Sheriff Joe Arpaio.

In response, organizers across the country – some new and some veterans of the movement – are contending with questions that were left unanswered after the spike in mass activity around the immigrant rights movement in 2006

The right wing of the movement is using the same tactics to demobilize protesters and organizers, and instead supporting bracero-styled legislation, and appealing to the nativist perception of the ‘brown hordes invading America.’

The challenge facing the rest of the movement will be whether we can build our own autonomous institutions that doesn't compromise with the right, doesn't sacrifice some undocumented peoples for a ‘well-behaved’ few, and build united working class power among the different sectors of the struggle.

Below are two articles by Joel Olson, an organizer with the Repeal Coalition, which is calling organizers to Arizona for a Freedom Summer in order to fight against this new round of attacks on immigrants and undocumented peoples.

Major questions still face the movement in terms of what next and how to do it:

What relationship should organizers and the movement have to institutions like the City Council of Flagstaff?

Can undocumented immigrants be organized at the workplace to fight SB 1070?

How do workers stop ICE raids? Do Cop Watch style groups need to be built in light of what Sheriff Joe Arpaio has done in AZ?

What support can be given to the folks on the ground in AZ from other parts of the country?

How will undocumented immigrants be won over to revolutionary politics in the course of this fight?

Is Sheriff Joe Arpaio representative of proto-fascism, fascism itself, or white populism? How do we look at the Minute Men and the Tea Party Movement under these ideological rubrics?

We should also ask what is the relationship of the economic crisis and the attacks on immigrants.

<http://gatheringforces.org/2010/05/16/on-the-ground-in-arizona/>