

## Stop ALL Raids

by Anne Winkler Morey



Armed with policies from on high, it's never known when they will show up, disrupting lives, terrifying people, tearing families apart, even criminalizing people who are not criminalize.

When my father was five years old soldiers barged into his apartment, upending furniture, tearing apart closets, and taking papers, photos and other possessions, looking for my grandfather. For months afterward the family lived with curtains drawn during the day, hoping not to attract attention from government authorities. When I was twenty-something, my dad and I visited his childhood home. As we stood in front of the stone apartment building, he told me about the raid as though it happened yesterday. His face changed to that of a small child and I was suddenly called to comfort the terrified kid inside a man twice my age.

Today U.S. authorities use raids for a variety of purposes. In Iraq and Afghanistan they are a common military tactic. In the United States raids of homes, workplaces and communities are conducted by local police, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), and Homeland Security.

### Raids as a military tactic

The wars that the United States fights today no longer involve soldiers facing soldiers. Raids of neighborhoods by U.S. and allied forces are the modus operandi. According to Iraq Veterans Against the War "raids of Iraqi homes are a daily occurrence." If you are Iraqi or Afghani, that is reason enough to subject you to

search and seizure at any time without a warrant. In other words, to the foreign occupiers of Iraq and Afghanistan, if you are a citizen of your own country, you are automatically guilty until proven innocent.

#### Raids as a tactic of immigration policy

In the United States, ICE agents have a different formula: if you are of Latin American descent, or look like you might be, that is reason enough to warrant raids of your workplace, your home, your community's spaces. In the case of undocumented immigrants, such a raid can lead to deportation. Documented or not, immigration raids lead to arrests and detentions in centers where civil and human rights are violated.

#### Raids in drug enforcement

Have you seen the movie *American Violet*? It depicts a true story of an apartment complex in a black neighborhood of a racially segregated Texas town in the early 21st century. We know about the raid because one young mother of four, accused of selling drugs to children at the local high school refused to plead guilty and take a plea bargain for a crime she did not commit. This meant she would remain in jail, away from her kids for weeks, lost her job and found herself blacklisted when seeking employment elsewhere. The ACLU took up her case. Their website is full of stories of innocent people losing property and livelihoods due to drug raids. The effect of these drug raids on children in predominately low income and African American communities is not measured.

#### FBI raids

The FBI, we are told, is ever vigilant and proactive these days, trying to find terrorists before they act. What I have learned from the raids and subpoenas of antiwar activists in our community is that we need to question the motives and judgment of any action taken by the FBI or Homeland Security. Just as these government raiders operate under a "guilty until proven innocent" policy, we who care about human rights, civil liberties and the security of our communities need to view the actions of these officials in the same light.

Surely not all raids are conducted against antiwar activists like those whose homes were raided by the FBI in the fall of 2010 in Minneapolis and elsewhere. Not all of those who are victims of raids are innocent of any crime, or victims of unjust laws. However, even when raids are conducted against those that most would agree are involved in criminal activities, raids are a blunt instrument inevitably involving so-called "collateral damage." In addition, raiders are highly susceptible to corruption because they are given license to loot property and profit from the latter. In fact, those ordering and conducting raids are often the ones engaging in illegal acts: from stealing to crimes against humanity. The effect is that raids increase crime in our communities and our world. Those damaged by these crimes are often the most innocent among us: children—and the damage can last a lifetime.

Raids are an effective tool for fascists like the Nazi's who raided my dad's apartment in Gleiwitz, Germany, when he was a child. They have no place in a democracy.

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