Raza Media within the Belly of the Beast: Counter-Insurgency in the Barrio

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Abstract
On December 15, 2005, the United States House of Representatives passed the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Immigration Control Act (H.R. 4437) by a vote of 239 to 182. This act, sparked a wave of community-led protests across the United States, from Los Angeles to Chicago, New York to Dallas, millions of protesters took to the streets to demand justice and to put a halt to the clear racist attack against migrants and immigrants. These mega and localized marches, which began to spill onto the streets in March and through May of 2006, drew the largest mass demonstrations ever in the history of the United States, to the point that analysts immediately called this struggle, the “new civil rights movement.”

An important factor in educating our communities on the true intentions of state-repression will be to continue to work on creating, maintaining, and expanding an independent movimiento that can provide an alternative to the Republocrats (Republican/Democrat) Party and that can identify and challenge the counter-insurgent, low intensity warfare against La Raza.

An integral part to this effort, will be to establish an independent Raza Press and Media Association that will be able to provide our communities with information and analysis that will never be found within the mainstream, corporate, capitalist media.

Keywords
Raza media, movimiento, capitalism/imperialism, migrants, immigration, Sensenbrenner Bill, counter-insurgency

We must endeavor to maintain the integrity of the immigration process and protect our homeland by ensuring that every alien that is ordered to be removed, and can be, departs the United States as quickly as possible and as effectively as practicable.¹

—Anthony S. Tangeman, Director, Office of Detention and Removal
June 27, 2003

¹ June 27, 2003, Department of Homeland Security Immigrations Customs and Enforcement, Memorandum for Deputy Assistant Director, Field Operations Division, and Field Directors.
On December 15, 2005, the United States House of Representatives passed the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Immigration Control Act (H.R. 4437) by a vote of 239 to 182. This act sparked a wave of community-led protests across the United States, from Los Angeles to Chicago, New York to Dallas, millions of protesters took to the streets to demand justice and to put a halt to the clear racist attack against migrants\(^2\) and immigrants. These mega and localized marches, which began to spill onto the streets in March and through May of 2006, drew the largest mass demonstrations ever in the history of the United States, to the point that analysts immediately called this struggle, the “new civil rights movement.”\(^3\)

Although H.R. 4437, also known as the Sensenbrenner Bill, named after its sponsor from Wisconsin, Representative James Sensenbrenner, was never passed by the Senate, it nevertheless brought the immigration debate front and center in the political arena. The climax of the protests against H.R. 4437 was the Day Without Immigrants\(^4\), a mass demonstration held on May 1, 2006 on the commemorative International Workers’ Day, which resulted in at least one million demonstrations across US. The boycott was expressed in many ways, including marches, pickets, store closures, work stoppages, walkouts from worksites and schools, teach-ins, and blockades of streets, among others.

Since this historic action, participation in the struggle on this issue has subsided. We argue that it is through scientific, calculated counter-insurgency measures led by the state and its apparatus of repression and containment, which have contributed to the derailing or suppression of this \textit{movimiento}.\(^5\)

Beginning immediately after March 2006, in response to demonstrations, which in the main were led by \textit{Raza} youth, the state mechanism of counter-insurgency began to go into effect. The militant and independent nature of the early March 2006 demonstrations in which seas of Mexican flags alongside other Latin-American flags were unfurled, brought about serious concerns by conservative and even “progressives” from within mainstream non-profit Latino “advocacy” agencies and within both the Democrat and Republican infrastructure. In the midst of these mass actions, and just six days after the

\(^2\) Note: “We use the term ‘migrant’ to define Raza, as an indigenous people that has migrated these territories for centuries and we reject being defined as immigrants.” Raza Press and Media Association.


\(^4\) “Thousands march for immigrant rights, schools, businesses feel impact as students, workers walk out”, CNN.com, Monday, May 1, 2006.

\(^5\) The term “movimiento” in its historic definition, meaning the movement, for social justice, self-determination, and liberation for Raza.