

ILLEGAL ALIENS

News

Neighborhood Acts On Agents To Be Focus Of Lawsuits

12-13-84 - CT
TWO local groups expect to file suit next month against the federal Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to halt alleged illegal tactics in arresting and deporting migrant workers.

"The MMEP is committed to taking the INS to court and getting an injunction against their raids," said Jon Silver, of Watsonville's Migrant Media Education Project.

More than 400 people marched from Beach Flats to San Lorenzo Park Saturday, protesting the INS activity. Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt called the INS agents "thugs and goons" for their alleged illegal tactics used in rounding up the aliens.

"Nobody has the right to terrorize people, to go into homes without a search warrant, to endanger the lives of sick people and to arrest poor people who are standing in line to get food," said Wormhoudt, referring to two November raids in which 20 people were arrested. The raids coincided with morning deliveries of free food from the St. Francis Catholic Kitchen truck. Wormhoudt's comments, she said, are based on having seen statements given under oath by witnesses.

County supervisors have scheduled a February public hearing concerning methods used by the INS in rounding up undocumented workers.

City Council member Mike Rotkin said he is preparing an ordinance which would ban the INS from operating within the city. There is currently a city resolution which prohibits city police from cooperating with INS agents, Rotkin said.

In defense of their activity, INS agent George Ruiz of Salinas said, "Our policy demands that we observe the rights of aliens, and we are strictly reprimanded if we do not protect their rights."

But Silver said, "The treatment of people by the INS is one of contempt. They rarely inform the migrants of their rights and often use verbal and physical threats to make them sign a voluntary departure form." •