

Thousands demonstrate in Milwaukee, Wisconsin against deportations

By Chris Davion and Jeff Lusanne
14 February 2017

Tens of thousands of workers, families and youth marched through Milwaukee in the “Day Without Latinos, Refugees and Immigrants” protest against the Trump Administration’s raft of anti-immigrant measures. The larger-than-expected turnout reflects enormous opposition to Trump’s xenophobic and racist plans to deport millions of immigrants and refugees. The demonstrations took place in the wake of last week’s ICE raids rounding up nearly 700 immigrants and following Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke’s decision to enroll the Milwaukee County law enforcement in Section 287(g) program (referring to the Immigration and Nationality Act). This deputizes local Milwaukee County police officers to carry out raids against immigrants as an extension of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The protest was striking both in the number of workers, families and youth attending to denounce the anti-immigrant policies and in the broadly working-class character of the population that attended.

On January 27, Clarke announced that he enrolled in Section 287 to support the Trump Administration’s executive orders and plans to deport millions of immigrants and refugees. He declared: “President Trump made it clear with his Executive Order on enforcement of our immigration laws... No more catch and release of criminal illegal aliens. I will assign as many deputies to this initiative as I can. It is a public safety priority.”

The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to demonstrators at the rally. Yesenia said the decorations are “not fair, they are breaking up families. This is their home. Even though they say they are sending them back where they came from, they don’t know anything there; they live here, this is their home. And then parents have to leave their kids behind, because they are the ones that are

being sent back.”

Many demonstrators explained that the anti-immigration policies of the Trump administration were prepared by the Obama administration, which deported 2.5 million migrants, more than all previous presidents combined.

Jeider ,a young demonstrator, noted, “Even throughout the Obama Administration, this march has been going on for every single year that I can remember. There is a lack of humanity in these deportations. I see it in my house, it is right there, my parents suffer, I suffer. People are denied access to opportunities— federal aid, for example. I couldn’t go to the university I wanted to.”

His friend Favi added, “Immigrants are here for a reason. They believe this is a great place, and they are already working. Sheriff Clarke’s new law is just a new way of making us fear, of keeping us on our toes, and we already live like that. It is unnecessary, and it is based on prejudice and discrimination. That should not be allowed, ever.”

Milwaukee Sheriff Clarke has distinguished himself as an ultra-right and fascistic proponent of police state measures and is closely aligned with the Trump Administration. An African-American and registered Democrat, Clarke posted tweets endorsing a martial law-like response to social unrest regarding Trump and popular anger over police shootings, calling for a state of emergency and the use of “all non-lethal force” to “quell” the anti-Trump protests that erupted across the country after the elections.

Earlier in January, it came to light that Clarke had made bullying threats to the Milwaukee County chief medical examiner after the examiner released information about two inmates who died from horrific neglect in Milwaukee County Jail. Under Clarke’s

tenure, four people died in Milwaukee jails over a six-month period in 2016, including a newborn baby birthed by a mentally-ill woman who was “laughed at” by prison guards when she cried for help while going into labor. In addition, a black man died in jail from dehydration after jail staff shut off his water supply.

In Clarke’s myriad interviews in right-wing news outlets, he has referred to demonstrators against police violence participating in Black Lives Matter protests as “subhuman creeps” and made dubious claims about the group’s potential to collaborate with ISIS and that the protesters should be eradicated “from American society”. In a 2015 radio interview, Clarke said impoverished African-Americans turn to crimes of desperation “because they’re uneducated, they’re lazy, and they’re morally bankrupt. That’s why.” He epitomizes the brutal and fascistic social outlook of the American police, who serve to protect private property and the privilege of the wealthy.

The tens of thousands of marchers carried a variety of signs denouncing Trump and Clarke and opposing the anti-democratic and discriminatory measures. Workers, families and students came from across Wisconsin, and as the mostly Latino crowd marched up 5th Avenue, a cheer erupted at the sight of hundreds of Muslim protesters and others defending refugee rights.

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