

OPEN THE BORDERS

NO ONE IS ILLEGAL

PUBLIC MEETING, Oxford Town Hall,

7:30 PM, THURSDAY JUNE 16TH, 2011

VICTORIA BRITTAIN - *journalist, author, former Associate Foreign Editor at The Guardian, and campaigner on many human rights issues, including detention at Belmarsh and Guantanamo, the oppression of Palestine and the Gaza blockade, and the brutality against women in the eastern Congo.*

RAHILA GUPTA - *campaigner, writer and journalist. Through interviewing at length five "illegal" workers for her latest book "Enslaved: the New British Slavery" she became convinced that the one thing that would free them would be open borders and the end of immigration controls.*

TRACY WALSH - *Trade Union and anti-racist activist; TUC Tutor at Ruskin College, Oxford.*

FOR NEARLY 20 YEARS, politicians have been locked into a crazy contest: who can hit immigrants the hardest? In 1993, Britain had just one immigrant prison. Now we have 11, and Europe has become a fortress against foreigners. By early 2011, its borders had claimed at least 15,725 lives and (in the UK alone) reduced perhaps a million people to destitution, despair, slavery, and even suicide.

Persecution "by popular demand", or just to appease racists?



This stencilled graffiti image first appeared in Bristol in 2006. It has become an emblem of the European No Borders movement from the Arctic to Athens.

Some newspapers say this is what British people want. But do they? If they did, would that make it right to harm people who have done no harm, just because they were born elsewhere?

Increasingly, people are recognising that these laws are a disaster. They cannot be made fair or humane. They're meant to hurt, and for the lowest of purposes: to woo supporters of racist groups like the BNP by being "tough as old boots" (as Labour Home Secretary David Blunkett put it) on the kinds of people the BNP dislikes.

Scapegoating can be used against anyone if we allow it, and tear society apart. It started with immigrants but the same strategy is now being deployed against benefit claimants, public employees, disabled people, and unions.

Join us on June 16th, and help build the arguments, and a movement, to replace the madness of anti-immigrant laws with a new politics based on equality, solidarity and freedom for all.

Place: The Old Library, Oxford Town Hall, St Aldates, Oxford OX1 1BX *Time:* 7:30 pm *Admission free*

Contact: oxford@noii.org.uk 01865 726804

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Anti-foreigner laws undermine everybody's welfare.

ANTI-IMMIGRANT LAWS POISON and distort every society that tolerates them. Surveillance becomes pervasive. Teachers and employers are required to check on their students and employees. Neighbours are encouraged to inform on neighbours they suspect of being “illegal” or “extremist”.

Vast, malign business empires have grown up around these laws, to build and run the new prisons, to monitor, incarcerate and deport. Often, these are the same companies involved in privatising public services, and they form a global lobby for out-sourcing, surveillance, “flexibilisation” and de-unionisation.

Global criminal networks thrive on the super-vulnerable labour of “illegals”, in every industry from agriculture to packaging to sex (an industry now worth more in Europe than the global arms trade - thanks to the endless supplies of rights-less, illegalised women and children these laws create).

These laws claim to protect “our” workers but in reality they undermine everyone's welfare.

As David Cameron said, in his Munich speech in April 2011, “immigration and welfare reform are two sides of the same coin”. His “solution” to the economic crisis is to cut immigration *and* benefits, and force native British workers into lousy, badly-paid jobs currently done by insecure migrants.

Trade unionists increasingly recognise that the way to protect their members is not to try to stop immigration, but to organise and recruit immigrants, and to struggle for equal rights for all.



GUARDS AT YARL'S WOOD immigrant prison, Bedfordshire; scene of numerous hunger strikes, endemic self-harm and racism against detainees. Babies and children were held here with their mothers till last year. It is run by £4.3 billion-a-year outsourcing giant Serco.

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Message to the meeting, from John McDonnell MP



“We live in a world where the planet can be circled in days; a world in which people, seeking escape from threats to their physical safety and human rights or living in hopeless poverty, can travel thousands of miles to seek security. The walls around Europe cannot be built high enough to keep these people out and nor should they be. It is time now to accept the reality of a world without borders that is emerging and to start planning for this inevitability. We can then constructively face the vista of issues we need to address ranging from the role we must play in eliminating the push factors of poverty, oppression, climate change and war that are uprooting people from the developing world to determining how we can eliminate the brutality with which people are currently being treated.”

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