

# NO-ONE IS ILLEGAL!

The No One Is Illegal Group, UK web: <http://www.noii.org.uk> email: [info@noii.org.uk](mailto:info@noii.org.uk) post: Bolton Socialist Club, 16 Wood Street, Bolton, BL1 1DY. April 2005

## ALL IMMIGRATION CONTROLS MUST GO!

**They're mere concessions to racists, and they're poisoning our entire society.**

IT'S TIME TO CONFRONT the whole ideology of immigration controls. Many people privately believe they're a mad, dangerous idea. It's time we all started saying it publicly!

No One Is Illegal (NOII) UK was set up in 2003 to campaign for the total abolition of controls. We oppose them in principle and reject any idea there can be "fair" or "just" or "reasonable" or "non racist" controls. We recognise, too, that it's impossible to distinguish between "economic migrants" and "refugees", between the "legal" and the "illegal" -- and downright immoral to try to separate the "deserving" (who we deem to have been sufficiently-horrendously tortured to be worthy of our sympathy) from the "undeserving". Instead we support free movement for all and unity between all.

According to the media and parliamentarians, immigration controls are a basic, god-given fact of life. To suggest their abolition invites violent condemnation for utopic and even dangerous naivety. But what is utopic, what is unrealistic, is the idea that controls can be sanitized, turned into their opposite and made fairer. They were never meant to be fair!

Immigration controls are not a natural feature of life. They are relatively new, and always a response to racist agitation. Britain had none till 1905, when the Aliens Act scraped through Parliament after years of agitation by the anti-Semitic British Brothers' League. Italy survived without immigration laws until 1998!

Controls invade the entire life of a country, particularly by linking welfare provision to immigration status. Our rights cease to be simple human rights, but *entitlements* predicated on our status - which is always open to challenge.

Controls are inherently authoritarian. They are first and foremost statements of power. Humans are favoured or punished not for anything they've done, but as a message to their fellows, out there in the world; fairness is not a consideration. And controls, however mild, can never be "fair" to those subject to them. There will always be some who fall foul of them, and are crushed.



**INSTITUTIONS OF RACISM:** Typical guards at a typical immigrant-prison. These are at the notorious Yarl's Wood "Immigration Removal Centre", near Bedford UK, operated by Global Solutions Ltd (formerly Group 4). Successive media exposés and official enquiries have revealed that these places are riddled with racism, and violence against the inmates is routine.

Britain now has a "state within a state" that was inconceivable not long ago: a steadily-spreading "Gulag archipelago" of immigrant-prisons, where people are locked up indefinitely, without trial, subjected to casual violence, for daring to set foot on our sacred British soil. Entire new careers and business interests burgeon in the new detention industry, and extend into sectors which should be opposing controls. For instance many local authority workers now have to assess immigration status before providing housing or social services; voluntary sector agencies are deeply implicated in the Home Office's forced dispersal scheme.

Meanwhile, much of the Left, which should be opposing these developments, is silent. In private it will say it is opposed to all controls - then declares the idea "too advanced" to argue in public. We consider this position is based on fear of confronting the hard and popular racism behind immigration controls.

Arguing against immigration controls may not be popular - but it has to be done, and urgently. Removing them won't be easy. Given the identification of the state with immigration controls, getting rid of them may well require a revolution. Making them "fair", however, would take a miracle.

**THE NO ONE IS ILLEGAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE:**  
*"Our slogans and theirs"*

**Saturday, July 2nd 2005**  
**1:00pm - 6:00pm**  
**Cross St Chapel, Cross Street, Manchester.**



**Come to this, our second annual gathering and see how we can internationalise the struggle.**

**Entry by donation. Come early for light refreshment.**

**No need to register in advance but it would help us if you could indicate if you intend to come: [info@noii.org.uk](mailto:info@noii.org.uk)**

► NOII's principles are developed at greater length in our Manifesto, which you can download at <http://www.noii.org.uk>. Please read it, discuss it, distribute it, and let us know what you think of it: [info@noii.org.uk](mailto:info@noii.org.uk) ◀

# Introducing the new, GLOBAL GULAG.

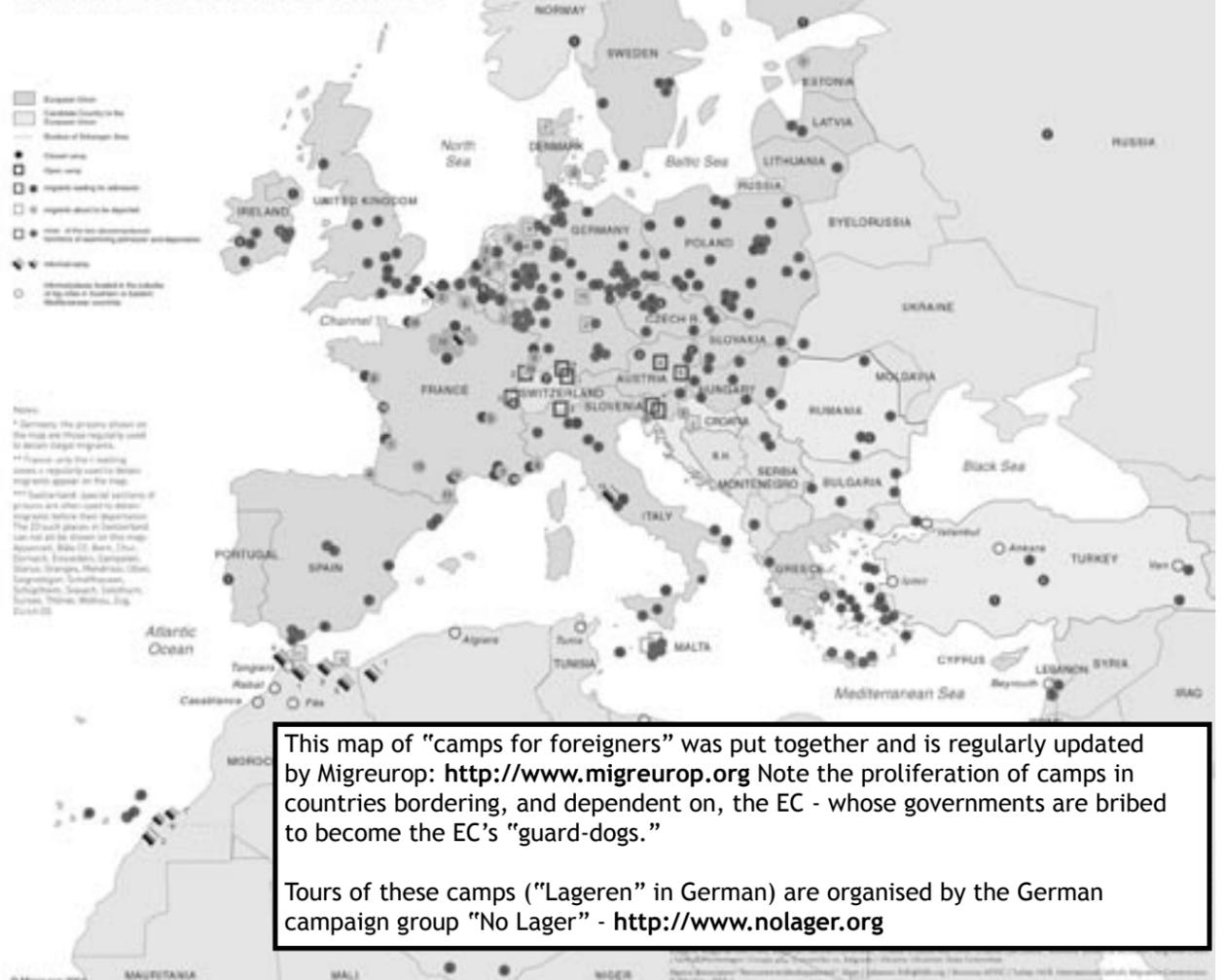
Europe's 4,500 known deaths a year are just the tip of an iceberg of planned suffering and super-exploitation.

SINCE THE COLLAPSE of the Soviet Union, a worldwide war on migrants has erupted — with a breathtaking growth of frontier fortifications, and a sudden rash of prisons of all kinds, shapes and sizes. In the ones in Britain, migrants are detained without legal process or time limit. The death-toll is that of a fair-sized military conflict: 4,500 died trying to get into Europe alone in 2003, according to one Dutch-based refugee support group. Nobody can even guess what the global total is. The EU countries, and the USA, now spend billions of dollars on border-defences: the OECD countries spent \$17bn in 2002.

The new Gulag Archipelago makes the old, Soviet one look very small and amateurish. Migrants are a vital resource for capitalism, and it creates plenty of them via its various wars and “aid” schemes. Approximately 7.5 million refugees are “warehoused” indefinitely in camps of various kinds, mainly in places like Pakistan, Chad, Zambia, northern Kenya, and the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories. But the real interest, for the richer countries, focuses on the newer constellations of camps and prisons around their borders. These include large modern-looking prisons in neighbouring states in North Africa and Eastern Europe. East European governments are required to build detention centres as a condition of their “accession”. Elsewhere governments are bribed to stop their nationals emigrating. In 2003, EU President Romano Prodi was said to have offered the president of Senegal €400m “to stop his people running away”. Many Greek holiday islands now have their own discreet mini-prisons, mostly for passing Turks and Kurds. There is to be a new super-prison on Malta, supplementing its three existing ones. Imprisoning Africans is now an important part of Malta's economy.

The frontiers have expanded, like a mutant life-form, into places nobody ever imagined could harbour a frontier. Ships on

Camps for Foreigners in Europe and Mediterranean Countries



the high seas have been redefined as “virtual borders” so that they can be boarded and searched by immigration police. Under its “eBorders” programme, Britain has tested biometrically-monitored mini-frontiers at Miami and Malaga airports. Biometric frontiers have almost become a national virility test. Britain's (based on iris-recognition, supplied by NCR) are said to be a flop, but an Israeli system that recognises hand-span gives real “club-class” treatment to the approved traveller: just wave your hand and through you go, bypassing the queues of unchosen. For some asylum seekers, the British border

now begins at the ankle — to which is attached one of the new electronic tags, supplied and monitored by erstwhile roller-towel suppliers, Reliance Security Services. And with the arrival of the National Identity Card, the border can be anywhere — and anyone who provides a public service can be an immigration officer.

Given the shortage of labour and human talent in the migrant-imprisoning countries, all of this might seem perverse. An open borders policy would surely be more appropriate: it seems most of the US economic boom of the 1990s was due to immigration; it faltered when migration laws were tightened. Similar contradictions are found all over

the world. Malaysia, which in March 2005 employs 300,000 vigilantes to hunt down illegal workers, depends utterly on migrant labour: 15% of the workforce is “illegal”. But if migrants are good value, illegal and precarious ones are the best.

Moroccan contract-workers in the Bouches du Rhone region of France are fantastic value all round: they often work up to 30% extra hours of unpaid overtime. If they leave or get sacked, they're deported. They pay full taxes including pension contributions, yet cannot draw benefits. Strawberry-pickers in Huelva in Southern Spain cost just €30 a day - and only €15 a day if they have no papers. Switzerland's sex industry is now very well-organised. Migrants can apply for permits to work as prostitutes. They may *only* work as prostitutes, are given pregnancy tests on arrival, and their permits expire after 8 months.

“Managed migration”, for which the new Gulag regime is designed, allows human beings to be exploited with previously-inconceivable precision and flexibility, on a just-in-time basis. The leaders here are the old office-temp firms like Manpower (now the world's biggest employer), Adecco and Randstad, aided by the International Organisation of Migration (IOM). In 2000, this configuration made it possible to clean up damage caused all over France by a freak hurricane, with “ghost-armies” of Turks, flown in on special permits for a few days, and working at Turkish rates of pay.

A possible flaw in this impressive system is its vulnerability to outbreaks of human indignation and international “solidarity from below” - and its quite remarkable tendency to provoke them.



The movement against border controls is growing fast, and it's a truly international movement. In 2004 the first co-ordinated Europe-wide day of action against border controls was marked by over 50 actions in more than 10 countries.

# SOLIDARITY, NOT PITY!

Good health is a bad idea under immigration law; the quest for refugee status becomes a suffering-competition.

“If a young person tells me they were raped, I say good! Tell me the details. The more sordid the better”.

This quotation is not from a predatory male. It is from a feminist lawyer who has devoted two decades to fighting racism and preventing her clients being deported. In the article from which this quote is taken the lawyer says she “had become an unwitting party in the oppression of children and at the same time she felt that she had little option”.

There is obviously something strange and dubious happening here. And what is happening is the fighting of deportation/removal cases on so-called “compassionate” grounds. This practice has become so routine and unquestioned that it is possible to provide a league table of typical grounds. These are (1) adverse effect on welfare of children (2) ill-health (3) domestic violence (4) family separation. (5) old age.

What is immediately clear from the above is that the people most vulnerable to immigration enforcement are the young, single, healthy and childless. What compassionate grounds remain open to them? None.

## Compassionate grounds as spreading illusions - the legal and the political.

The No One Is Illegal group aims to stand present reality on its head. Its aim is to challenge one of the central orthodoxies of resisting controls. It is to question ideologically one of the weapons used by all of us who are opposed in one way or another to immigration controls. It is to redefine as at the most problematic and at worst as reactionary something which is normally seen as unquestionably progressive.

Up to a point, but not beyond it, a distinction has to be made.

This is between the ways cases are presented by represen-

tatives to the Home Office (the “private”) and the way they are presented politically through campaigns (the “public”). Given the balance of forces – with the Home Office being immeasurably more powerful than the individual – it is clear that legal advocates will be obliged to present whatever grounds are deemed necessary to win a case. As Malcolm X said in a very different context – “by any means necessary”.

However political campaigns are different. Their purpose, or one of their purposes, is to make political points as part of the process of winning a victory. And the political point at issue here is the need to challenge at every step the legitimacy of controls themselves. Without challenging the very principle of controls then we are simply creating or reinforcing a vicious circle within which the undocumented remain trapped. Making compassionate grounds the basis of a public campaign is simply reducing the spurious argument that there can be “fair” controls to the individual case. It is spreading illusions that there can be “justice” within controls. As such it is contributing to the myth there can be “non-racist” controls.

Contesting cases publicly on compassionate grounds is problematic for the following reasons. First it is divisive – with each case competing against the next as to which is more “compassionate”. Second it effectively dehumanises the individual by reducing her or him to the sum total of their vulnerabilities. Third where health is made an issue then it is based on a bizarre form of pathologisation. It is as though there exists some unacknowledged point-scoring system: one point for influenza briefly postponing an air flight, two points for a surgical operation delaying departure longer... .five points for a nervous breakdown caused by fear of



expulsion....eight points for risk of suicide.. ten points for terminal illness.

## Where what is bad is good.

Consider undesirable personal and social situations that everyone would wish to avoid – being abused as a child, being battered as a woman, being ill, being too old to be independent. All these undesirable attributes suddenly become desirable, treasured, the holy grail when it comes to contesting immigration cases. They are the hallowed compassionate grounds. Conversely campaigning on such grounds inevitably means that their absence – that is the absence of being battered, of terminal illness – becomes a positive disadvantage. This truly is a world turned upside down. A world where the bad becomes the good.

## Orwell lives!

In 1980 the House of Lords declared Mohammed Zamir to be here illegally for failing to declare something he was never asked, namely that he had got married in Pakistan after being given entry clearance to join his parents here. The court held there existed a “duty of candour” to reveal all “material facts” even though no official had said they were material. This transformed the watch word of the immigration service into “anything you don’t say may be taken down and used in evidence against you”.

This case illustrates with a vengeance the culture of disbelief within immigration control – the undocumented are to be disbelieved even when they say nothing having been asked nothing.

## Nineteen Eighty Four Revisited

All the apparatus of Nineteen Eighty Four is present within immigration control enforcement. The Home Office as Big Brother; the immigration service as the Thought Police, spying on and rooting out the undocumented; standing alongside the immigration authorities is the rest of civil society, for instance local authorities and employers who have now been given a responsibility to report the undocumented to the Home Office. Just as in Nineteen Eighty Four the Proles are tolerated as a group outside of the rest of society, so today those without immigration status exist outside of the welfare state. These modern Sans Papiers exist under a revised Poor Law with the National Asylum Support Service playing the same punitive role as did the Victorian poor law commissioners. As in Nineteen Eighty Four there is a “memory hole” where the past is obliterated, and what’s obliterated is the entire history of the exclusion of refugees since the very first piece of immigration control legislation: the 1905 Aliens Act.

The rampant authoritarianism of controls has now spread its net even wider, reaching into the rest of society. This is the true meaning of the current debate over so-called anti-terrorist legislation. Orwell writes about this authoritarianism: “If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face - for ever”.

# The way forward: break the links; pull the plug!

THESE ARE THE CORE AIMS of the No One Is Illegal Group, from our Manifesto, whose full version is at:

<http://www.noii.org.uk>

- TO BUILD THE WIDEST POSSIBLE ALLIANCE in all struggles against immigration controls amongst those of differing political views. But to do this without collusion with controls and without compromising with the principle of no controls. To do this on the basis of challenging and winning over those involved to a position of opposition to all controls.
- TO RAISE THE DEMAND for no immigration controls within all actions and campaigns in support of migrants and refugees. A no-controls position should not be a necessary precondition of support for any particular campaign, but we should argue constantly within all campaigns for such a position. We should argue for campaign slogans to reflect a position of opposition to controls, not "refugees are our friends" or "refugees are welcome here" but slogans which recognise that we are in favour of freedom for all as a right, not a charity.
- TO SUPPORT AND BUILD EVERY SINGLE CAMPAIGN AGAINST DEPORTATION. To do this on the basis of solidarity not compassion.
- TO SUPPORT AND BUILD EVERY CAMPAIGN AGAINST DETENTION/REMOVAL CENTRES, since these are one of the clearest and most outrageously brutal and unjust consequences of immigration controls. No refugees or migrants should be detained simply because they want to be in this country. All detention/removal centres, and also all accommodation, induction and any other repressive 'centres' designed to enforce the unenforceable, should be closed.
- TO FIGHT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF COLLUSION with immigration control and with the Home Office. In particular this means local authori-

ties and voluntary sector organizations refusing to implement the new poor law. Local authorities should refuse to act as sub-contracted agents providing accommodation (often otherwise unlettable) for the forced dispersal scheme. Voluntary sector agencies should likewise refuse Home Office monies to enforce the poor law either through the provision of accommodation or advice.

- FOR WORKERS WITHIN THE WELFARE SYSTEM to refuse to comply with the denial of benefits or provisions based on immigration status. Most workers within the welfare state, at either local or national level, entered their jobs in the belief they would be providing some form of socially useful service. Instead they now find they are denying services and have become part of the apparatus of immigration control.
- Of course non-compliance by individual workers would leave them absolutely vulnerable to victimization and dismissal. NON-COMPLIANCE REQUIRES MAJOR TRADE UNION SUPPORT. It is manifestly important to try and win trade unions to a position of no immigration controls. To do this it is equally important to form rank and file groupings within unions of welfare workers who are being obliged to enforce internal immigration controls.
- FOR A MASSIVE TRADE UNION CAMPAIGN of recruitment of undocumented workers. Such a recruitment campaign would help break the division between the documented and the undocumented. It would enable a campaign to develop against sweated labour and for the protection of migrant rights - rights to a fair wage, right to proper work conditions and, most of all, the right to work itself - as now it is unlawful to work without the correct immigration documentation. It would also provide another base for the undocumented to resist deportation and to fight for the regularization of their status.

**The No One Is Illegal group UK** was started in Manchester, in September 2003 by five activists. Since then many others have joined us. Our first task was a manifesto, setting out the arguments and a programme of action against immigration controls. This forms a 22-page booklet, which we hope you will download from our web site:

<http://www.noii.org.uk>

Thousands of copies have been distributed throughout the UK, Europe and North America. It has been translated into 4 other languages and through it we're making links with more and more like-minded groups world wide. (One of these is the No Borders Network, whose emblem is below: <http://www.noborder.org>). In July 2004 we staged our first conference. Our next one, on Saturday July 2nd, will be a truly international event. We hope you'll join us there, and see how we can internationalise the struggle. These are exciting times!



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## WHERE "NO ONE IS ILLEGAL" COMES FROM.

"No One Is Illegal" is a phrase first used by Elie Weisel, a Jewish survivor from Nazi Germany, a refugee and a Nobel prize winner. He was speaking in 1985 in Tuscon, Arizona at a national sanctuary conference in the USA in defence of the rights of refugees to live in the USA. The sanctuary movement undertaken by religious communities in the USA (and to a far lesser extent in the UK) in support of those threatened by immigration controls is one of many pieces of resistance to controls.

Over the last few years No One Is Illegal groups have been formed throughout Europe and North America - for instance in Germany (*Kein Mensch Ist Illegal*), Spain (*Ninguna Persona Es Ilegal*), Sweden (*Ingen Manniska Ar Illegal*), Poland (*Zaden Czlowiek Nie Jest Nielegalny*) and Holland (*Geen Mens Is Illegaal*). In August 1999 anarchists organised a demonstration in Lvov Poland against the deportation of Ukranian workers under the banner of No One Is Illegal. In France the sans papiers campaign under the slogan *personne n'est illegal/e*. There have been No One Is Illegal/No Border camps at the joint borders of Germany, Czech Republic and Poland, and No Border camps at Frankfurt, southern Spain and Salzburg. In June 2002 there was a demonstration against war, globalisation and in defence of refugees under the same slogan in Ottawa, Canada. In England groups are emerging calling themselves No Borders. The demand for no controls, rather than being seen as extreme, operates as a rallying call to the undocumented and their supporters.

Our aim is to encourage the formation of No One Is Illegal/No Border groups throughout this country - groups specifically and unreservedly committed to the destruction of all immigration controls.

## THE NO ONE IS ILLEGAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: "Our slogans and theirs"

*Come and discuss what our slogans mean and how to implement them. How to work with unions to sabotage internal controls and fight for the rights of the undocumented. How to fight deportation cases on principle and not on appeals to charity. And how to extend and build the international struggle for a world without borders.*

*Entry is by donation. Come early for light refreshment. There's no need to register in advance but it will help us if you email us to say that you intend to come:*

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**Manchester M2 1NL.**