



STILL ANGRY NOT APATHETIC

Resistance Special Edition Free/Donation

In the wake of the general election
the working class is angry not apathetic!

Resisting the Raids

“So the cops broke into our place at about four o’clock one morning, burst into me and my girlfriend’s room, and one of them turned to the other and said, ‘Leave them alone, they’re white.’ A lady from one of the other flats has disappeared – we haven’t seen her since.”



This is one of the stories that we’ve heard on the Anti Raids Network’s Know Your Rights stall on Deptford High Street this summer.

The idea for the stalls started when one of us learned that some local shops have been raided four times this year already, with the immigration authorities blagging their way in with talk of faulty gas meters and electrical checks. Shop workers and customers have been questioned for hours, and local residents scared away from their own high street.

Across London, communities are fighting back against these multi-agency raids. Sometimes it’s been as simple as surrounding the immigration authority’s vans and making some noise – making it clear to the authorities that they’re not welcome in

our communities. This is what happened in Peckham in May. Enforcement officers were surrounded, and eventually forced to hide out in a butchers shop until they could get away.

A month later in Walworth, it took three vans of riot cops, six police cars and some dogs to remove one guy detained by the authorities. News of the raid spread by word-of-mouth and social media, and the authorities were faced with improvised barricades and flying fruit and veg. Although sadly one guy was taken by the authorities, if every immigration raid was met with that level of resistance it would seriously screw up the State’s ability to deliver these raids.

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In July, an attempted immigration raid being sabotaged by locals in Shadwell, East London. Sixteen van tyres were let down and officers were egged – a similar reception to the previous month in Walworth. To make matters worse for the immigration cops, they had been accompanied by media in a bid to do a spectacular “tough on immigration” stunt. The cops were called, and sadly two people were arrested in the incident – but who knows how many more arrests and detentions there would have been without community resistance?

When people step up and show each other solidarity, we can make immigration checks and raids a lot more difficult. We can do this not only by physically confronting the authorities, but also by knowing our rights and telling others about them.

If immigration officers or the police stop you in the street and ask about your immigration status:

- **You DO NOT have to answer any questions.**
- **You DO NOT have to tell them your name address.**
- **Tell them that you do not want to talk to them.**
- **Stay polite but confident.**
- **You can walk away.**

You can find more news and information on the fight against immigration raids from the Anti-Raids Network, as well as information about your rights, translated into more than twenty languages. It's time to make some noise.

See more at: <https://network23.org/antiraid/>

HOW TO SPOT AN IMMIGRATION RAID

Anti Raids Network



HOW DO THEY ARRIVE?

Vans marked IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT
Sometimes unmarked white/blue/black vans accompanied by police car.



WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?

Should be wearing UKBA
insignia/numbers on shoulders.
They often hide them.



WHERE DO THEY GO?

Streets, Train & Tube stations,
Buses, Workplaces, Homes.



HOW DO THEY ACT?

Arrive in groups, sometimes
with plain clothes officers.
Often block entrances/exits.



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you see someone being stopped by UKBA officers or police on immigration grounds, and your immigration status does not put you at risk, we recommend you:

- 1 Immediately make the person aware they do not have to answer questions & they can leave
- 2 Remind the officers of the law
- 3 Film the incident, where possible asking the person stopped if that's ok, or just film the officers involved. This may be useful in making a claim in the event of an unlawful stop or arrest.
- 4 Record lapel numbers of officers involved
- 5 Make other members of the public aware of what's happening
- 6 Get witnesses' contact details if the stop leads to an arrest or the person wants to pursue it afterwards.
- 7 Attempt to pass on a phone number to the individual if you think the stop will lead to arrest.
- 8 Do not get aggressive or physically obstruct officers if you want to avoid arrest for obstruction.
- 9 If you want to refer to their guidance when speaking to Immigration Officers, everything can be found in Chapter 31 UKBA Operational Enforcement Manual: tinyurl.com/7bt79ym

network23.org/antiraid/,
facebook.com/antiraid_92antiraid

UKBA RAIDS

If immigration officers come to your home or work...



YOU DO NOT HAVE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS



YOU CAN LEAVE IF YOU ARE NOT UNDER ARREST



LEAVING WITHOUT SPEAKING TO THE OFFICERS IS NOT A REASON TO ARREST YOU FOR AN IMMIGRATION MATTER



IF YOU ARE NOT UNDER ARREST, OFFICERS CAN'T CHASE YOU



IF THE OFFICERS BLOCK THE EXITS OR STAND IN FRONT OF YOU TO STOP YOU FROM LEAVING THEY MAY BE LIABLE FOR FALSE IMPRISONMENT.

DON'T TALK – JUST GO

WWW.NETWORK23.ORG/ANTIRAIDS

Editorial: Still Angry not Apathetic



May's general election saw the Tories claim 'victory' with just 24% of the population voting for them. The result isn't even based on public support or enthusiasm towards the Tory party, but rather disillusionment with the fact that none of the political parties are offering any alternative to neoliberalism and austerity. Even Jeremy Corbyn says he will stick to the Tories budget if he were to become the Prime Minister. At the same time the mainstream unions continue to funnel money into the right-wing, big business supporting, warmongering Labour party, rather than into a strike fund where it belongs.

We said before the elections that whoever won, the state would continue to do what it sets out to do – hammer the working class on every front. We weren't wrong.

Workers today are facing the longest cumulative decline in real wages since records began in 1864. Rent increased by 12% under the coalition, and will likely increase further. Unemployed people, especially disabled people, are facing a brutal regime of workfare and benefit sanctions backed by left and right alike. This has forced almost a million people onto food banks and driven people to suicide. Meanwhile the richest sectors of the population – which the government is *really* answerable to – have enjoyed a healthy rise in income.

Popular resistance to this has been prevented in two ways

– first of all by policing and mass surveillance, and secondly by trying to divide our class, scapegoating immigrants and benefit claimants. David Cameron's recent horrifying statement that, "For too long, we have been a passively tolerant society, saying to our citizens, 'so long as you obey the law, we will leave you alone'" is so nakedly authoritarian that it may as well have been said by a fucking comic book villain.

While funding for public services is continually slashed, money and resources are poured into mass surveillance programmes, such as GCHQ's *Tempora*, which involves monitoring phone calls, emails, browsing history and social media activity. Theresa May recently proposed a Draft Communications Data Bill (nicknamed the Snoopers' Charter), which would expand on *Tempora* by making it a legal requirement for WiFi providers and mobile phone companies to keep records on users' activity for at least a year. The growth of the surveillance state will likely expand further in the next few years to combat popular resistance to austerity.

The state has also attempted to prevent popular resistance to austerity by whipping up racism, blaming migrant workers rather than bosses for the colossal wage decline that working class people are facing. Some people claiming to be on the left have even shamefully blamed the working class for the rise of the far-right, rather than institutionalised racism within capitalism and the state.

The state's inherent racism and bigotry has shown itself on multiple occasions, such as in the horrific story of an Albanian man with a brain tumour being taken directly out of intensive care and into a prison cell for immigration 'offences', still wearing his hospital gown and slippers. Earlier in April, the British state allowed 700 migrants – *human beings* – to drown in the Mediterranean.

The situation at present facing our class is absolutely dire. Too dire for us to wait until the next election, or to wait for a saviour to come and help us – whether that's Owen Jones, Russell Brand, or whatever 'Thatcher of the Left' people are waiting for.

We cannot afford to wait.

We have to fight for ourselves and to gain control over our own workplaces, our own homes, and ultimately our own lives. The multi-billionaire owner of *Cartier*, a luxury jewellery company, recently stated that the fear of the working class rising up against the rich keeps him awake at night – and he's right. If we continue to agitate and build up stronger networks of solidarity and resistance, not a single capitalist will sleep a wink.

Cartier owner's fear of working class uprising:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/cartier-boss-with-75bn-fortune-says-prospect-poor-rising-up-keeps-him-awake-at-night-10307485.html>

Housing: Wealth for the rich, a burden for the working class



A place to live is one of the most basic human needs. Unfortunately, housing has now become a source of income for those who can afford to 'buy to let' or 'buy to sit' (buy and leave empty). Using housing as a way to make money has meant that rents and house prices are ever increasing, spiralling out of control.

For most of us, paying for housing has become increasingly difficult. In London people spend on average more than 50% of their income on rent or mortgage payments. Together with low wages and benefit cuts, the cost of housing is yet another attack on the working class, as the government, banks and corporations make us pay for their crisis.

Roots of the Problem

- Government policy that encourages people to want to buy their own home, eg right to buy, low interest rates. They do this because if people feel that they own a home they will be more likely to spend money on credit, thus keeping the economy going. The problem is that they people don't own their own homes, the banks do.
- Government encouragement to foreign property speculators. Successive governments have been unwilling to spend money on housing. A way to get homes built is to get in foreign money. Developers know that they can sell their properties to these rich buyers, so are more likely to invest in housing. But, the vast majority of these properties are out of reach of the average renter or buyer. Forcing people into overcrowded accommodation in order to afford the high prices.

Consequences

Apart from making people suffer financial hardship, struggling to make ends meet, the consequences are very

far-reaching, affecting the very character of urban areas. As the money is to be made in the centres of cities, people are being forced further and further out in order to find homes they can afford. Those on benefit find can often themselves forced to relocate far from friends and family. This an even bigger issue in London because it is not just the centre that is the target for developers but most of the city, forcing many out of London all together.

Another consequence is that the whole economy is very precarious; too much depends on the housing prices continuing to rise. It doesn't have to take much for a few people to lose confidence, for foreign borrowers to panic and the whole house of cards could come tumbling down, just like it did in the last crisis!

The Growing Resistance

In many cities, the housing crisis has given rise to a host of campaigns that are challenging the current situation. These campaigns were already well-underway before the election and they knew that they would have to carry on fighting no matter what political party got in. Some campaigns focus on anti-eviction work, for example the E15 mothers who successfully stopped the relocation of young mothers out of London. They continue to campaign against individual evictions and against social cleansing. Others are fighting the demolition of whole estates as housing associations and councils sell of their properties to private developers. Resistance has been militant, with a number of occupations, such as the one on Aylesbury Estate in south London. The Boleyn Ground 100 campaign is an ambitious one. Realising that the main source of the problem is a lack of social housing, they are demanding 100% social housing to be built on the grounds of the West Ham stadium when the team is relocated.

What is particularly significant about what is happening is that the various campaigns are gradually linking up. This process is helped by the formation of the Radical Housing Network which is made up of grass roots campaigns from all over London. This is helping to create a full-blown housing movement rather than just a number of isolated



campaigns. It is not just a movement of political activists, but one made up of people from the local communities fighting to save their homes from demolition or struggling against rent increases and evictions. And there have been victories! The New Era Estate in Hackney defeated an American company and won the right to stay on social rents. We can all be encouraged by this determination to fight back and win, showing what we can do if we build resilient communities.

However, there is a risk that some may focus less on building the local campaigns and instead put their hopes on having a left Labour government. We cannot forget that our only chance of having major changes in the housing situation is to rely on ourselves and having a strong movement. This comment from someone in the Sweets Way housing campaign in North London says is all:

"One thing I think has been abundantly clear at Sweets Way is the power of collective action. Together, we have fought the twin giants of an ultra-Tory council and a private developer with strong links to national Tory brass... And have secured some wins that may seem piecemeal to some, but which have been absolutely critical in the lives of the various families involved. We've also stood by one another, using the occupation as a multifunction community space that hosts organising meetings, collective meals, and 7 year old's birthday parties, offering the emotional and practical support needed to deal with the bullshit.

We have been creating our own power at Sweets Way and it is not a power that was phased, one way or the other by the election results. It is a power that has emerged in spite of politicians, and which will continue to grow without them."

Wake Up!



Wake Up gatherings, where people are given opportunity to use quality PA on the streets of towns and cities are mushrooming over the country. Debates which divide and rule us, encompassing racism, extreme religion, sexism, Islam and austerity are taking place in market streets. The views of the right and the racist are openly being challenged out of doors without the use of darkened meeting rooms and the need to read in advance. Equipment is provided by Community Bandstand and, during sessions, no-one is allowed to shout another speaker, ensuring a degree of voice for all involved.

The first Wake Up! Manchester followed on from some arrests in the summer of 2014 at the anti-fracking site at Barton Moss. PA equipment was used outside the police station where the arrestees were held and quality debates began. Initially, the Wake Up! sessions were musical, with serial monologues but they soon developed into debates.

Recently in Manchester, a rabid Christian using his own PA was peddling his church on Market Street. He was challenged, using another street microphone with "What happens to all the money you collect?". Mobile mikes were distributed and a large crowd got involved in a debate which challenged the power of the church and the role money plays in sustaining it while the poor and homeless remain on the street.

In Bolton, an EDL member was mouthing off their usual Islamophobia. A large crowd gathered and through debate and discussion, the racist ideas were dismantled. It is risky

giving voice to those like the EDL and the religious right, but by taking them on in a public forum, the Wake Up! team believe that it is more effective to break down their ideas and it is worth this risk to attack the ghettoised opinions.

For some people, access to new anarchist ideas is limited by a fear of reading and limited literacy. Wake Up! gets around this by allowing for street debate. When you have a conversation with a person you have an opportunity to clear up misunderstandings there and then.

Currently Wake Up! Operates in Bolton Manchester Liverpool and Wigan. New Wake Up! groups are developing in Ipswich, Newcastle, Bangor and Sheffield. If you would like to set one up in your local area contact www.communitybandstand.wordpress.com

[www.communitybandstand.wordpress](http://www.communitybandstand.wordpress.com)

- Will provide PA systems
- Megaphones
- Cameras telescopic banner poles

You will need to cover petrol/diesel money

Advice on setting up a Wake Up!

- Choose a space with
- Good footfall
- Space for a banner behind
- Space for PA equipment, e.g. outside a closed-down shop with shutters.
- Pick a regular time so people can find you
- Check local by-laws. In some areas, when challenged by the law, cops left when informed it was a civil issue and the council were welcome to come and discuss it with them. This may be different in your area.

Syriza: lessons from the Greek tragedy

Many volumes will be written over the coming years about the rise and fall of SYRIZA, but the immediate lessons are simple.

Capitalism is sustained in part by the Left

From European 'social democrats' supporting imperialist slaughter in World War One, and the French Communist Party winding down the 1968 General Strike, to SYRIZA rescuing the euro with Greek austerity, parliamentary Leftists have helped stabilise capitalism and defend war for over a century. With the euro teetering in the balance, it took Europe's most radical government to save it. When people have had enough of the 'tough' anti-worker, anti-poor talk of the right, there is always somebody waiting in the wings to carry out much the same policies with a new face and a left-ish sounding program.

When elected leaders say they are going to sell out, believe them

Even on the eve of the "OXI" referendum, SYRIZA leader Tsipras insisted that he was only going to use it to negotiate a better deal in order to remain in the Eurozone. He was doing everything he could to avoid a Greek exit and was very open about it. The numbers in the eventual austerity deal were even worse than expected, but ultimately this is not a maths problem but a political problem.

Electing radicals into powerful positions disarms them

Taking a radical, giving them an enormous amount of power, media attention, a generous living stipend, a free car, etc. is a formula for turning them into just another politician. This should be obvious. They become accustomed to their position, to their own self-importance, and to playing by the rules of government and business. Even worse, once they are in power, others on the left suddenly become toothless and placid, unable to stand the thought of fighting their own friends.

Leftists will consistently cling to power rather than dismantle it

Only two members of SYRIZA's 'Left Platform' voted against Tsipras's proposal. Many even voted for it, or like many in Labour's recent parliamentary votes simply abstained. They could have used every parliamentary tactic they had to sabotage the deal that the Greek people had voted against. They could have split their party, brought down the government and done everything possible to pull the emergency break on this



disastrous plan. Instead they chose to maintain SYRIZA's hold on parliament and their position in it.

In spite of what they consistently say, Leftists throughout the world are waiting for a messiah to rescue them

Various self-described left-revolutionaries the world over looked to SYRIZA to break the euro and defeat austerity in Greece and beyond. All they had to do was realise that a few dozen left-wing MPs were not up to the task and would, as always, succumb to the pressure. In spite of all the talk of working-class self-organisation, many still believe that electing radical leaders into parliament is a good strategy rather than a disaster waiting to happen.

There is a bright and necessary future for radical and revolutionary organising, but it is in the workplaces, the prisons and the streets, not in parliament

The problem is not that we have bad people, but bad strategies. Even the best people falter when they take parliamentary power. The more radically working class and left-wing they are, the more everyone around them believes they are immune from the pressures to compromise their principles and sell out. The solution is not to find better people to elect, but to use different strategies.

These unsurprising sellouts will continue happening until there is a revolutionary struggle powerful enough to fight for something else

So let's build that instead.

Adapted and abridged from an article originally posted to Libcom.org by Scott Jay in July 2015.

JC's not our Saviour



Jeremy Corbyn has won the leadership contest for the Labour Party. The events leading up to this and his actions since make one thing clear: the Labour Party is in severe crisis and has been for some time.

After Labour's devastating defeat in the May election, being all but wiped out in Scotland, some high-ups in the party thought that it would be a good idea to have a token left candidate in the Labour leadership elections. Modelled on the US primaries, the leadership race was designed to give an appearance of democracy whilst trying to take away any real say from what was left of the base membership of the Party.

On one hand the Labour Party could say it was being inclusive, while on the other hand Corbyn's expected defeat would show that there was no room at all for what was left of the Labour Left and anything that at all jarred with the hymn to the market that was being sung by the party leadership and their party machine.

For his part in this, Corbyn is rather a mediocre personality. For years he would have been seen as being on the centre-Left of Labour, offering the standard social-democratic politics and bland discussion points. Corbyn is only now being portrayed as some sort of left-wing radical due to how far to the right the rest of the party has moved.

However, the plans of the party chiefs backfired, as they underestimated the strength of feeling amongst the working class. There are plenty of people that are disgusted by the ever increasing austerity measures being voted through parliament. Labour membership grew to try and put in place a leader that people felt could turn the party into a force to oppose the ongoing cuts. Corbyn was given a clear mandate by the membership to be the leader, unfortunately the will of the membership makes little difference to the party's actions.

At the core of the Labour party many are far less thrilled about this turn of events. Wealthy donors have threatened to pull their support and a huge number of Labour MPs refused to be considered to form part of the shadow cabinet alongside him. Those that did are little better, and often voice open opposition to their Leader's ideas. While

many thought the Blairites would rebel, a leaked memo by Tony Blair's right-hand man Peter Mandelson urged the parliamentary party to just sit back and wait for Corbyn to lose popularity before the Blairites retake control. Mandelson and his ilk don't want a public split at this point as they fear any split would sink the ship they hope to steer.

Corbyn does not want such a split either, even if some of his left allies would welcome it. He has been a loyal Labour MP for 30 years, staying with it through thick and thin, through the Iraq War, though Labour's introduction of university fees, and most recently through the complete lack of opposition to the Tory Welfare Bill. His inclusion of Blairites in his new shadow cabinet shows just how reluctant he is to split the party.

He may have won the leadership contest but he now faces the 'party machine' built by Blair and his allies. It is designed to shore up their control, decide who gets onto the list of electoral candidates, and stifle opposition from the membership at key times. He also faces the majority of his own MPs who are still wedded to the Blairite and Brownite ideas of the Labour Party being pro-business and pro-war.

In order to hold his party together, Corbyn has spent the first two weeks of his leadership backing down and capitulating on precisely the things his supporters wanted from him. He has been forced to make the vote over Scrapping Trident and opposing the current austerity measures a free vote, meaning MP's will ignore him. He has also stated that his opposition to the benefits cap is purely personal and may not be reflected in how the party votes in parliament. Worst of all, if elected, he has stated that Labour would work within the same budget laid out by the Tories.

We should not be surprised by his well-intentioned lies. Corbyn is just one in a long line of 'new hopes' of the Left, designed to fail before they have even started. PASOK and Syriza in Greece betrayed their supporters. The Irish and German Green Parties sold out to get a chair at the table. Podemos in Spain have already u-turned on their radical rhetoric. While here we have Jeremy Corbyn, a person so intent with keeping the peace within his party he refuses to fight for his professed ideals. Instead he is paralysed against action to the point of handing the party back to its right-wing he claimed to oppose.

If JC isn't even willing to stand up to the bullies in his party then why should any of us expect him to stand up to big business and austerity? Self organisation and direct action still stand as the tried and true method not only to take on our enemies, but to win!

The Myth of '45

“We must give them reforms or they will give us revolution”

Quintin Hogg, Tory politician in 1943



A whole raft of personalities from Tony Benn and Ed Miliband to Jeremy Corbyn and Ken Loach (in his film *The Spirit of '45*) have praised the 1945 Labour Government. They offer a list of leftwing reasons; the nationalisation of the railways, electricity, gas, mines, Bank of England, and British Airways, and most famously, the birth of the National Health Service.

Labour were swept to power in 1945 with a majority of 145. After years of war, many did not want to put up with a class ridden society of inequality, poverty and shortages for the working class. However the nationalisation that was carried out, was seen by the ruling class not as a way of bringing about more democratic control of industry, but simply as a necessity to rebuild the country. In France the right wing nationalists led by General De Gaulle had nationalised far more of the economy, and they certainly weren't doing it in the name of socialist ideals.

Meanwhile Labour's program of social insurance (welfare) was based on a report by the liberal economist William Beveridge in 1942. Even Churchill's Conservatives were prepared to implement 'cradle to grave' social insurance had they not lost the election. While the creation of a National Health Service took pride of place in the manifestos of all three main parties.

The reforms brought in were geared to firstly helping Britain reconstruct after the War and secondly head off any revolutionary movement by offering a package of reforms to placate the masses. The ruling class was fearful of another round of revolutions after World War Two after it had witnessed a similar scenario after World War One.

By 1948 Labour were introducing an austerity package because of an economic crisis that had started the previous year. It including cuts to NHS provision and a wage freeze. Labour even banned sport during the week because they believed that it encouraged absenteeism. Unemployment shot up from 400,000 to 1.5 million.

Labour's attacks on the working class hadn't waited until 1948. Within 6 days of coming to power Labour sent troops into the Surrey Docks in London to break a strike. Three months later Labour again sent troops in to break a national docks strike, and did this again in 1948. In 1950 Labour used the Navy to break a gas workers strike and had some strikers arrested and charged. Labour also used the courts against striking miners in 1947. In fact throughout its term of office Labour repeatedly acted against workers with the key target of keeping wages down.

In foreign policy Labour strove to preserve the British Empire and indeed other Empires, helping the Dutch in Indonesia for example. They intervened militarily in Egypt in 1951, threatened Iran in 1951 over oil interests (sound familiar?) shot down demonstrators and used napalm in Greece. They went back on their commitment to the end of military conscription, eagerly keeping it in place.

Labour re-established relations with the Franco dictatorship in 1951, bombed Indian villages in 1946, and applied vicious repressive measures in Kenya and Malaya.

The 1945-51 Labour Government was not a Golden Age. Far from it. The reforms that were passed, and that indeed made working people's lives a little easier, would have been given just as readily by the Tories or Liberals. They were given because Britain needed to be rebuilt after the War and to head off unrest and rebellion. To this day however, there are still those who continue to push the idea of a Labour government acting as a pioneering socialist administration.



Fighting Scum Landlords with Bristol SolNet



Bristol Solidarity Network (SolNet) has been running for around two years. In that time it has fought unfair bosses, won back stolen wages, sent corrupt landlords packing, confronted harassment in job centres, and supported people through work capability assessments (run by the notorious ATOS and Maximus).

The SolNet has been able to fight – and win – on a wide range of issues because the tactics they use are easily adaptable to almost any situation where someone in a position of authority needs to be taught a lesson! Even just knowing that they are supported and listened to can help people gain the confidence to fight back. From writing demand letters and attending meetings, to calling demonstrations, phone blockades and occupations, the network ensures that those directly effected take the lead in the action.

One family who the network has been supporting came to them after 8 years of constant struggle against a slum landlord who's name they didn't even know! Their house had major damp issues, broken doors, almost no insulation and massive cracks in the walls and ceilings. Worst of all several family members had health issues related to the poor condition they were forced to live in. Unsurprisingly the council in Bristol had been useless, and despite making several visits to the property and deeming it a health hazard they stopped short of actually doing anything!

After chatting to the family the SolNet was able to establish what the tenants wanted. Together they were able to write a demand letter to the property manager, delivering it in one large group. This gave the manager a time frame for when the repairs were to be done. When these were not met the SolNet then organised with the

family to demonstrate outside the letting agency, with information leaflets and blown up pictures of the property.

After this the Agency backed out of managing the property handed over all the details of the landlord, giving the family and the network the real target for action. To help keep the pressure up in the interim, the council was contacted and asked to look at the property again and made to give a deadline for the landlord to do repairs. This gave the SolNet time to track down the landlord and deliver a set of demands once more, this time detailing exactly what needed to be done.

When he then tried to evict the family, the network was there to give them advice about the eviction process and bring in the correct people to stop the eviction. With this in hand the family have chosen to sue their landlord, and now help others in struggle as part of the network.

In the meantime Bristol SolNet have launched a media campaign against the scum landlord nationwide. They have been able to find several companies that he owned and publish contact details. After a day of getting calls, emails and general bad press the landlord called up Bristol SolNet saying he would do the repairs, and contacted one of the builders.

From being part of Bristol's Solidarity Network they have seen first hand how a few committed people can pull a community together to make a big impact. It has helped empower people, giving them the courage to face those that oppress them, and the tools to win.

To get in touch:

bristolsolidaritynetwork@riseup.net | 07871540233

Twitter/Facebook: [BristolSolNet](#)

Build Gardens not Prisons



The campaign against a new mega-prison being built near Wrexham got a boost recently when the Reclaim the Fields network held an action camp nearby. The camp, of 100-150 people, was hosted by a local anti-fracking site and workshops explored the links between prison abolition and many other struggles.

People held evening noise demos at three prisons in the region in solidarity with those inside, leafleted the local town, and picketed several companies involved in the mega-prison. Finally, a blockade of the construction site held up lorries for over 4 hours without any arrests.

"Prisons are part of the problem," said Olly Torcada. "They are abusive places used to control and threaten people,

particularly those of us who are working class, people of colour, or disobedient."

"We need justice processes based on strong, vibrant communities," said Frieda Evans, "not more prisons and cops harming our communities."

The new prison would be the biggest in the UK, and the second biggest in Europe. It aims to open in 2017 and would give the State enough cages to lock up an extra 2100 people.

Reclaim the Fields: reclaimthefields.org.uk

Gardens Not Prisons: [@gardensnotcages](https://twitter.com/gardensnotcages)

Community Action on Prison Expansion: cape-campaign.org

Borras Community Protection Camp: [@BCPC2](https://twitter.com/BCPC2)

Frack Free Wrexham: frackfreewrexham.org.uk



On the Streets

Solidarity and the Manchester Homeless Camp



April 2015 saw the start of a self organised homeless camp in the city of Manchester. A march against austerity culminated in 30-40 people gathering together for security. People who are homeless often sleep separately or in small groups. Individual homeless sleepers not only run the risk of violent assaults from members of the public, but also regular harassment from the police. Young women, who

are the most vulnerable, face a terrible time. Living in this supportive atmosphere allowed many, who had previously felt isolated and vulnerable, to be able to tackle other issues.

The camp was a varied group. There were ex-military, ex-prisoners, minors, pregnant women, young single ladies and many who had issues with substance-abuser. One man with cancer was unable to access treatment because he was living on the streets. Older people in the camp took on a parental role.

During the first weeks, some anarchist activists joined the rough sleepers and acted as advocates, dealing with the police and the council. A good ethos was built up at the camp, with sharing of resources. A local activist from the group "Community Bandstand", loaned a PA, and music was played around the site of the first camp. This had a positive influence both on the camp members and on the other city users. It served to break down barriers between the two groups and reduced the invisibility of the homeless people. Food was donated by established street food

kitchens and local people. Those in the camp were no longer always hungry and were able to begin to tackle other issues, such as benefits, and health.

It is no surprise that there has not been a wonderful response from the established charities, the council and the police. *Shelter*, charity for the homeless, continued to fundraise near the camp but did not in any way help those who were actually in need of it. This paper has previously criticised the role of charities, who often exist to provide for their own, in the form of high salaries and expense accounts, and who make it possible for the state to ignore their responsibilities. The council has offered nothing but temporary shared accommodation to those it deems are not 'intentionally homeless'. As one of those camping put it "Nobody wakes up and decides to sleep on the streets. Many of the group haven't even been offered something temporary. We want permanent housing for all." Those who were offered somewhere with a roof said the offers were divisive and did not account for their needs. They were in hostels or group homes, lacking security and privacy. In an act of brazen callousness some have been put in hotels several miles from the camp area, places which do not accept couples, visitors and which deny people the right to take their dogs. For many, their animals are their sole security and companionship. This tactic of divide and rule almost beggars belief, forcing apart the community which has been built.

The camp has been moved on twice and now exists in three separate sites. One of the anarchists who has been closely involved from the early days commented that this venture has faced many problems. Firstly, it has been impossible for the campers to establish a non-hierarchical, horizontal way of organising and making decisions. This is a result of people being used to being told what to do all their lives, whether in the prisons, mental hospitals, schools or army. Whilst the camp has had a safer spaces

policy, it hasn't been properly applied. There have not been enough people there with an understanding of what such a policy means. There is a great need for more confident peacekeepers. Alcohol and drug use has led to argumentative behaviour. The people who become loud and aggressive can be, and have successfully been, asked to leave; but, with only a few people there able to do this, it has not always happened. This resulted in some homeless people leaving the camp. While the activists have been sleeping at the camp, the police have stayed away, but as soon as they took a break the cops camp back, arresting and harassing in their old style.

The early days of the camp show that, with the right contributions, it is possible for such a camp to provide relatively safe space for homeless people to live for the duration of the protest; but without the input of more active and confident people, it is difficult to break into the socialisation suffered by many sleeping rough. With a safe place, the camp can rebuild and be stronger, and the safe place must come from outside support.

If you would like to help people are needed to:

- *Find information about those who have been arrested*
- *Help new people integrate into the camp*
- *Give benefits advice*
- *Teach about horizontal organising*
- *Cook and provide healthy food.*
- *Develop understanding of safer spaces policy*
- *Create a sense of overnight security*
- *Set up a buddy scheme*
- *Get rid of bullies*
- *Deal with the council*



Calais: A Call to Action



It seems as if something in the consciousness of our society has recently snapped. For well over a century the right wing press and the politicians have demonised migrants, labeling them as scroungers and criminals. They confidently repeated their views as the opinion of the majority.

This attitude, the kind behind articles that spoke of inconvenience to British holiday makers as the worst result of a refugee crisis, sat oddly next to other stories that were emerging. Stories of war torn cities in Syria, of boats crowded with desperate families, of millions in Turkish and Lebanese refugee camps, and most strikingly of those who had died on the shores trying to reach safety.

Hundreds of thousands of (mostly working class) people decided that not only was the old attitude bullshit, but that they were going to do something about it. What followed is perhaps the largest humanitarian mobilisation to occur

without the backing, or the need, of the major charities and non-government groups.

Activity sprung up across the UK as working class people became intent on showing their solidarity with migrants stranded in Calais by the government's border policy. They raised funds, gathered clothes, tents, and other essentials and continue to make their way over with vans of volunteers. Others offered up rooms in their homes to house migrants, donated money, and came out in huge numbers on 'refugees welcome here' marches. Further afield aid stations were created on the edge of Europe, and people gathered to welcome and

support those arriving by train and bus.

This has been an inspiring show of human empathy, that has gone beyond old models of charity to a genuine show of mutual aid and solidarity across borders. It isn't just hand outs that are on offer, it is an honest attempt to stand shoulder to shoulder with those forced from their homes. Nowhere is this clearer than on the ground in Calais itself where migrants organising marches against their mistreatment were joined by visitors and locals pictured.

A real difference is being made, and can continue to be made despite politician's lies, the anti-migrant crackdown by police across the continent, and the inevitable backlash from dis-empowered racists on the far right. Solidarity is the greatest weapon of the international working class, and with it changes can be won for all of us, wherever we are from.

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