

WAKE UP!! IT'S YER RIGHT ON IT...



SchNEWS

www.schnews.org.uk

Friday 09th August 2013

Free/Donation

Issue 847

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

ANTI-RAIDS NETWORK DISRUPT RACIST UKBA ACTIVITIES IN LONDON

Solidarity is the best way to stick two fingers up at the authorities, and for the last year the London-based Anti-Raids Network (ARN) have been doing just that.

The ARN was initially started by the Latin American Workers Association (La-was), a pretty kick-ass group who've been working on issues for exploited migrant workers for several years. In February last year, the UK Borders Agency (UKBA) did a damn fine job of pissing all over people's weekend when they conducted an impromptu ID raid on a queue waiting to get into a gig of Puerto Rican artist Don Omar, whose audience was mostly Latin American. Over 90 people were nicked there and then. Some were then deported. It was a kick-start in creating a network of solidarity activists to resist immigration raids, an idea long in the pipeline.

Raids are increasing in many parts of the country. Targets include bus stops, train stations, workplaces, restaurants, and basically anywhere picked up on the UKBA's finely-tuned racist radar. The result is a ramping up of the pressure on people trying to get by without documents, whose status already forces them into a daily existence of precariousness and a permanent risk of imprisonment and deportation.

Lawas have been joined in a loose coalition of groups by No Borders London, Precarious Workers Brigade, Stop Deportation, Southwark Action and South London Sol Fed. Activity is centred in two areas. Firstly, informing people of their rights should they be stopped and controlled through information dissemination and workshops and, secondly, mobilising to challenge the UKBA and cops on the ground when they raid and spread information to those at risk in the immediate vicinity.

Successful disruptions of raids have taken place at locations such as a restaurants and shopping centres in one of the UKBA's favourite harassment spots, Elephant and Castle, among others. Activists manage to screw up the pigs plans by reminding them of their own guidelines: ID demands can't be made without a reason. To counter-act the cops' intimidation tactics, rowdy activists

remind people that they are not obliged to give documents or speak to officers at all. Filming arrests and taking lapel numbers is another tactic for documenting the illegality of the raids.

The UKBA have responded by scraping the barrel of legislation to threaten activists (unsuccessfully...), and resorting to physical intimidation by pushing activists to the ground and into vehicles.

For more information on rights and raids: <https://network23.org/antiraid/immigration-checks-know-your-rights/english/>

SchNEWS spoke to Andy - who is active with the Anti-Raids Network.

What's the situation with immigration raids, has it got worse recently?

It's difficult to tell, it works in patterns. It seems like the UKBA target one area for a period of time, then a different area, and it changes. That's how it appears to be at the moment. We hear about the raids that happen in shops or in the streets, but we don't hear so much what happens in people's homes.

Have there been a lot more in certain areas of London recently?

Well for a period of time they seemed to be targeting Elephant and Castle area. Now it seems like they've moved away from that.

Looking at your information, it's all about telling people their rights and what the UKBA should be doing. Have the UKBA become more lax with their own rules recently, or is it that people are becoming more aware of it?

The UKBA act as if they're a law unto themselves, and always have. It appears that they have their policies and procedures but they continue to act how they want to act.

So they're doing what they've always done?

The thing with immigration raids is that they've always gone unnoticed. They mostly happen without witnesses, people to see what they do or don't do, meaning they can act however they want during these raids. No one can witness them by the nature of what they are. Even when they're in the street or in a shop, most people don't understand what's happening and don't stick around to witness them, so that's what the anti-raids network is doing different. It's about seeing how to



CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For crying over spilt tea

At the Balcombe anti-fracking site one thirsty protester was enjoying a cuppa while sitting on a log with his comrades. The fact that the log might have been blocking the gates is of course of little relevance to our story. When the cops swooped in on this most English of protests our thirsty friend was heard to shout "Careful! I've got a hot cup of tea in my hand". Undeterred the cops grabbed him anyway and rather than taking the mild splashing in their stride added on a trumped up charge of assault police. Altogether now - what mugs!!

UKBA during them, and also intervening when they do.

What impact does intervening have?

One of the things we've found is that by warning people that the UKBA are there, that prevents people from entering the area that their in which disrupts their raids. On one occasion the UKBA just left when we arrived.

That's a success! Do you think the information about people's rights and publicity about raids is getting out there more than it was before?

It's a slow process. A lot of the work that people are doing in London is trying to make people aware of their rights. But of course it's about working to reach all the communities and encouraging people to work within their own communities to spread the information. It's a slow process considering that for a long time these things were going unnoticed and people weren't getting any information about their rights and situation.

How do the UKBA act when you intervene?

There's been a few interventions now as the movement's grown. On the occasions when people have managed to get there when the officers have still been around their reactions have ranged from people being told it's illegal to film them which isn't true, to threatening that by filming them you're obstructing them. Yeah, in general it's threatening behaviour towards people who are there to try and support undocumented people. So if it's been going on for a long time, what

Continued Over...

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INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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...was the tipping point for people organising and making the network?

It was the big raid outside the gig. They picked up loads of people in one go. Had those ppl known their rights most of those people could have walked away.

Have the UKBA started to be a bit more public about what they're doing, for example boasting about what they're doing, and the link between that and the racist van...

The racist van! I mean yeah, if you look at the UKBA twitter account and what they were putting out around Valentines Day for example, saying 'happy valentines day...' and then information about a raid they did on a couple about to get married, it seems like they're actively promoting what they're doing. Like they think it's a public service. You can look at the UKBA TV show ... So I think they are getting more public about their activities. However, what they show and report to people is not the reality of how these raids affect the community and individuals and the relationships between people.

Is there a diverse collection of people involved in acting in solidarity with people affected in this way?

Yeah there is a whole range, from people from migrant communities themselves, to people who live in London, young people, old people, to squatters. All people who want to stand in solidarity with people that suffer at the hand of the UKBA during these range. It's a broad range. A community response to what's happening, in London and across the UK. It's slowly spreading, there have been actions in Glasgow, in Cardiff, and obviously the Anti-raids network in London. There's a growing movement of people who are aware of what is happening and how the UKBA affect people's lives, how they tear apart communities and families. The raids that take place can be dawn raids on people's homes, to outside tube stations, to workplaces. It spreads fear amongst communities. It's not just about them taking people, it's the effect on those around them and the people that live in an area. It has a much bigger impact then you can initially see.

ROBBER BARONS

SchNEWS reveals how benefit farmers Baron Homes put the boot into tenants and squatters.

Another Brighton squat was raided by hired security goons last month. They forced their way into the newly-opened 'Apothecary' building and punched some of the squatters in a brazen display of intimidation. The cops swiftly arrived to serve and protect, only to simply watch from outside as chaos proceeded indoors.

So far, so typical, in this post-Mike Weatherley age of Brighton squatting. But the company who own this property are Baron Estates, part of the Baron Homes group. This particular scumbag rentier cartel make their profits from benefits farming, charging Brighton and Hove Council £150 per week per person to house 'homeless' people in dingy, overcrowded and unsuitable bedsits.

Baron Homes own and administer properties in Grand Parade and Brunswick Square.

SchNEWS spoke to one teenager, David, housed in Baron Homes 'emergency temporary accomodation'.

"About a hundred people are housed in three separate blocks here. Many 18 or under, probably thirty of us altogether. Obviously the people here have a wide range of issues, they're drug addicts, alcoholics or they have mental health issues. There are definitely a few who are suicidal. It can be a frightening place to live."

David described the living conditions to us: "I have a plastic mattress and my own cooker, technically I have a lock on the door but they have keys and in any case its quite flimsy. There are two toilets for the whole block and one communal shower - they might be cleaned once a fortnight. We're banned from allowing guests (even family) into our rooms."

Crucially, Baron Homes' tenants have to find an additional £10 a week 'service charge' from their usually low incomes. If Brighton City Council are handing over £150 a week per tenant then that's in excess of £40,000 a week going from council tax payers straight into the coffers of Baron Homes. Brighton is the homelessness capital of Sussex, as many people come to the city seeking opportunities in the City by the Sea (TM) end up broke, desperate and thrown on the trashheap. The percentage of people using Basics banks and emergency accommodation is so high that the council simply can't provide enough property or food. The new squatting laws have meant that as the poor and homeless try to organise their own accommodation they are ruthlessly evicted, leaving them with nowhere to turn except for 'emergency accomodation'. Nice little earner!

FREE KOSTAS SAKKAS

GREEK ANARCHIST ON HUNGER STRIKE AFTER BEING UNFAIRLY INCARCERATED BY GREEK POLICE STATE.

Kostas Sakkas has been on hunger strike since the 4th June.

Kostas Sakkas is a Greek anarchist who was grabbed during one of the Greek police state's sweeps in december 2010 over the "Conspiracy of Cells of Fire" see SchNEWS 755 and has never been given a trial. He was branded as a terrorist with no evidence given, the only thing they had on him was the fact that he was an anarchist and anti-fascist.

Kostas Sakkas and the CCF have both always stated he was never a member of the CCF. Greek law states that after 18 months without trial the accused person must be released from prison, or 30 months in exceptional cases. On the 4th June Kostas's incarceration time reached the legal limit they could hold him in for. The courts have now set a bail price of 30,000 euro (25890.93 British Pound Sterling guvnor), this is an amount of money that is unaffordable for Kostas.

Kostas refuses to take money raised through financial institutions. To help him people have been trying to fundraise and collect funds and send it to VOX social centre in Athens to add to his bail money.

If you can help in any way with donations or anything else contact pumpkinrecords (Manchester DIY label), a collective which is helping raise awareness and fundraise for yet another injustice under the greek regime.



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SchNEWS warns all readers, that Stonehenge will be better equipped once Disney gets its hands on it. Honest.

WILDLIFE MASSACRE STOPPED?

HAS THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE BADGER CULL CAVED IN?

Gloucestershire falls to the badger lovers?

Despite a deafening silence from all official bodies, it seems likely the Gloucestershire part of the badger cull won't go ahead. Apparently some farmers have pulled out leaving less than the necessary 70% of the land signed up. Defra are denying there are any problems but maybe they're just hoping to sort it out. They have announced as little as possible about the cull in most respects, keeping quiet about the exact boundaries and the start dates.

It was always a possibility that not enough landowners would sign up in Gloucestershire and a North Dorset cull zone has been prepared as a back-up. There have already been huge public meetings against the cull in Dorset. Various sources had suggested the cull would start at the beginning of August. Is the whole project teetering on the brink of collapse, or are they quite happy to wait til the last few weeks that are warm enough?

However if it does go ahead, shooters expect to kill 80% of the badger quota in the first 3 days of the cull starting.

Now is the time to act. Find your local sab group. If you're in the Brighton area and would like to get involved contact Brighton Hunt Saboteurs on facebook or by email: southdownsabs@yahoo . com

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