

STRANGERS EVERYWHERE: UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS & DEMOCRATIC CONCENTRATION CAMPS

solidarity
with
immigrants,
and with
anyone
who's
found
themselves
a stranger
in this
world.
Let's
destroy the
repressive
machine
wielded
against
immigrants
and all of
us.

The number of immigrants wandering the globe trying to escape repression, war, poverty and starvation is growing exponentially as this world falls apart. Because social, economic, environmental and political disasters are everywhere, the immigrants in detention centers have their brothers and sisters throughout the world. In North America, as elsewhere, undocumented immigrants inside and out of these special prisons have begun to rebel. It only makes sense that anarchists would respond with solidarity, since we are also strangers in this world.

Capital and the state are spreading devastation into every corner of the globe, poisoning those lands they haven't yet stolen where a few still manage to create their lives on their own terms. Just as the homeless are not simply individuals who love sleeping in doorways and under bridges, so immigrants are not just carefree nomads wandering for the love of adventure; migration across national borders is a specific strategy for attempting to take back control of one's life. The fact that these people then find themselves undocumented is the most blatant expression of the precarious reality that capital is imposing on all of the exploited. Desperate conditions of poverty, environmental devastation, war and political repression: those who respond by refusing to submit to the repressive borders drawn by our rulers find themselves criminalized, defined by racist propaganda as dangerous and undesirable elements.

In every country, capital needs cheap labor. The most desperate, those who live in daily fear of capture and deportation, are the most easily blackmailed. If they don't accept the worst of conditions at the lowest pay, they are not needed and can be turned over to the authorities. In turn, the rulers present these immigrants to the local workers as a threat to their own precarious jobs, using this as blackmail to enforce servility among all the exploited. Such racist and nationalist ideologies have always served to prevent solidarity between immigrants and those "native-born" exploited who persist in the delusion that they have more in common with the masters who exploit them. This is the lie of the citizen and the illegal.

But those in power understand the real threat of the excluded. If the Nazis began to build their concentration camps as the place of exception for holding those who constituted objective threats to the state (political dissidents, homosexuals, Jews and Roma) simply because they were vulnerable to exclusion, then the various refugee camps, ICE transit centers and immigrant detention facilities are the concentration camps of the modern democratic states – not metaphorically, but literally, because they are places for holding those who are perceived as objective threats to that state, outside of the arena of civil rights, stripped of all but the bare minimum recognized as "human rights."

As these concentration camps for undocumented immigrants have spread throughout the world – particularly the democratic states – they have become hotbeds for rebellion. Riots, hunger strikes and planned escapes are frequent. Those locked up inside are not resigning themselves to their miserable conditions: this is why solidarity is possible. Since those locked up in these specialized prisons within the larger social prison are rebelling against the reality imposed upon them, we can find ways to intertwine our own struggles against the larger social prison which is our daily reality with their specific struggle. The destruction of these concentration camps for the undocumented requires the active destruction of this social order that turns the entire world into a prison/shopping mall.

We can have no interest in making conditions in these hellholes more humane, in streamlining the citizenship process, in picking between immigrants "good" and "bad." As anarchists, we want to destroy these prisons and the world that creates them, a world that has made us all into strangers, while stealing away the capacity to create our lives on our own terms.

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