

# Newark, New Jersey residents speak out against immigration raids: “They’re exiling people for just wanting to live”

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This past Thursday, federal Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents raided an Ocean Seafood Depot warehouse in Newark, New Jersey without a warrant and arrested three undocumented workers, while detaining others for questioning.

The action was part of a series of raids across the country by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), leading to the arrests of over 1,000 individuals on Thursday and Friday alone, according to ICE. It marks the beginning of the Trump administration’s brutal attacks on immigrants and democratic rights, including plans to deploy thousands of US troops to the southern border as part of a mass deportation operation.

Reporters from the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to many workers and young people in Newark on Saturday about the raids, both outside Newark-Penn Station and at a shopping plaza in the Ironbound district where the HSI raid took place. Almost everyone was aware of the Newark raid.

Samuel, an older Newark resident, said, “I think they are ridiculous and they need to leave people alone and let them live. This is supposed to be America? Land of the free, home of the brave? And yet you’re exiling people for just wanting to live, to be human, to make a living.” He added, “That’s all they target—workers.”

A sanitation worker, Chris, said, “It’s messed up, and these attacks on immigrants are getting much worse. Trump’s a bully. He wants to make us hate these people, but they’re not the problem.”

“I’ve tried to avoid politics for a long time, but now, with everything that’s going on, it’s impossible. You can’t avoid politics in this situation. But, it’s a different politics that we need. There’s no difference between the two parties in this country. They both

don’t serve the people. That’s what I’ve come to believe.”

Tom, a Newark commuter, told the WSWs, “It’s wrong, randomly pulling people without a warrant, going into workplaces without a warrant, into schools. I think people are afraid, they’re living in fear. I think it’s sad, and I wish Newark had the capacity to put measures in place to prevent these raids. I think the recent raids were to strike fear into people so that they are afraid to go to work. I think this will eventually have a boomerang effect that is going to hurt everyone.”

Another Newark resident outside Newark-Penn station, Rachel, said, “I think that the raids are disgusting, and they’re forgetting that the people who started this country came from other places. It’s kind of a slap in the face to be honest.”

On what she thinks about workers coming to the defense of immigrants and democratic rights, Rachel said, “That’s human. I think that we’re human beings, and we kind of forgot that somewhere along the way.”

The discussion also touched on Trump being supported by billionaires while targeting the poorest sections of society. “Essentially, it’s divide and conquer,” Rachel said. “Robin Hood was a thing, and maybe it’s time for someone to step in and start taking from them.”

Celeste, a young Colombian immigrant, told the WSWs, “It’s uncomfortable for all the people, immigrants, ‘illegals,’ because you don’t know if you’re going to be targeted because you are an immigrant or because you are brown. A lot of people are in fear. It’s not good. For example, my boyfriend works for DoorDash, and he said it’s really slow. The

restaurants, everything around, people are afraid.”

She spoke strongly against the idea that immigrants are bad people, adding, “The economy is based on the immigrants because there is some work maybe the Americans don’t want to do. So I think the economy is not going to be right [if mass deportations begin and] if there are no people working these kinds of jobs.”

“It’s hard. All the immigrants want to be legal. I’m from Colombia, so if you want to have a visa, you need to have money. If all the people have the opportunity to come legally here, they’re going to come here legally, for work and for school. It’s hard for our countries. It’s hard for Asia. But we don’t want to come here illegally. It’s not like that. Not all these people are bad. There’s a lot of people who come here for work.”

Our reporter brought up how these attacks are being led by a government of, by and for billionaires. “Yeah, I know,” Celeste replied.

The WSWS also spoke with Olivia, who commented, “It’s horrible what’s happening. It’s so unfortunate that this population is being targeted by a blatant racist. I wish there was more that we could do. I hope there’s more that we can do. I hope this [speaking out] helps.”

After a WSWS reporter raised the need for workers to come to the defense of immigrants against these attacks facilitated by both parties, Olivia said, “I totally agree, and heavy on placing the blame on the Democrats as well because they’re not doing enough. It’s just mind boggling. At the inauguration, they laughed with him [Trump].”

Another commuter, Sarah, told our reporter, “I don’t think it’s right, regardless of what they are doing [crossing into the US without a visa] is ‘illegal’ or not. People coming here with their families to work—to start a new life here— no longer feel safe even in the so-called sanctuary cities.”

A young woman, Rose, spoke to the WSWS at the plaza located only a few blocks away from the raid.

“It’s just not fair. If it wasn’t for immigrants, we wouldn’t have access to the roads, to construction, farms, etc. They basically built this country. So it’s kind of like, why are you taking that away from America?

“It’s not like they’re criminals. For those I know, because my parents are Haitian, they’re immigrants, I know that they work hard for this country. They made sure I had a good opportunity to have a great school to

go to. Why take that away? I told my parents, what is America really like? I don’t really think America’s technically a culture. I just feel like all of us make America. A melting pot, the only melting pot in the whole world!”

On Trump’s executive orders, including his attempts to throw out the 14th Amendment, Rose said, “It’s ridiculous! Who gave this guy the right? Who’s giving him all this power? That’s my question, because there’s no president I know that just passed laws like that without a judge or whatever federal body approving them.”

Our reporter responded that it was the entire ruling class giving Trump power, while the media normalizes and promotes his actions. The Democrats were complicit in the “peaceful transfer of power” to an individual they correctly labeled a fascist only weeks ago. “Exactly, it’s crazy!,” Rose responded.

She also spoke about how she thought Trump was “creating unnecessary tension” and “dividing workers,” and while a focus is currently on immigrants, he will go after “everyone... Literally, it’s like no one’s safe.”

“But you know what? There’s always power in numbers. That’s what I believe. So I feel like if we, the people, sit together and fight against the oppressor, I feel like we may win, you know, because who are they? They’re flesh and blood, just like you and I. What power do they really hold besides money?”



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