

NO TO FORTRESS BRITAIN – NO TO FORTRESS EUROPE

The resurgence of the far right cannot be separated from borders and imperialism

The far right is on the rise across the world. Internationally we have witnessed the election of Bolsonaro in Brazil, the rise of the AfD in Germany, the alt-right in the US and Golden Dawn in Greece. The Trump presidency shines out as a global beacon for the rising fascist tide. In the UK, the far right has been organising through the Democratic Football Lads Alliance, UKIP and the ‘Free Tommy’ movement. Organising to meet and defeat this threat demands a unified and militant refusal of fascism and racism, in or out of the EU.

THE STATE AND THE RIGHT

It is vital that we organise on the streets and counter the far right to stop them marching and organising. Organising in our workplaces can be vital in building the numbers to stop the far right on the streets. But racism doesn't just come from the far right. The Windrush scandal laid bare the brutality of immigration removals, and the ‘Hostile Environment’, a series of policies since 2014, has enforced stricter controls over undocumented people. The 2016 Immigration Act criminalises ‘illegal’ migrants for accessing housing, driving licences, and bank accounts.

In the form of migration controls and state ‘counter-terrorism’, the establishment has created a perfect breeding ground for the far right. The government’s Prevent agenda enforces the monitoring of Muslims in all aspects of society, demanding that everyone from teachers to doctors report on anyone without enough commitment to ‘British values’, and perpetuating a climate of racist suspicion. We need to support groups like Docs Not Cops, who campaign against borders in the NHS, and stand firm against the extension of Prevent into our lives and workplaces. We need to unite not only in marches against the far right, but also to demand an end to racist surveillance, the closure of migration detention centres and safe passage for migrants and refugees.

BEYOND THE ‘EU DEBATE’

The question of border controls was made central to the ‘Brexit debate’. The official ‘Leave’ campaign attributed the devastation caused by years of austerity and neoliberalism to migrants driving down wages and straining public services, while the official Remain

campaign consistently took the side of international capital. Since the referendum, these positions have been repeated over and over again: the most vociferous supporters of Leave are still the most loud-mouthed (but not the only) racists; the most high-profile Remainers are determined to learn nothing and offer nothing beyond the fantasy that the failed and despised centre can be restored to its pre-crisis dominance.

Border controls are no remedy to the problems we face in Britain. The deregulation of the labour market, increasingly common “flexible” zero-hours contracts and the marketisation of healthcare has left more and more of us, British and migrant, in poverty and precarity. If we are serious about arguing for a genuinely united working class, against the politics of borders and state repression, then it falls to us to build an anti-racism which has nothing in common with the bourgeois internationalism of the European Union, an association directly culpable for the deaths of thousands of migrants at its borders.

IMPERIALISM AND BORDERS

In an age of imperialism and climate crisis, with millions of people displaced by war and economic ruin, we find the same rhetoric in the mouths of mainstream politicians as the far right. As states become ever more authoritarian in response to the catastrophes on the horizon, the strategies of the ruling class and the power of the state and borders will continue to animate the far right. Anti-fascists and anti-racists can't stay silent on state racism when hundreds of thousands of people drown at the borders of the EU or live in fear of detention, deportation and rendition here in Britain.

As the skies darken it will be more and more tempting for anti-racists to fall into line and defend the status-quo, but the defining struggles of our age will involve attacking the causes of racism, and attempting, wherever possible, to uproot the racist structures which feed the right. Through struggle from below this can be done: the Government recently announced the closure of Campsfield detention centre after decades of protests, and earlier this year they were forced to abandon data sharing between the NHS and the Border Force. We must stand in solidarity with each other, migrant and non-migrant, against the far right, the state and borders.