

NO TO STATE RACISM, YES TO REFUGEE SOLIDARITY

The far right is growing across Europe. Hungary, Italy and Austria have fascists in government. "Fortress Europe" contributes daily to migrant deaths. The murderous racist attack in New Zealand is horrifying.

Migrants are subjected to racist and degrading checks at the border and during asylum claims. For example, LGBT+ people routinely undergo humiliating questions about their sex lives and identities to "prove" that they are "actually" LGBT. Though migration controls are not new, in recent years migrants have come under ever-increasing surveillance, with teachers, health workers and administrators forced to act as border guards. The border, which has seen huge physical reinforcement in Calais, is being embedded in public services and workplaces.

This state racism creates a perfect breeding ground for the far right. The attack on migrants works in tandem with "counter-terrorism" policies and the government's racist Prevent agenda to build a climate of suspicion, aimed especially at Muslims. Home Secretary Sajid Javid's decision to strip Shamima Begum of her citizenship exemplifies this racist logic. She has been made stateless, resulting in the death of her days-old son, sickeningly branded a 'jihadi baby' in one major national paper.

Refugees and asylum seekers are relentlessly demonised: for months, Javid misrepresented the English Channel crossings of a few refugees as a full-blown "crisis". People leave their countries for a variety of reasons – often because of wars, tyrannical governments, ecological disasters or extreme impoverishment in which Britain, and other imperialist Western states, are complicit. Yet people seeking safety in Western countries are met with brutal repression. In France, riot police make the lives of migrants intolerable – pouring bleach refugees' tents, slashing the canvas, pepper-spraying their sleeping gear, smashing their mobile phones, confiscating their belongings and slashing their shoes. Unaccompanied minors are seen across mainland Europe and are prey to all kinds of abuse. Fortress Europe ensures they are vulnerable and exploitable. In Britain, monstrous detention centres keep migrants indefinitely in prison-like conditions. Guards hired by private companies G4S and Serco routinely engage in abusive and degrading behaviour towards detainees.

Opposing the far right when they gather in our streets is only one part of the resistance to the growth of fascism and racism – we must also challenge the state violence against people of colour and migrants which is legitimising and driving far-right organising.

REFUGEE LIFEBOAT

Refugee Lifeboat stands for uncompromising solidarity with migrants. The problems migrants face can only be addressed on a political basis, from opposing war and imperialism which drives people from their homes through conflict and economic ruin, to confronting the state racism which justifies sending gunboats rather than lifeboats to meet migrants in the Mediterranean, and raids, detains and deports those fortunate enough to have safely made the journey.

With the growth of far-right organising and the centrality of borders in fascist propaganda we can clearly see how important migrant solidarity is in building the fight against racism and fascism more generally. Our focus on migrant solidarity forces us to see that the state is complicit in the growth of racism and the far right and forces us to confront the fact that a merely humanitarian response to the crisis faced by migrants is not enough.

We work to provide direct practical and material solidarity with migrants through regular trips to Calais and elsewhere to distribute donations, but also through waging a political struggle against the state, racism and imperialism to fight the politics which create a hostile environment for migrants in the first place. There are many ways you can help, by donating, running stalls, organising against racism and organising material solidarity. See our page at <https://www.facebook.com/Refugee-Lifeboat-529624960742365/>

