

## Does that mean you're against immigration controls?

Yes, Left Unity is opposed to immigration controls. Immigration controls are bad for all workers. They do not solve any of the problems facing the working class in Britain and other countries today. Every piece of immigration legislation from 1905 onwards has followed racist, and sometimes fascist, agitation against this or that group of people coming to the country, often fleeing persecution, torture, destitution and the destruction of their environment.

## What about threats to the safety of women and children?

The idea that 'foreigners' are criminals and a sexual threat goes back to the end of the 19th century with regards to Jewish immigrants and refugees and has been recycled again and again against each group of migrants who have arrived here. There is indeed a huge problem of a failure to address sexual harassment against adults and children but this is not the fault of refugees or 'foreigners'. It is a problem across all communities related to a failure of police

to take victims/survivors seriously and robustly investigating allegations. There are grooming gangs in some towns in Britain and some of these have been from minority communities. The far right today is mobilising hate-filled demonstrations at hotels where migrants are staying.

## Immigration controls kill

Those crossing borders "illegally" take huge risks to their personal safety and at huge personal cost. Thousands have died crossing the Mediterranean and now the English Channel. Many have died in the backs of lorries. They arrive illegally and they are often forced to work in dangerous conditions out of fear for being shopped to the authorities.

Former Tory Prime Minister David Cameron said *"The real issue is this: migrants are filling the gaps in the labour market left wide open by a welfare system that for years has paid British people not to work... So immigration and welfare reform are two sides of the same coin. Put simply, we will never control immigration properly unless we tackle welfare dependency."*

You heard it. Low wages, benefit cuts and immigration controls are all part of the same attack on working class people. We must fight back together – workers, welfare claimants, disabled people and migrants. Don't let them divide us.

**Always remember: an injury to one is an injury to all. Together we can win.**



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# Migration

## MYTHS AND REALITIES

## Don't let them play the blame game

Listening to our media and all the mainstream parties you'd be forgiven for thinking that migration threatens the living standards of working class people.

The fact is there's a blame game going on. Migrants and refugees aren't to blame for a single one of the problems we face in our daily lives. They are being scapegoated for the affects of public sector cuts and policies that benefit the

richest in our society, the bankers and billionaires, at the expense of the many.

Left Unity stands up for the rights of migrants and says that we must unite the whole working class, migrants and non-migrants, those in work and those out of work, to campaign for jobs, pensions, better pay, welfare and an end to outsourcing, zero hours contracts, and the privatisation of our public services.



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## Alien Invasion!?

Home Secretary, Suella Braverman has been whipping up fear and hostility by talking about an 'invasion' of migrants on the south coast of Britain. She is scapegoating people who are in such dire circumstances that they will risk life and limb to get here, as the enemy. On the back of this vile scare mongering she is trying to pursue a policy of removing migrants and asylum seekers to Rwanda. She tries to justify this as the government's way of putting people traffickers out of business. The only way to do that is to open the borders so that nobody is so desperate that they will come this dangerous way.

Patel and then Braverman after her, are trying to legislate that people can only apply for asylum by using "safe and legal" routes. But there are no safe and legal routes! But if these routes are not available for everyone, there will always be people coming 'illegally'

Britain is not and has never been destroyed by the 'invasion' of 'aliens' despite the arrival of groups of migrants being subject of such scary propaganda.

## Migration is still the exception

Despite the world coming closer together in recent decades, it is still unusual for people to take the huge step, often involving great personal and financial risks, of moving and settling overseas. In 2013, according to the United Nations, just 2.3 per cent of the world's people were living outside of their country of birth.

This is changing as the environmental crisis, war, destitution get worse. These damaging changes which lead to people being displaced are very much the responsibility of the British State and other western powers. Britain sells masses of arms to dictators. British and multinational companies make huge profits from industrial production, logging, pollution... carried out in the developing countries of the world.

**FACT** The first systematic immigration controls in the UK were only set up with the Aliens Act in 1905 after similar scaremongering against Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe and Russia. Needless to say that the world's population did not turn up in Britain prior to that law.

## Hostile Environment

Suella Braverman's attitude is not new. She is following in the footsteps of politicians of all the mainstream political parties including the Labour Party. It was Alan Johnson who first used the phrase 'hostile environment' against migrants coming into Britain and used by successive Home Secretaries, Blunkett, Clarke, May and Patel. We, on the contrary, welcome refugees and migrants.



## Should we be for 'British jobs for British workers'?

Some voices in the trades union movement talk about the need for "British Jobs for British Workers". Sometimes politicians turn it around and blame "lazy British workers" for immigrants filling jobs. These ideas are divisive and do nothing to boost the opportunity and living standards of working class people.

Ask yourself why there is a shortage of jobs. Are there too many nurses? Are there not enough frail people needing care? Are there too many bus and train drivers driving along empty roads with no jams? The list goes on. The truth is that there are plenty of essential jobs for people to do. But in the irrational capitalist economy we are forced to live with, work is only deemed useful if someone, somewhere, somehow can squeeze a profit out of it to line his or her own pocket.

## Migration doesn't cause unemployment

Communities in Britain have been blighted by unemployment for decades and it has got worse since the world plunged into recession. The misery of unemployment needs to be tackled urgently. But we won't be able to cure the patient if we misdiagnose the illness.

All the major parties claim migration is a major factor in the rise of unemployment.

It's not true. The massive growth in unemployment we've seen since 2008 is a product of the most serious economic depression we've experienced since the 1930s. When the economy contracted really sharply and unemployment rocketed, there were actually fewer migrants coming to Britain – not more.

The bottom line is that we'll only be able to start tackling unemployment if we address the failure of the capitalist economy to meet the basic needs of our society; access to jobs, to social services, welfare, health and education.

## But don't migrants undermine our terms and conditions?

No! Migrants are not a threat to workers conditions. On the contrary it is IMMIGRATION CONTROLS which undermine all our conditions. Immigration controls create vulnerable groups in the workforce by making them illegal or having fewer rights to other workers which can be exploited. Despite this migrants are often amongst the most militant of workers.

By improving the skillset in the workforce as a whole migration often improves productivity and creates upward pressure on wages amongst most sectors of workers. It's about the bosses trying to drive down working class living standards.

The undermining of wages, conditions and standard of living in Britain reflects the retreat of workers' rights and conditions, the decline in collective bargaining and the weakening of trade unions, we've seen in this country over the last decades, which allows them to weaken terms and conditions, short-term contracts etc. All workers need more secure and better paid contracts.

Only proper trade union rights and collective bargaining can solve this. And this is where anti-migrant xenophobia undermines our fightback. By dividing "native" workers from "migrant" workers, by encouraging one to blame the other for these attacks, then the bosses can play a game of divide and rule over us.

Over the last year or so there has been a dramatic change in the combativity of the trade unions. This is a great opportunity for workers – migrant and non-migrant – to unite and cast away such xenophobia.

**'Migrants and refugees aren't to blame for a single one of the problems we face in our daily lives'**

## 'Illegal' immigrant: just think through what it means

What happens when a section of the working class are deemed illegal, to have no right to live and work in this country? The simply answer is that it becomes really difficult for these workers to organise for better wages and conditions, because the bosses can threaten them with deportation. Some bosses take advantage of this quite consciously to employ people illegally below the minimum wage, knowing that if they went to the authorities they would be deported.

This hits everyone else by pushing down wages in the lowest paid jobs. But the answer isn't to crack down on the migrants. It's to create a level playing field where everyone has equal rights regardless of their immigration status.

Left Unity says we must all fight together for a living wage and for secure contracts so that the bosses cannot lay-off one group of workers and employ others at lower rates of pay – whether they are migrant workers or not.

**FACT** Between 2005 and 2008 when the economy was growing and many people were moving to Britain from overseas to work, the employment of existing British workers increased by 116,000.