

## Migration Policy

### Anti-Racism Policy Group proposal to 29<sup>th</sup> March conference

1. Migrants and refugees face a sustained offensive which began under the last Labour government and has further intensified with the Tory-led coalition. There is a campaign of vilification by mainstream politicians, which fuels the rise of UKIP and the far-right. This is cheered on by the right-wing media's scare stories about Romanians and Bulgarians "flooding into Britain".
2. Migrants and refugees have had their rights to benefits, housing, health, work, and legal representation removed or restricted. An ever-widening number of professionals and landlords are expected to act as "immigration spies", legally obliged to check the immigration status of their clients.
3. There are moves to set caps on non-EU immigration and talk by the government of re-negotiating Britain's relationship with the European Union to bring an end to freedom of movement.
4. Many of these measures are contained in the proposed Immigration Bill and some proposals are even being rushed in ahead of the Bill becoming law. Raids on migrants at home, in places of employment, cafes, social events continue and are being carried out more publically, sometimes with embedded media coverage, in order to spread fear across migrant communities.
5. This situation will worsen in the run up to the European and local authority elections in May 2014. The success of UKIP in the May 2013 local elections, fought openly and unashamedly on an anti-immigration ticket, has pushed immigration up the political agenda.
6. Labour and the Tories have reacted by competing with each other over their anti-immigration rhetoric. This creates a predictable vicious circle that boosts the chances of UKIP and strengthens the right per se.
7. While there is a long-term trend in British society that has been hostile to immigration since the 1960s, attitudes over the last decade have dangerously hardened. According to the *British Social Attitudes Survey* in 2003 some 33 per cent of people believed immigration had a negative social impact. But by 2011 this had risen to some 48 per cent. Some 75 per cent of respondents advocated a reduction in immigration with 51 per cent wanting 'a large reduction'.
8. But other data shows that responses to questions about immigration depend heavily on how the question is posed. Even those who buy into anti-immigration rhetoric can also be won to arguments based on fairness and working class solidarity; that they enjoy freedoms to move and work overseas that should not be denied to others, that the global super-rich enjoy near total freedom of movement across the world's borders that is denied to the poor and marginalised, etc.

9. The self organisation of black and other migrant communities over decades is also important in undercutting racism and anti-migrant sentiment. While individual anti-deportation campaigns can have the limitation of being seen as special pleading they also act to mobilise people in a positive way. The work done by Lambeth Left Unity in support of the Jermaine Strachan campaign was exemplary.
  10. Left Unity completely rejects all anti-immigration arguments and rhetoric. We believe mass migration has had, and always will have, an overwhelmingly positive impact on society. We recognise and respect the extraordinary sacrifices that people have made and continue to make to come to Britain, and we unreservedly defend their right to stay, to bring their families, and to build a new life for themselves.
  11. Migration transforms the nature of the working class for the better, bringing experiences of global struggles, and opening up new and exciting avenues for cultural and artistic change.
  12. Migration has an impact in breaking down many, but by no means all, racist myths and stereotypes. There is a strong anti-racist sentiment in many of Britain's major cities that is a consequence of decades of struggle by ethnic minority communities against racism. Like on so many other issues there is simply no pro-migration, anti-racist voice in party politics shaping the agenda.
  13. The labour force today is bigger than ever, but capitalism still does not provide jobs for all those able and willing to work. This has nothing to do with immigration but is entirely based on the 'artificial scarcity' that capitalism creates when there are too many people looking for work than can be profitably employed in the market place. A reduction in the working week with no loss of pay is a solution to the scourge of unemployment in the interests of working class people, restrictions on migration ultimately serve the interests of the bosses.
  14. For all these reasons, Left Unity believes that there can be no "fair" or "non-racist" immigration controls. We are opposed to immigration controls. We are opposed to all laws which make people illegal because of who they are, where they or their parents were born, the colour of their skin, what language they speak, and so on.
  15. We believe that it is in the interests of the working class as a whole, migrant and non-migrant, in Britain and internationally, to have equal rights to move across borders, to settle in other countries, and to bring their families with them if they choose to do so.
  16. Insofar as the right to 'freedom of movement' exist, however imperfectly, in the EU states as a result of binding international agreements, we defend them trenchantly and without equivocation.
  17. These circumstances present Left Unity with important duties in the immediate period.
- A) Anti Cuts Campaigns: Bring these issues and migrant voices into campaigns against the cuts, defence of the health service, housing etc. The ruling class tries to divide us - saying they are saving

services and resources for the “indigenous” people by excluding the “foreigners”. We need to say “we are all in it together” and ensure that these campaigns do likewise.

B) Support campaign(s) to stop the Immigration Bill.

C) Elections 2014: Be a strong pro-migrant voice during the 2014 election campaigns. Where we have candidates they should make it a priority to challenge the reactionary line that is coming from the other parties. But we can challenge these even without candidates. We should produce pro-migrant materials and distribute these, take our arguments to hustings, put out press releases and letters to local papers where this nonsense is circulating.

D) Defiance not Compliance. The government proposals and existing controls can only work if professionals comply with them. Already we have seen the opposition by health professionals to it is being proposed. Left Unity needs to campaign for the trade unions not only to oppose these proposals but support workers in refusing to carry them out.

E) No to privatisation. The Government is outsourcing immigration controls to organisations such as G4S who have an appalling track record on human rights including the death of Jimmy Mubenga who they were trying to deport. While we campaign against the whole immigration machine in so far as it exists it should be in public hands

F) Challenge ideas in the labour movement, and even sections of the socialist movement, that openly support or implicitly endorse the idea of “British Jobs for British Workers”. Immigration controls divide and weaken the working class and therefore against the interests of all workers.