

Left-Horizons

Tory Immigration Policy blatantly racist

Socialists must support free movement of labour

The new Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, is making strenuous efforts to distance himself, at least in words, from the policies of his two predecessors, Amber Rudd and Theresa May. As well he might, because the two previous incumbents conducted an immigration policy that has been exposed as blatantly racist. The policy of creating a “hostile environment” for “illegal” immigrants originated with the present Prime Minister when she was Home Secretary and **it could have had no other purpose or result than the calculated harassment of black and Asian workers**, the overwhelming majority of whom have spent decades living, working and paying taxes in the UK.

British immigration policy is blatantly class-based. Anyone with enough wealth to throw around can literally *buy* the right to remain in the UK. Under the so-called ‘golden visa’ scheme introduced by the Tories, the purchase of £2m-worth of government bonds, share capital or other property will guarantee a three-year stay. Another cool

£5m will buy the right to settle permanently after three years, or, by paying £10m, after only two years. Thus, the door is ever-open to Russian oligarchs or former dictators, no matter that their fortunes are the ill-gotten gains of massive state corruption and theft in their former countries.

But when it comes to black and ethnic minority people from an ordinary working-class background, it has been open-season for harassment, denial of medical care, denial of welfare rights and even arrest and deportation. Over the recent past there has been a steady trickle of stories in the national press about the victims of the Home Office Immigration department – sometimes grandmothers and grandfathers who have living in the UK virtually all their lives – being harassed. Some of these victims have visited family abroad and been denied the right to return. Some have lost their jobs and their homes because their ‘citizenship’ has been cast into doubt. Some have even died for the lack of medical treatment. This steady stream of individual

cases has now become a flood as it has become clear that the Home Office Immigration team has conducted a mammoth campaign of harassment against any section of the population that lacks a white-British heritage.

The idea that *anyone* – whether a child immigrant or even someone born in the UK – can provide four pieces of documentary evidence for every year of their residence in the country is a monstrous absurdity. Yet this is what the Home Office has been demanding. For all Sajid Javid's posturing in the House of Commons, he cannot deny that it has been his party and his Prime Minister – Theresa May, as Home Secretary – who introduced this disgraceful and deliberately racist policy.

No confidence in Sajid Javid

We can have no confidence whatsoever in Javid or in any Tory minister to respond to the problems faced by the Windrush generation. On the same day that the new Home Secretary was pleading his case as an 'ordinary' son of an immigrant family (despite personally being a multi-millionaire), British residents were still being threatened with deportation on charter flights to Jamaica. The *Independent* carried a story about a 63-year-old grandmother, who had been arrested and incarcerated in the notorious Yarl's Wood immigration detention for nine months. Despite the fact that she came to Britain as part of the Windrush migration, in 1957, she had been treated in this appalling way and was being held, with a large group waiting to be deported, even while the Home Secretary was on his feet speaking in the Commons.

The Windrush affair is a salutary lesson to those MPs on the right wing of the Labour Party who have supported immigration controls over many years. These controls *always* end up with the legalised harassment of the black and Asian part of the population. Labour must demand a complete end to the Tories immigration policies and must stand unequivocally for the free movement of workers. It is not immigration but *capitalism* which is responsible for the housing crisis and problems in the education and health services and Labour must stand firm on this issue.

Labour must demand in Parliament not only the complete abandonment of the policy of a 'hostile environment' but full compensation for all those affected by this disgraceful policy over the years. It is also time for Labour to step up its demands for Theresa May, the architect of the 'hostile environment' policy, to resign and for an early general election. The Tories have nothing to offer the big majority of the population, whether black, Asian or white workers, except more austerity, more cuts and a seemingly endless squeeze on living standards.

Labour will be fighting for every vote it can get in the local elections on Thursday. Left-Horizons supporters in the Labour Party will be working their socks off to get out as many votes as possible for Labour on that day. But a big defeat for the Nasty Party in the local elections must be seen as only a stepping stone to a bigger campaign to get rid of this Tory government and for the election of Labour Government committed to socialist policies.

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