

The fake emergency of the Channel boat refugees



Why is such a fuss being made about the arrival of a few desperate migrants on the shores of one of the richest countries in the world?

It is well known to anyone with even the most cursory knowledge of human history that from the beginning of our existence on the earth people have been 'upping sticks' and moving themselves, their families and whatever belongings they can carry in search of a better life. In the vast majority of cases, this has not been done on a whim or without some external trigger. Natural disaster, lack of food or shelter, the devastation caused by war, or the fact of finding oneself under the control of powers, domestic or foreign, who regard a particular population only as a pest to be driven away or put down – all these are among the more common triggers for emigration.

Imperialist war and economic brigandage fuels mass migration

Under the present (and final) [imperialist](#) stage of capitalism, these triggers all operate – both separately and together – in various parts of the world, and will continue to do so while the lives of some are considered to be cheap or even worthless in comparison to those of the ruling classes or from ruling countries. Or, to put it another way, while skin colour, native language, place of birth or individual wealth determine one's 'value' in society. Capitalist society, it can be seen, is divided not only by class – by our relationship to the means of production – but also by nationality, age, sex, skin colour, health, religion and many other subdivisions. Class is, of course, the *primary*, most important division. For the small minority who really rule, and who seem so all-powerful and unassailable, the other 'lesser' divisions exist mainly to keep the vast majority in a state of continuing disunity. There is constant movement of peoples from vassal, subject, poorer and less developed countries towards the centres of imperialism – usually following the stolen wealth of these weaker countries. When the 0.1 percent of the bourgeoisie in an imperialist predator country robs the wealth of a less powerful country, whether through outright war or purely economic means, a massive knock-on movement of refugees and migrants invariably occurs, causing destabilisation, hunger and intolerance where the worst effects are felt. This, then, is the world we live in, and

our imperialist masters, the 0.1 percent of the [British bourgeoisie](#) who must be reckoned as among the most bloody and disgusting of the world's elites, will tell us through their news machines and puppet politicians that our livelihoods, homes and 'peace' are threatened by the poor wretches who are on the move – some to regain a little of their country's stolen wealth in the form of wages from the thieves, others running for their very lives from various hells that have been created by the actions of their murderous henchmen. There is ample evidence to back this up. Consider [Libya](#), [Syria](#), [Afghanistan](#) or [Iraq](#) just recently as proof of the war-driven refugees. Consider the Central-American [walking caravans](#) that have been taking place over many years with minimal success as proof of the economically-driven refugees. We don't need particularly long memories to add many more examples to both categories.

Danger faced by desperate refugees

At the points where the imperialist heartlands meet those of the plundered and spoiled majority, the mass of refugees is greatest and so too is the danger to their lives. Consider the many thousands of refugees who died in 2015 fleeing across the Mediterranean Sea from Libya to Italy. Many more did survive the journey across what the UN named the 'most dangerous stretch of water in the world' and, once the journey was made, found themselves in the middle of a [huge humanitarian crisis](#) – which, in that particular case, was eased by moving people on to other European destinations. Indeed, as many Italians said at the time, since Britain and France had caused the problem, they ought to be the ones dealing with the fallout. In the event, however, it was Germany that took 50 percent of the unfortunate people who had survived that perilous crossing. Of course, Libya wasn't an isolated case. There are many more waves of migrants fleeing imperialist-inspired wars, poverty and general turmoil in [Africa](#), [Latin America](#) and the [middle east](#). In recent years, only the last ripples of those waves of displaced humanity have been reaching British shores. In 2017, there were 648,000 asylum applications

across the 28 states of the [European Union](#). This was far lower than the peak of 1.3 million applications made during the 2015-16 refugee crisis. Of the applications made in 2017, a mere 5 percent were made in Britain, compared with 30 percent in Germany, 20 percent in Italy, 14 percent in France and 9 percent in Greece.

The Channel migrants farrago

Now the British Home Office, or more correctly, the home secretary, Sajid Javid, has declared a small surge in 'illegal' refugees crossing the Channel from France in tiny dinghies to be a "major incident", and the British media devoted much sensationalist coverage to this alleged 'crisis' over the Christmas period. To bring this 'major incident' back to the realms of reality, some 220 refugees have crossed the Channel from France to Britain in small boats since November. According to the British government's figures there were an estimated 1,832 illegal entrants into British south coast ports during 2017/18. This figure was mostly made up of people arriving on ferries and in the backs of lorries, but of course some also arrived in smaller boats. This figure is down by 23 percent on the year before, when the number of arrivals was 2,366. The 200-plus refugees – mainly Iranians – whose arrival across the Channel has been described as a 'major incident' did not (like those small boats [80 years earlier](#)) bring forth gushing media accolades regarding their heroism or pluck. Instead, their appearance was greeted with an avalanche of hysterical fearmongering that caused the home secretary to abandon his family holiday and rush back to Britain, recalling two Border Force cutters (ships) from where they had been patrolling in the Mediterranean (where they were tasked with picking up some of the many thousands of refugees who really are at risk of their lives) to try to stem the alleged 'flood' of immigrants crossing the Channel (where most are picked up on landing). The imperialist media in the main omitted, in their rush to portray a British crisis, to report that French police had stopped as many refugees again at the start of their journeys. David Aaronovitch, writing in the Times of 2 January, put the numbers involved in this 'major incident' gloriously into context when he wrote: "This is slightly fewer people than Essex police arrested on suspicion of drink-driving in the three weeks before Christmas." ([Gunboat politics won't solve immigration](#)) To add to the fiasco, the home secretary went on to call in a third vessel, HMS Mersey, to stop the terrifying flood of refugees, at which point any sane person must be asking themselves: Why? What on earth is the point in all this

grandstanding?

Diverting workers' attention from the real cause of their problems

Besides the increasingly urgent need for the ruling class to keep workers believing that it is foreigners and not capitalism that causes [poverty](#), [austerity](#), [unemployment](#) and insecurity, it will not have escaped our readers' attention that a leadership contest in the Tory party is expected to take place sooner rather than later. Sajid Javid seems likely to throw his hat into the ring along with fellow ministers Jeremy Hunt and Gavin Williamson. Clearly, he wishes to be seen as ultra-tough on immigration – although not on the causes of immigration, since he has never, to our knowledge, opposed a war of plunder (sorry, 'humanitarian intervention') or the superexploitation of the oppressed countries by British corporations. Another possible reason for involving the Royal Navy was also suggested by the head of the British military, General Sir Nick Carter, during a lecture at the Royal United Services Institute, in which he added fuel to the fire in the ongoing campaign of demonisation of Russia, China, Iran and Islam. Britain, said Sir Nick, must shift away from a 'peacetime' mentality and embrace the innovation associated with war to combat rapid technological change and an array of national threats. He accused Britain's 'enemies' (ie British imperialism's non-imperialist rivals) of every crime of which British imperialism itself is guilty: starting wars of brigandage and regime change, interfering with other countries' elections, launching cyberattacks on innocent populations, assassinating its opponents abroad, creating fake news ... and so on, ad nauseam. Claiming that "instability was the defining condition of the age" and that threats were "diversifying, proliferating and intensifying very rapidly", the general asserted brazenly that "mass migration is arguably an existential threat to Europe", compounded by populism and nationalism, all of which, he said, have a "bellicose nature". "We are in a period of change more widespread, rapid and profound than humanity has experienced outside of world war," he asserted, adding: "What constitutes a weapon in this 'grey zone', below the threshold of conventional war, no longer has to go 'bang'." Our 'enemies', he claimed, will use all sorts of tactics, *including mass immigration*, "to gain advantage, sow discord, undermine our political cohesion and destroy our free and open way of life". So now *the very act of being a refugee* is enough to lay a person open to the charge of being a hostile pawn in the hands of Russia,

China, Iran or whoever else the imperialists are demonising today, and of being engaged in attempting to destroy this country's 'free and open' (!) way of life. So much for Britain's much-vaunted 'democratic values' and 'respect for international law and human rights'. This is talk straight out of the Nazi handbook. That being the case, could it be that the 'crisis response' is viewed by our rulers in the nature of a dress rehearsal for something more sinister? Are British workers being prepared to view all migrants as enemy aliens as part of the [imperialist drive to war](#)? We leave our readers to judge who poses the greatest threat to humanity: the ruthless perpetrators of imperialist war and brigandage, or their victims.

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