Stop the Leave campaign’s racist, xenophobic attack
No to Fortress Britain!
No to Fortress Europe!

- Stop the racist scapegoating of immigrants and Muslims for the effects of government policies
- Build the immigrant & youth-led movement for the rights of immigrants and refugees
- Open the borders of Britain & Europe to immigrants and refugees! Stop the imperialist war-drive in the Middle East.
- Equal citizenship rights and freedom of movement FOR ALL who live, work & study in Britain and Europe. Amnesty now for all immigrants and asylum seekers.
- Join the movement for civil & immigrant rights with mass action against austerity, poverty & inequality – For free, public education and healthcare FOR ALL – For an economic policy to meet the needs of the poor, oppressed, working class and struggling middle class people of all races & nationalities – Nationalise the Banks
The campaign for Britain to Leave the European Union is driven by racist immigrant-bashing. In reality that is its only policy. The referendum on 23rd June is happening because politicians of all the main parties, especially the Conservatives with their rebellious child UKIP, have created or condoned a cycle of racist rhetoric and policy that blames immigrants for the rising levels of insecurity, poverty and inequality that have resulted from the policies of successive governments. It is a logical extension of those policies in the context of rising economic and political uncertainty, reflected in the conflicts within the Conservative Party. The impact of a Leave victory would inevitably have a negative impact on the political climate and policy making in Britain, strengthening the racist scapegoating of immigrants and the demonisation of the Muslim community, and creating further hardships for refugees and immigrants. The assassination of Labour MP Jo Cox is an indication of how a Leave victory would embolden the most violent elements of far-right racism.

The Movement for Justice (MFJ) condemns the racism and xenophobia of the Leave campaign. The MFJ is committed to building a movement that defends the rights of immigrants and refugees as equal members of society and fights the divide-and-rule immigrant-bashing policies of the rich and powerful. Most of us in the MFJ are asylum seekers and refugees who escaped persecution in Africa and Asia and are now leaders in the struggle for freedom, equality and justice in Britain.

We are building a mass movement against the racism, immigrant-bashing and anti-Muslim bigotry that are the most important weapons of the rich and powerful, and we know we can inspire and lead mass struggles against poverty and ‘austerity.’ Our movement inside and outside detention has won a series of victories against that inhuman, racist system because we speak the truth about racism and because refugees, asylum seekers and past and present detainees are leaders at the heart of the struggle.

Everyone who has taken part in the MFJ’s Surround Yarl’s Wood demonstrations has experienced the dynamic power of the oppressed when we organise in collective action, and knows that we can shut down detention and win much more.

It is no surprise to us that the strongest support for the Remain campaign comes from Britain’s black, Asian and Muslim communities that are directly threatened by the impact of a Leave victory, from the youth who want a future of progress and hope, not an ugly, backward-looking and impoverished Fortress Britain, and from London, the most multicultural and integrated city in Europe – together with Scotland, where 8% of the UK’s population have welcomed a third of the Syrian refugees allowed into the country.

Many of those voting for Remain have supported the MFJ and contributed to growing strength: you have been with us on our demonstrations with the detainees in Harmondsworth/Colnbrook and Yarl’s Wood detention centres, that have been the focus of the growing movement against detention over the past two years; you have marched with us on demonstrations in solidarity with refugees, for free public education, against austerity and war, or on Peckham Community Pride in February; you have bombarded airline switchboards and gone to Heathrow to stop deportations; you have attended our public hearings to put detention on trial and organised meetings for us or contributed to our fundraising, you have heard us speak at your colleges, universities and conferences. You will be with us on the Immigrant Rights Bloc at London Pride two days after the referendum and on the next Surround Yarl’s Wood on 10th September.

In reality you will be casting your vote against Leave, rather than for a Remain campaign that leaves most people feeling confused, baffled or indifferent and offers only a continuation of an uninspiring status quo. Nor is it a vote for EU institutions that have established the supra-national Frontex border force,
that are closing borders and condemning immigrants and refugees to drown in the Mediterranean or live in destitution if they reach an EU country. It is not a vote for the economic policies that have devastated the jobs, living standards and public services of the Greek people and imposed mass unemployment on the youth of Spain and Portugal.

In reality there will be an anti-racist vote for Remain (which could well be decisive) because those voters want to do something about the threat posed by the Leave campaign and can't see what else to do in the circumstances, because the movement is not yet big enough and powerful enough – in reality because the Movement for Justice is not yet powerful enough. That is what has to change.

Our movement, our future

The challenge and opportunity for everyone who is voting for Remain to prevent a victory for the racism of the Leave campaign is to join and build the Movement for Justice. The need for MFJ to grow will be more urgent after the referendum, regardless of the outcome, and we will face new challenges and opportunities. We have to build and organise the growing community action against immigration raids and extend it to make the over-reaching powers in the new Immigration Act unworkable.

We have a real opportunity to stop the Home Office bringing in a new form of the unlawful Fast Track system; the fight to bring back deported MFJ fighter Prossy N from Uganda is an integral part of that struggle. We have the opportunity to build the fight among students to disrupt and defeat the Government's anti-Muslim Prevent programme in schools, colleges and universities following the dramatic victory of Algerian refugee Malia Bouattia as the first black woman and first Muslim president of the National Union of Students (NUS). We have growing opportunities to link the fight for immigrant and refugee rights and for LGBT equality, shown by the success of Peckham Pride.

Moreover, we know the racist scapegoating of immigrants will continue because the Government (on both sides of the referendum dispute) is committed to further austerity measures, and because of the precarious state of the global economy. Building the Movement for Justice is the fight for our future, and building the leadership of immigrants and refugees in our movement will be the key to our growth.

Immigrants and refugees are the strongest and most determined fighters for freedom and equality in Britain and Europe because of the struggles they have faced to get here and the struggles they face once they are here. The problem for refugees and immigrants who have successfully opened the borders into Britain and the EU is that they are generally dispersed and always in a grinding daily struggle with racist laws and institutions. In that situation they have to rely on charitable organisations that in turn rely on the powers-that-be in one way or another, and only see refugees as victims deserving of sympathy. Immigrants and refugees need a movement that is their own – a movement in which they are leaders, organising to fight an unjust, racist system, and where they can build their own relationship with the poor and oppressed and progressive forces in the societies they are living in. Building that movement and leadership is the strategy of the MFJ and the basis of the impact we are having and every victory we have won.

The MFJ is fighting, based of the collective strength of the poor and oppressed,
without illusions in the established political and legal systems but ready to exploit its contradictions. We speak the truth about racism because the exploited must overcome time-worn prejudices in order to defeat the austerity policies of the rich and powerful and fight for equality and freedom. We fight By Any Means Necessary because the exploited and oppressed must determine what it will take to win; we don’t let the powers-that-be tell us what methods are ‘acceptable.’

We can join this movement to the struggle against poverty and austerity because the fight by immigrants and refugees to expose and overcome racist scapegoating policies is central and necessary to building the integrated mass action that can stop the Government’s austerity policies, restore and expand public services and win free public education. The strength, victories and honesty of our movement can inspire millions, showing a way to win and providing real leadership.

None of this will happen spontaneously. Consciousness, organisation and leadership are essential for a movement that can win. Immigrants and refugees who are up against the sharp end of British and EU racism every day of their lives can’t afford to indulge in the frivolous luxury of ‘spontaneous,’ unorganised, leaderless struggle. Spontaneously we always end up relying on the established system and institutions in some way or other, simply because those are the prevailing ideas. That is how the heroic spontaneous struggles of the Greek working class and youth led to the election of a government that, despite its promises, ended up carrying out even bigger cuts. That is why the MFJ is committed to develop consciousness and build organisation and leadership. Join the Movement for Justice Now.

Open the borders

The MFJ calls for Open the Borders because it is what hundreds of thousands of refugees and immigrants are doing every day, from the Aegean Sea to Calais, in order to solve real and pressing issues in their lives. Their practical action has placed this demand firmly on the political agenda for all anti-racist and immigrant rights movements across Europe and all progressive struggles, including the labour movement. The mass movement of people who are battling every obstacle to open the borders of Europe is asserting in practice the human and democratic rights that Britain, the EU and the ‘West’ have been declaring in words for two centuries: ‘Liberty, Equality and Fraternity’; ‘Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness’; the right of asylum; the rights of the child; the rights of women etc.

In response, a movement has sprung up in Europe to put those values into practice. People living on Greek islands and in Italian coastal towns are defying threats of arrest and prison by rescuing refugees from the sea and helping them to safety. In southern Italy people are defying the authorities by providing material support to refugees who have been given papers ordering them to leave the country. In the Sicilian capital, Palermo, last weekend’s LGBT Pride march was declared a march in support of migrants. In central Europe and elsewhere people have been putting refugees in cars to get them across borders. All these actions are opening the borders too. And across Europe large demonstrations have supported the struggle of immigrants and refugees and challenged the racist policies of the EU and its member governments.

Europe’s governments have an opposite response to immigrants who escape the
unending warfare created by western interventions in the Middle East and the poverty and social conflict caused by western 'free market' exploitation of Africa: they close the borders, build more fences, condemn thousands to drown in the Mediterranean, and increase their racist rhetoric.

Open the Borders is the only rational, progressive and realistic policy for a world whose people and countries are so increasingly inter-connected through free movement of goods, services, and money and through highly developed communications and transport, and where societies are increasingly connected by personal relationships through the large and rapidly growing number of international and intercontinental families that in some cities are coming close to a majority. And when this inter-connected world is at the same time so grossly unequal, it is inhuman and destructive to deny freedom of movement to the millions of people who must move to survive.

Our movement fights for Open Borders because the alternative is tyranny and barbarism.

Europe in crisis, Britain in crisis

In reality that is the choice for Europe as it faces its biggest and deepest crisis since World War Two. This is not a 'migrant crisis' as the media keep calling it - there is a profound crisis in the relationship between Europe and its near neighbours, the countries of the Middle East and Africa, that is part of the global crisis that Europe is facing. It is the crisis of an economic system that can't meet the needs of humanity, or create a more equal and prosperous world, because its only goal is to maximise the profits of a small minority. The greed of the capitalists who dominate the world economy created the banking collapse in 2008, and they can't find any way out of the long depression that followed. That is leading to dangerous international conflicts and to more damaging attacks on the working class and the poor in every country.

The MFJ sees nothing progressive in the EU. It is an imperialist club, set up to protect the interests of the ruling classes of west European countries by integrating their economies more closely. Those interests include exploiting poor countries and former colonies in Africa, Asia etc., and since the 1980s the EU has expanded to include and exploit its poorer neighbours in eastern and southern Europe. Now the crisis in global capitalist economy has brought this EU project to a juddering halt and sent it into reverse. The countries and regions of Europe are pulling apart and falling out – but they are also far less able to prosper separately.

Neither the EU nor a capitalist Britain outside the EU offer any solution or hope to the poor and oppressed. Britain is part of the crisis in Europe not separate from it – whether it leaves the EU or stays in. For that reason, while we recognise the positive anti-racist and pro-immigrant reasons why many people and many of our supporters will vote for Remain to defeat Leave, the MFJ does not endorse the Remain campaign.

We can't politically endorse the EU that is the bailiff and debt collector for the banks holding Greece to ransom, the international enforcer of austerity, the parent of Frontex and mass deporter of refugees, and the institution that has negotiated the notorious Trans-Atlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP) – a robbers’ charter that gives giant monopoly corporations power over national governments whose policies might damage their profits. To endorse that would be a betrayal of the refugees who are opening the borders and every anti-racist and anti-austerity struggle in Europe.

We should have no illusions in the record and role of the Labour Party and trade union leaderships with regard to the EU. They have increasingly fallen in line with the dominant free markets ideology of the capitalists since the 1980s and been among the strongest supporters of the EU on that basis. Under Blair and
Brown the Labour Party implemented free market policies that led to rising levels of inequality, passed a series of racist immigration acts and introduced Fast Track. Since then the leaders of the labour movement have tried to present the EU as some kind of counter-weight to the austerity policies of the Tories – a ludicrous strategy while the EU was imposing increasing hardship on Greece, Spain, Portugal, Ireland etc. (and reducing the real wages of German workers).

Across Europe Labour’s sister parties, like the Social-Democrats in Germany, the Socialist Parties in France and Spain and PASOK in Greece, have played the same role, as close allies and defenders of the EU’s capitalist establishment. Their greatest political crime, in Britain and Europe, has been their refusal to seriously defend the rights of immigrants and refugees and their active support for ‘Fortress Europe’ immigration controls.

Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell have a long record of opposing those policies, campaigning against imperialist wars and supporting refugees and immigrants, which is why Corbyn was elected as Labour leader last year. In the referendum campaign, however, they are trying to put a totally unconvincing ‘left’ gloss on the Remain campaign. Far worse though is Labour’s abject and near-total refusal to speak the truth about racism and anti-immigrant prejudice and come out fighting against the scapegoating of immigrants, or even to call for an amnesty for the thousands of immigrants living in limbo, without rights or status, for years or decades. This is a disgraceful betrayal of the black, Asian, Muslim and immigrant communities that have been among Labour’s strongest supporters – and it is a betrayal of poor and working class white communities.

Labour has effectively written off poor white people for purposes of the referendum campaign. In many areas it is avoiding such neighbourhoods altogether. Labour’s problem is that it can’t fight the scapegoating of immigrants as long as it accepts the argument that there is no alternative to the economic policies that have devastated so many working class communities. Essentially Labour and the social-democrats and liberals (and just about every journalist) across Europe all believe that the basis of racism lies in the prejudices of the ‘white working class.’ In fact the racism of the ruling class is far stronger and more profound because it is rooted in and serves their real material interests. Racism in poor and working class communities is shaped by living in the race-and-class divided society of an imperialist power, but it is not as strong as the politicians and media keep telling us.

The decision for Corbyn, McDonnell and their Momentum campaign is whether to remain prisoners of the Labour MPs and bureaucrats who are determined to destroy them, even at the cost of further defeats for their own party, or to join in building the movement of mass action against racism and austerity, in Britain and across Europe.

MFJ will fight for the labour movement, especially for the trade unions, to be part of the movement we are building – because this is a life and death question for the labour movement. There will only be a serious and powerful resurgence of mass working class struggle in Europe if immigrants, refugees and migrant workers are a leading part of it and if they are able to break the unions from their collusion (including collusion by silence) with the racist stereotyping of immigrants.

To that end the MFJ has to build a relationship with the struggles of immigrants, refugees, the poor, oppressed and exploited across Europe, united against all our ruling classes. We have the same fight against racism, austerity and repression and the movement for immigrant and refugee rights is the decisive issue everywhere. Struggles are growing across the continent. We have to build that international movement regardless of the outcome of the referendum.
What we are fighting for

MFJ is fighting for equal citizenship rights and freedom of movement for everyone who lives, works and studies in Britain & Europe, whatever our national origin, and to end the ‘allocation’ and dispersal of refugees to particular countries, towns etc.

We fight to end the unequal relationship between the British & European imperialists and the poor countries of Africa, the Middle East and southern & eastern Europe. No more imperialist wars in the Middle East; end support for Israel and reactionary Arab regimes like Saudi Arabia. Cancel the debts of African and other poor nations, including the debts of Greece and other poor countries in Europe.

Immigration detention must be ended. It is an attack the human rights of those detained and on all our human rights; it is an attack on the immigrant, black and Asian communities and an attack on the working by dividing it from the most dynamic and determined forces that can lead the struggle against austerity. It will take uprisings in detention centres and communities to shut down the detention system for good, end deportations and enable detainees to build their lives in the community.

Immigrant-bashing politicians - in a time of economic and political crisis and in the absence of a strong enough mass movement of the poor and oppressed - inevitably encourage the growth of far-right and fascist groups. This is happening in many parts of the EU and we have a warning of how that can happen in Britain from the fascist terrorist who declared “Death to Traitors, Freedom for Britain” after assassinating Jo Cox, a prominent figure in Remain and well-known campaigner for Syrian refugees. Our movement has to build integrated mass action to defend our communities from the fascist and drive them off our streets.

We must build integrated, collective action by students, teachers and communities to stop all forms of repression and discrimination in education. Stop the surveillance and deportation of international students. Shut down the British government’s Prevent strategy – state repression and witch-hunting of Muslim students from nursery to university. Overturn the ban on the Hijab in schools in France and elsewhere in Europe.

Education, Healthcare, housing and welfare for all who need it are rights not privileges. Build a movement to defend, extend and fund these services, reversing
privatisation and cuts, including the benefit cuts. Free, quality public education, health care and welfare services FOR ALL, regardless of national origin.

We will build collective action to fight the insecurity & poverty of growing numbers of people of all races across Britain and Europe. Build community action and occupations to stop evictions and defend social housing and community facilities (hospitals, nurseries etc.). Organise demonstrations, pickets and strikes against benefit cuts. Build worker/community action (occupations, strikes etc.) to defend threatened jobs. Fight for public house building at affordable rents and public investment in policies to meet the needs of the poor & oppressed and create jobs & training.

The powers-that-be will tell us that ‘there’s no money.’ That is a lie. The rich and powerful are sitting on huge and growing sums of money that are not being used for productive investment because of the economic crisis they created. To carry out our demands it will be essential for the poor and oppressed to get control of that money and plan for the future by Nationalising the Banks.

The MFJ will support any politician or organisation that fights for any of these demands, but we know that none of the demands will be won by persuading the rich and powerful, but by the power of a movement that has established deep roots in our communities and become irresistible. And when we are winning these struggles in Britain or anywhere else in Europe we will come into direct conflict with the European Union, because it is an imperialist club. Then we will need to break it up in order to create a different kind of European union altogether – a Europe of and for the poor, the oppressed and the workers of all races and national origins, with Open Borders, building a relationship of equality and co-operation with our oppressed and exploited brothers and sisters in Africa, the Middle East, eastern Europe and beyond.

**Fight to Win! – Join the Movement for Justice By Any Means Necessary!**

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This statement is endorsed by:
Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action, Integration & Immigrant Rights and Fight for Equality By Any Means Necessary (BAMN, US), Revolutionary Internationalist League (UK), Revolutionary Workers League (US) & The International Trotskyist Committee