

Migration, Immigration, Refugees and asylum seekers A POSITION FOR THE WORKING CLASS

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Migration, immigration, refugees and asylum seekers: A position for the working class

In recent years there has been an increased public focus in Ireland on the issue of immigration into the country.

There is no doubt that there are problems arising at present from how immigration into Ireland is carried out. Even for those who see no problem with the current fashion in which immigration is occurring, there is no question that the process is open to being abused by those who control it.

Various elements have used the problems arising from immigration to make political, personal and financial gains by offering false analyses and solutions.

The IRSP's position is that the problems arising from immigration are a symptom of a broken system. The movement of people throughout the world should be based on their free will, not them being pushed from their home country due to poverty and war to be used by exploiters elsewhere, and not with the view to being used in undermining the working class of other countries. The reason that immigration doesn't occur without such problems is due to a system in Ireland and internationally which prioritises the wealth and power of massive corporations, banks and landlords, over the wellbeing of the people as whole.

Concerns with issues arising from the state's immigration policy cannot be viewed without reference to the broader issues affecting Irish society, and the IRSP is clear in its position that we must work toward building a 32-County Republic in which the working class- the majority- controls all such policies in our own interests.

Introduction: A summary of the working-class position

It is an obvious demand of the Irish working class that policies on who enters Ireland are based on our own interests. Regardless of one's views on immigration at present, this is clearly the only reasonable position.

- The Irish Working Class must demand a policy on who enters and resides in this country based on what is in our collective interests- but this cannot be achieved under the existing political system.
- Currently individuals and institutions such as large businesses and corporations, banks and landlords, called capitalists, decide on who enters Ireland and resides here.
- This is because these capitalists own and control the resources and wealth of Ireland- whoever controls the wealth and resources of a nation will control its political and economic decisions, including on immigration.
- Capitalists make such decisions based on their own interests, wishing to make as much profit as possible, and this causes many of the problems arising from policies involving the movement of people. Even for those who see no problem at present with immigration- the process of immigration remains open to abuse in its current form.
- **The problems arising from immigration policy are tied to a great many other problems, the only way to ensure that these problems are resolved is for the working class to control the wealth and wealth-producing resources of the country and to ensure political and economic decisions benefit everyone.**

Why is immigration and refugee policy an issue?

The numbers entering Ireland, like many other political and economic policies, affects the well-being of the Irish people. An obvious example of this is that increased numbers can mean increased demand on resources which are scarce. Realistically, immigration can easily be carried out in a responsible fashion which is beneficial to everyone involved- so we must question why problems are arising from it.

Who is making the decisions?

Ireland exists under the system of capitalism. This means that Ireland's economy, our resources and wealth, are owned and controlled privately by capitalists, capitalists include individuals and certain institutions such as large corporations, landlords and banks. Capitalists own the resources, and the working-class must slave to make profit for the capitalists in return for a wage, the working class must also pay them for housing.

How are they in control of these decisions?

Those who own and control our wealth and resources- the capitalists- determine the political decisions. The decisions of large corporations, for example, can have a greater impact on Irish society and the Irish economy than any government decision. Politicians under the current system are merely the puppets of the capitalists. This is why changing the government, but not the system, will not achieve anything.

On what basis do capitalists decide on numbers entering and leaving the country?

Capitalists wish to always make as much profit as possible off the backs of the working class. They own the big companies, and they want as much work from workers as possible while giving as little as possible in return, they own the housing market, and they want to take as much rent as they can while providing sub-quality accommodation, and so on. How many workers, renters, etc. enter and leave the country is an important factor in all of this.

How do the capitalists use the movement of people into a country?

Sometimes capitalists seek more workers, or workers with specific skills, which they feel unable to attain in a given country. However, it is also a case that workers who are migrating do not want to live in their own countries will work and live in conditions that native workers may not. Irish workers who do try to challenge wages, rent or conditions, can be threatened with replacement by a foreign worker.

Capitalism sustaining itself

The capitalists own the resources of the country, and so the rest of us must work for them and pay them just to live. To maximise profit the capitalists exploit workers, charge high rents, and charge huge prices for access to resources such as healthcare, education and transport. Of course, then capitalists fear that their system may be challenged by the working class- that we may demand control of our own resources, or even better conditions.

An effective way for the working class to better their conditions and take control is for the workers to unite and refuse to produce for or pay rent to the capitalists. To lessen the chances of this happening capitalists can bring increased numbers of people into the country, so if the working class begins to refuse to work, or refuse to pay rent, they can be easily replaced with foreigners who will accept poorer conditions rather than face having to return to their home country.

Some weapons of the capitalists

Foster division: The capitalist plan has a weakness however: what if immigrant workers began to unite with the Irish workers to stand up to them? That is why pro-capitalist political parties will attack and criticise foreigners while also bringing them into the country. They want them here to use them for profit, but they want division between foreign and native workers. Capitalists have the option then too to choose the ethnic, cultural and religious makeup of who comes into the country, and how many, and how quickly they bring them to the country, they can do this in such a fashion that achieving unity between workers of different backgrounds is very difficult.

False opposition: Capitalists will also promote false opposition to themselves. This includes those who deem any criticism of policies relating to the movement of people

as 'racist' and attempt to silence any critics. On the other side there are those who will promise to reduce immigration but make no mention of challenging the capitalist ownership of Ireland's wealth and resources. They criticise 'the foreigners' taking up local housing, but not the foreign vultures buying up entire blocks of housing to rent back to the working class at unaffordable rates. The capitalists also promote false opposition to themselves which focuses on conspiracy theory or on racial, ethnic, and religious aspects. None of the above threatens their control and none of the above will see change in any sense to immigration policy, this is why so many politicians elected on the promise of reducing immigration ultimately do nothing.

The only solution for the working-class

Whether one agrees with the current scale of movement of people into Ireland, a policy on this matter left in the hands of capitalists to control in their own interests at least has the potential to be used to the detriment of the working class. The only solution to this ultimately is the organisation of the working class to demand control of Ireland's wealth and wealth-producing resources. This has been the call of the recent generations of Irish patriots through to the heroes of our history, that the workers of Ireland control the resources of Ireland. From the democratic program of the First Dáil:

We declare in the words of the Irish Republican Proclamation the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies to be indefeasible, and in the language of our first President, Pádraig Mac Phiarais, we declare that the Nation's sovereignty extends not only to all men and women of the Nation, but to all its material possessions, the Nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and all the wealth-producing processes within the Nation, and with him we reaffirm that all right to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare

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