



IMMIGRATION, CAPITALISM & IMPERIALISM IN IRELAND

LASAIR DHEARG POLICY

WWW.LASAIRDHEARG.COM





IMMIGRATION, CAPITALISM & IMPERIALISM IN IRELAND

LASAIR DHEARG POLICY

CONTENTS

PREAMBLE	P2
INTRODUCTION	P3
CONTEXT	P4
IMMIGRATION LEVELS	P4
IMPERIALISM	P6
HOUSING	P8
THE CLIMATE CRISIS	P12
THE ECONOMY	P15
CRIME	P17
HEALTHCARE	P18
OUR CONCLUSION - A SOCIALIST REPUBLICAN POSITION	P21
IMMIGRATION IN A SOCIALIST REPUBLIC	P24
APPENDICES	P25
APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY	P25
APPENDIX 2: REFERENCES	P28
OTHER PUBLICATIONS	P33

PREAMBLE

This policy, developed by the general membership of Lasair Dhearg, a Socialist Republican organisation with a presence across Ireland, seeks to address the issue of immigration into Ireland. In the process, this policy aims to provide a context within which the issues facing the people of Ireland can be viewed.

In developing this document, we are conscious of the fact that there exist two realities within which immigration into a state should be considered. Firstly, immigration into a capitalist economic entity, in this case, the Six and Twenty-Six County States, and secondly, immigration into the eventual Irish Socialist Republic.

The following analysis is, for the most part, concerned with immigration in the context of the current capitalist economic order that exists in Ireland. However, immigration into an Irish Socialist Republic will be addressed in our concluding remarks.

INTRODUCTION

At present, both failed states on the island of Ireland are experiencing a growth in racist and xenophobic sentiments, primarily aimed at those who, for a variety of reasons, have immigrated here from other countries and now call Ireland home. Whilst immigration to Ireland is not a new phenomenon, it is undeniable that opposition to it has grown in recent years. It is no coincidence that this has occurred in parallel with the failures of the capitalist economic system in place here. These sentiments have been cultivated and exploited by those on the right of the political spectrum, hand in hand with those who run this system and the governments who continue to prop them up.

Much of the sentiment expressed by those in opposition to immigration, aside from being openly racist, centres around concerns regarding housing, access to local resources, and supposed fears around ‘unvetted’ males and ‘military-aged men’ – deliberate tropes designed to stoke fear in our communities. It is abundantly clear that a significant amount of misinformation, much of it deliberate, exists in the public discourse around this issue, often propagated in an organised way using social media. Large portions of the arguments that are put forward by many different sides of the discussion around immigration lack any sort of grounding in fact.

However, other concerns, expressed by racists and non-racists alike, centre around the state’s failure to properly integrate those who have immigrated here into the communities within which they are placed. These concerns and others must be addressed as part of any discussion on this issue.

CONTEXT

IMMIGRATION LEVELS

Ireland's population has been growing due to immigration, returning Irish citizens and a net positive ratio of births to deaths. This growing population has naturally had an impact on services such as housing, health, and education. That is undeniable. However, it is vital we assess the level of its impact in comparison to government austerity and policies put in place to allow the capitalist system to exploit the people. For example, there are nearly 200,000 homes vacant or derelict. That is enough to solve the housing crisis 15 times over. This point is discussed in more detail in another section of this document.

One of the main tropes used by those on the right of the political spectrum, and which is pushed to a significant degree by them on social media, is that Ireland is full and that there has been an 'invasion' of the country by 'military-aged men', to such an extent that ethnically Irish people are or will very soon be a minority. Analysis of these social media posts has shown that the majority of those posting the claims actually come from the United States and Britain, with as few as 20% of anti-immigration posts coming from Ireland ^[1] ^[2]. Even this figure could be overstating the number of Irish people engaging with the *#IrelandIsFull* hashtag on Twitter. It is well known that right-wing groups from the United States have been using VPN software to falsify their location.

The irrationality of these claims is on display when you look at the most recent immigration data from the Twenty-Six Counties Central Statistics Office (CSO). According to that data, there were 836,200 non-Irish citizens living in the State as of August 2024: around 15% of the population. To place this in perspective, there are approximately the same amount of people who are more than 65 years old as there are non-Irish citizens.

As of the 2022 census, when identified by place of birth rather than citizenship, there were 955,000 people resident in the Twenty-Six Counties who were born outside of the Island, accounting for approximately 19% of the population. This also includes people born in Australia, Britain, and the

United States, around 50% of whom identified as white Irish in the census ^[3].

Nevertheless, the highest year for Immigration into Ireland was not 2022, 2023 or 2024. It was 2007. That year 151,100 people immigrated to Ireland, including returning Irish citizens ^[4]. In the 12 months to April 2024, there were 149,200 people who immigrated to Ireland, again including returning Irish citizens, and net migration levels are still only marginally above those seen in 2007 due to almost 70,000 Irish citizens leaving in the same time period. Approximately 85,000 immigrants came from outside of the EU, however, this included more than 20,000 'UK' citizens ^[5].

Even this admittedly significant proportion of the population pales in comparison to a more striking figure. The most recent estimates from 2017, which have no doubt increased in the intervening years, show that there were more than 1.47 million Irish citizens living abroad, including around 123,000 living in the United States ^[3]^[6].

In the Six Counties, things are significantly different. The census of 2021 showed that just 6% of the population was born outside of Britain or Ireland and that almost 97% of people there described their ethnicity as white ^[7]. The most recent data from NISRA, the statistics agency of the Six Counties, shows that between 2022 and 2023 there was a net migration of just 7,500 people. For context, the population estimated by the same report was 1,920,400, representing an increase of less than 0.4% ^[8].

In stark contrast to what these numbers show, historically sectarian political organisations like the mainstream Unionist parties and their political representatives have repeatedly expressed their 'concern' at the supposed influx of immigrants and refugees into the state.

In what was clearly an attempt to stoke anti-immigrant sentiment, Gavin Robinson, at that time the interim leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), stated that the British government must act to prevent the Six-County State from becoming a 'magnet' for asylum seekers. Robinson's comments however, like many shared from within the Unionist political community, alongside tropes and other misinformation from across the 'political divide' in the Six Counties, fail to reflect reality.

IMPERIALISM

Recent years have seen a significant destabilisation of entire regions across the globe. Wars, coups d'état, counter-revolution, colonialism, and occupation, all driven by a Western imperialist backlash against increasing opposition to US hegemony, have resulted in significant numbers of people fleeing for safety, especially from the Middle East and Africa. This has inevitably resulted in an influx of millions of people, from countries such as Afghanistan, Syria, Palestine, and many others, seeking asylum and refuge in neighbouring states and far beyond. The Irish government is a junior partner in NATO/EU warmongering. The actions of Western governments including both governments on the island of Ireland, are leading to a refugee crisis across the world.

Rather than blaming those fleeing war, we must focus our blame and anger on those responsible for the conflicts.

For the longest time, the world's imperialist powers have been extracting much of Ireland's wealth and resources. Whether that be the British government's actions during An Gorta Mór, when they allowed more than a million people to starve to death because their crops were being sold off for profit, or in the modern day, the wholesale sell-off of Ireland's natural gas resources to multinational corporations, it is an issue we in Ireland know only too well. The capitalist class has constantly used it throughout history and is being applied at a growing rate to divide the working class in Ireland.

This can be seen through the Twenty-Six County government's purposeful policy to put large groups of refugees in already under-resourced towns in rural Ireland. The immediate reaction to this has been one of anger and to place the blame on the refugee. Yet the decision-makers and profiteers hide in their multi-million-euro houses counting their profits, while we, the working class, fight amongst ourselves for the crumbs of this self-destructing system.

In the Twenty-Six County State, in particular, large increases in immigration levels have been driven by imperialist endeavours in Eastern Europe. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which has now been ongoing for over

a decade, has seen an estimated 108,540 Ukrainian refugees take up residence in Ireland ^[1]. Of these, an estimated 45,000 reside in state-provided accommodation as of June 2024, down from around 60,000 in November of the previous year ^[2].

It is undeniable that Ukrainians have received significantly preferential treatment from the Twenty-Six County government when compared to those arriving from other countries. Only in March of 2024 did they implement plans to align the treatment of Ukrainians with that of other refugees. Whereas asylum seekers from other countries were entitled to a 'Daily Expenses Payment' of just €38.80 per adult and €29.80 per child each week, before this date refugees from Ukraine were provided with €220 per week, more than five and a half times as much ^[2]. It is well understood that steps such as this were deliberate moves by the government in the Twenty-Six County State to court favour with NATO and the EU.

Multiple groups in Ireland are doing the dirty bidding of the political elite. These groups are helping keep the landlord class in power as they seek to further divide working-class people in this country. When we follow the money, we see these groups and agitators are backed by the political elite, Unionists and MI5. These groups and agitators claim to be patriots yet act completely contrary to the interests of our country and our people.

HOUSING

Housing is the number one issue for people in every corner of Ireland. The lack of housing, the unsuitable nature of the housing that is built and the detrimental and sometimes fatal impacts it is having on our society.

For as long as capitalism has existed in Ireland, so too has the demand for access to fair housing. The housing systems across both failed states on this Island are no longer, and arguably never were, about the provision of homes, but about the building of houses as a commodity to create and retain profits.

From Dublin being Europe's most expensive city to rent outside of London ^[1] to 3,544 homeless children in the Six Counties ^[2], Cork's ghost estates and Donegal's Mica scandal, inadequate housing is a disease that has been festering for decades throughout Irish society. Housing demand in the Twenty-Six Counties is rising significantly, pushing up the cost of rent and mortgages. More and more people are living in precarious accommodations, with relatives, or are deciding to leave Ireland in search of better economic opportunities.

The shortage of affordable housing has not been caused by an increase in the number of immigrants or refugees, but by decades of government policy to leave the housing supply to private industry and the housing market rather than take responsibility themselves. There has been a coordinated effort from the political establishment, the vulture funds, and the landlord class to destroy working-class communities. A plan that has allowed them to successfully extract wealth from our class into the hands of landlords.

Who benefits when migrants and refugees are scapegoated for anger about housing? The answer is Landlords. Investor funds and private developers can all sit back and charge higher rents while claiming (falsely) that the problems are down to "scarcity of homes" and "supply and demand" in the light of a growing population.

In relation to scarcity, it is worth noting several points. Firstly, despite the Twenty-Six County State being able to provide more than one hundred thousand refugees with emergency accommodation in a very short timeframe,

it has failed to provide adequate permanent accommodation for the more than fourteen thousand people who are now homeless there as of June of 2024 ^[3]. What this shows is that when the political will exists within the state apparatus, it has the ability to house significant numbers of people in a short period of time. In the Six-County State, a similar ability was demonstrated during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic when on-street sleeping was in effect eliminated overnight through the provision of hotels ^[4]. Equally, once economic interests took over it was noticeable how callously these people were ejected back onto the streets.

The second point that needs to be made here, is that the huge demand for housing, in both the Six and Twenty-Six County States, which is only compounded by the need to shelter refugees and asylum seekers, results in vast amounts of public wealth being funnelled into the hands of already very wealthy landlords and hoteliers through the provision of Housing Assistance Payments (HAP), housing benefits, Direct Provision, and more.

Each incoming 'Taoiseach' has promised to solve the housing crisis, promised to build more and deliver more for the people. Yet each time, the Twenty-Six County government has failed. We have to ask why that is. An easy way of finding out is to follow the money trail. The political establishment works in its own interests, and these are in contradiction to our interests. This becomes all the more clear when we see the latest register of members' interests in Leinster House. Almost 80 TDs and Senators are landlords or landowners, with some politicians holding substantial property portfolios. Some 48 TDs, around 30%, own rental properties or land while 29 Senators, just under half, also have property and land interests. The biggest landlord in Leinster House is Kerry TD Michael Healy-Rae who has disclosed he has 18 properties.

In the Six Counties, Stormont's register of interests shows that at least 15 MLAs, around one-sixth of the assembly, currently derive rental income from at least 24 properties ^[5]. However, it is widely believed that for both Leinster House and Stormont these numbers are understated and that the true number of landlords and the amount of properties they profit from are hidden behind legal and financial smokescreens. For example, it is known that

properties are often registered in the name of relatives or with a holding company to avoid the need to register an interest.

Spiralling rents are directly connected to the fact that most of the new-build housing supply is expensive, investor-fund build-to-rent, backed by the government through tax breaks and incentives. In 2022, 58% of all newly built homes in greater Dublin were bought or developed by investor funds. Countless people are being locked out of buying a home by the reliance on these global vulture funds.

The current crisis has deep roots. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, successive governments have gradually shifted away from building social housing. The Twenty-Six County State had long held an aversion to publicly owned housing, instead supporting private ownership through assistance loans. However, the small number of publicly owned dwellings were sold off on a massive scale and the remaining social housing communities were progressively more stigmatised by the state. More than two-thirds of all social housing built in the Twenty-Six Counties since the 1930s has been sold off by the state into private hands.

Local authorities were further undermined during the boom ‘Celtic Tiger’ years from the mid-1990s to 2007, as social housing was outsourced to private developers and private rental schemes. But rather than transforming the housing model after the 2008 crash, the policy adopted to achieve economic ‘recovery’ included pushing up property prices so that the asset value of housing held on banks’ balance sheets would rise again, making banks solvent, and recovering the investments of ‘Celtic Tiger’ developers.

The state is acutely aware that it has the necessary resources, funds and infrastructure to build an adequate supply of homes for every family in Ireland. Indeed, it could take control of the 163,433 dwellings that were lying vacant across the state at the time of the 2022 census ^[6] or the roughly 22,000 homes lying empty in the Six Counties ^[7]. It is also acutely aware that if it were to do so, it would have a significant economic impact in that the cost of housing, due to reduced demand, would fall significantly. However, they also know that the effect of this would be to greatly reduce the profits retained by

those who have ‘invested’ in property across Ireland through investor funds and other means.

Put simply, the state chooses not to build enough housing for fear that it would have a detrimental impact on the already very wealthy. Supply and demand is a core component of capitalism; high demand means high prices, and the government must keep demand high.

Those same governments make the conscious choice to favour those who store vast amounts of wealth in Ireland, to the detriment of everyone else.

THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Increasingly there is an understanding of the role the ongoing climate crisis is playing regarding increased migration.

However, care must be taken when drawing links between what are two very complex issues. It must be understood that, for the most part, migration caused by the climate crisis has been, and will continue to be, internal or to neighbouring countries.

The narrative that environmental disaster in the Global South will lead to mass migration of people into the countries of the Global North is not based on any solid evidence. The UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency, has rejected this narrative as “a myth”, citing statistics published by the International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). These statistics show that in 2022 there were approximately 32.6 million internal displacements, of which around 98% were caused by extreme weather conditions ^[1].

Also of note is that around 70% of all refugees live in countries that neighbour their country of origin ^[2]. These same countries are often those most vulnerable to, and least able to deal with, the disasters brought about by climate change, as well as being the lowest contributors to the crisis. It also shows that despite the devastating impact of these disasters on their lives, most people will prefer to remain as close as they can to their country and their people.

The role of governments both in Dublin and in London cannot be understated. Along with other Western states they have been responsible for the systematic exploitation and destruction of the resources and ecosystems of the Global South.

This exploitation has, in many cases, resulted in the breakdown of traditional economic and societal structures; an upheaval that has led to the movement of huge numbers of people from countries across the globe.

The Twenty-Six County State, for example, heavily relies on countries such as China and Pakistan for the importation of goods and fuel, as well as for

the export of waste. The offloading of the production of these commodities, not to mention the extraction of natural resources and their transport across the world, heavily contributes to the growing climate crisis.

In terms of textile waste, the Twenty-Six Counties consume double the EU average: around 50kg per year for each person living there. Most of this waste will be sent to landfill. Worryingly, the Twenty-Six County State is among the top ten largest exporters of clothing waste to Kenya, contributing to an emerging environmental crisis across Kenya, along with the associated consequences on the health of people living there ^[3].

To appear sufficiently worried about the climate emergency, there has been a push by governments across the world to begin transitioning transport and technology away from fossil fuels and towards electric-powered solutions. Inevitably, this shift, led as it is by a capitalist order intent on profit above all else, has caused devastation on a huge scale to exploited nations in the stampede to extract as many new resources as possible.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), for example, has been devastated by cobalt mining, an important element needed to produce Lithium-Ion and other types of batteries used in electric cars and electronics. Demand for cobalt has more than trebled since 2010, and the subsequent increase in mining in the DRC has been disastrous for communities there.

Money made from mining has helped to fund an ongoing conflict between government forces and rebels that the International Organisation for Migration estimates has caused the internal displacement of almost 7 million people ^[4]. Entire villages have been razed to the ground to make way for mines, crops have been bulldozed and people working in and living near the mines have experienced severe health effects ^[5]. In many cases, those protesting these conditions have been subjected to abuse, including rape and sexual assault ^[6].

As the climate crisis deepens and environmental exploitation as seen in the DRC continues, it remains unclear exactly how global migration will be impacted. However, evidence clearly shows that internal displacement is a

much more common outcome than global migration.

Here in Ireland, we cannot consider ourselves to be immune from this. Wetter summers and warmer winters have seen coastal communities experience regular flooding, a risk that will only continue to increase. Combined with coastal erosion, we will continue to see internal migration away from places at high risk of flooding towards safer areas. These areas may well be already experiencing underfunding and under-resourcing and this increase in internal migration will potentially put them under increased pressure.

The climate crisis and the resulting patterns of migration are ultimately a symptom of the capitalist system, and as such cannot be properly dealt with without the destruction of that system. So long as Ireland and its people remain pawns of capitalism, we will be forced to deal with the consequences that result from its never-ending pursuit of profit at all costs.

THE ECONOMY

For many people the issues are - well-used tropes - that immigrants are taking jobs that should rightfully be going to 'native people', or that they lack the skills to do anything other than menial tasks and therefore do not contribute to the economy once they arrive here. The facts, however, say otherwise.

Key findings from a recent study conducted by the Twenty-Six County's Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) found that in most cases the opposite is true. They found that in the Six and Twenty-Six Counties 'most migrant groups are highly skilled and more likely to have third-level qualifications than the native-born population'. Additionally, they found that 'migrants in both jurisdictions have high employment rates, [and]...a higher proportion of migrants in both jurisdictions work in professional/managerial jobs than non-migrants' ^[1]. This tallies with a report on behalf of the National Economic and Social Council (NESC), which concluded that immigration "increased economic growth, eased labour market shortages, improved output and reduced earnings inequality" ^[2].

Research from other European countries shows that as asylum seekers become permanent residents, their contribution to the State outweighs the cost of initially receiving them if they are allowed to work and are supported in finding employment ^[3]. Indeed, the majority of migrant workers in the Twenty-Six Counties are of working age and contribute more to the economy in taxes and Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) than they receive in public services or social welfare. Migrants have contributed an estimated €3.7 billion a year to the economy of the Twenty-Six County State through taxes and PRSI, work permit fees, immigration registration fees, higher education fees and personal consumption ^[4].

A US study published in 2018, which collected data from 15 Western European countries between 1985 and 2015, including Ireland, Britain, Italy, France and Germany, showed that the inflow of asylum seekers does not deteriorate the economic performance of host countries. This is because the increase in public spending which results from supporting asylum seekers is "more than compensated for by an increase in tax revenues", according to the

work of French researchers published in the Science Advances journal. The study further showed that over time asylum seekers significantly increase per capita GDP, reduce unemployment and improve the balance of public finances.

We are told to believe that the money doesn't exist to fund public services, to build adequate housing or to eradicate child poverty, yet across Ireland, billions of pounds and euros of public money are transferred every year into the hands of the already well-off. The housing system, the Irish people, asylum seekers, and refugees, are all being exploited as part of the great giveaway of public resources into the hands of capitalist profiteers.

Rather than allowing asylum seekers to contribute in this way, governments both north and south instead force them to exist on an income barely able to keep them alive. As we have pointed out in a previous section, asylum seekers in the Twenty-Six Counties are entitled to a weekly allowance of just €38.80 per adult and €29.80 per child. However, this is only available for asylum seekers living in Direct Provision centres. If this is turned down, this allowance is denied to them and they must find accommodation at their own cost, even though asylum seekers are legally prohibited from working until their claim has been in process for at least six months ^[5].

In the Six Counties, things can be much worse. There is a higher payment: £49.18 per week for each person in a household. However, if meals are provided, which may be the case if a family is placed in a bed and breakfast or a hotel, then this payment will drop to just £8.86 per week for each person living in a household. This is less than the minimum wage for a single hour of work. In line with Britain, the Six Counties does not allow asylum seekers to work while their application is ongoing ^[6].

As of 2023, the average waiting time in the Twenty-Six Counties was 13 months with appeals adding around six months to this ^[7]. However, many cases can take much longer. In the Six Counties, the official position of the British Home Office is that most claims will be decided within 6 months. The reality is though that on average it will take between one and three years just to get an initial decision, with some cases taking more than five years ^[8].

CRIME

In many so-called 'developed' countries around the world, the link between immigration and crime has become an almost unquestioned truth for many sections of people in our society. Reports show that significant portions of the indigenous populations of what are supposedly the most 'advanced' nations in the world, usually held the opinion that increased levels of immigration fuelled crime.

However, a recent and significant study conducted across 30 member-states of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) found that "no statistical evidence exists to relate an increase in the number of immigrants to the rise of any kind of crime" ^[1]. They further added, "Based on our...results we rejected the hypothesis which believes that the inflow of immigrants boosts the crime rate." This study, which delved into statistics from 1985 to 2018, covered many European states which are members of the OECD, including the Twenty-Six County State, referred to as 'Ireland'.

In short, allegations or concerns about increasing crime or violence as a result of immigration have no basis in reality. People who have immigrated to Ireland are no more or less likely to commit crime than any other group of people in our society. Where individual incidents occur, they should be treated in the same way as any other crime. However, there is no evidence whatsoever that immigration and/or immigrants in Ireland have any negative effect on the overall crime rate.

Claims are often made that migrants are 'unvetted' or that they are not subject to border checks when arriving on this island. Where the extreme majority of these claims are made, they are without foundation. In truth, any individual entering Ireland, be it as a refugee, an asylum seeker, arriving on a work visa or in any other way, is subject to vetting.

In the Twenty-Six Counties, for example, a check known as 'SIS II' is carried out on all people entering the state. This check, according to the Department of Justice (DOJ) in the Twenty-Six Counties, is carried out on each and every individual against the 'Second Generation Schengen Information System' (SIS II). This database, which has been described as "the largest information

system for public security in Europe”, is a centralised secure database used by all European countries which are members of the Schengen Area, for maintaining information related to border security and law enforcement ^[2].

The integration of SIS II into ‘national’ systems means that automatic alerts are generated in real-time in instances where, for example, a Garda member or Immigration Officer encounters a person who is wanted or has been involved in a serious crime in another jurisdiction. Every person who applies for asylum undergoes a detailed application process involving the taking of photographs and fingerprints which are shared as part of the SIS II system. As part of this process, an applicant can be arrested at any time without a warrant if they are suspected of, among other things, posing a threat to public order or security, committing a serious crime outside the state, or destroying or forging travel documents, as well as failing to make ‘reasonable efforts’ to prove their identity.

A common claim made by those critical of immigration into Ireland is that potential asylum seekers are destroying identity documents and so are able to avoid detection of crimes committed in other jurisdictions. The Twenty-Six County DOJ states that “the establishment of an applicant’s identity and nationality is an important feature of every immigration process. This is especially so in the context of persons who enter the [Twenty-Six County] state for the purposes of making a claim for international protection. Any and all criminal convictions are considered when processing an international protection application, including violent crime”. Individuals who have undergone the process of applying for International Protection and who have successfully received refugee status in Ireland, have reported that the process involves repeated, thorough and lengthy questioning.

In the Twenty-Six Counties, the majority of immigrants come from the European Union, especially Poland, while the second largest group is from Britain, followed by Eastern Europe, in particular from Lithuania, Latvia and the Czech Republic. All of these countries participate in the SIS II system for the purposes of law enforcement, with the exception of Britain which had full access prior to leaving the European Union in 2020 and is seeking to rejoin the system.

HEALTHCARE

A frequent accusation levelled by those opposed to immigration into Ireland is that the current level of immigration is putting unsustainable pressure on public services, causing them to buckle and collapse. There is a certain truth within this. Public services across Ireland are on their knees. However, it is not because of immigration levels but rather the fact that budgets are being cut to the bone by business-friendly politicians in both failed states.

As part of the capitalist economic system, both governments in Ireland are deliberately underfunding public services. There are multiple reasons for this. To use the example of healthcare, the reduction of access to adequate public healthcare serves the purpose of expanding the private healthcare system. Subsequently, those unable to access necessary procedures due to long waiting lists or the restriction of certain surgeries are increasingly utilising or considering utilising private medical care, thus reducing the state’s need to further fund the public health system and minimising the state’s responsibility.

The capitalist economic system, ideologically driven, would much prefer the privatisation of all resources and services. What is increasingly clear, as with other resources, is that the restriction of access to healthcare is being utilised by those in government for the transfer of significant sums of public money into private hands. Put simply, if the state has a really good public healthcare system, then there are fewer opportunities to make money out of healthcare, that is an undeniable fact.

One private hospital in the Six Counties, Kingsbridge, has reported a 33% increase in footfall between 2021 and 2022. The hospital’s chief executive, Mark Regan, said there was no longer an “elitist aspect” to those who came to them; instead, it was “everyone... because they simply can’t wait” and are “seeking other options” ^[1].

According to research by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) think tank, a long-term decline in access to health services has been rapidly accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, more people have bought private health insurance or paid for treatment.

The shift across Ireland to a two-tier health system has been so great that there are now growing waiting lists for those using the private sector as well. Of course, this will be to the benefit of the companies running these private clinics, because it will allow them to raise prices even higher. However, the consequences of this greater utilisation of private health provision are undeniably negative for many people who cannot afford to pay for procedures or indeed 'pay' to remain in ill health. Consequently, reliance on debt or support from other family members to fund procedures is compounding an already precarious situation for many. People are paying more for their healthcare, and because of this, private healthcare providers are seeing significant increases in their bottom line.

As with housing, the provision of public healthcare is deliberately curtailed in order to create demand within the private healthcare sector. Limited access to services is not because of inward migration, but of government policy to limit such services through deliberate underfunding.

It is worth noting that these same issues are seen across all public services throughout the island.

OUR CONCLUSION - A SOCIALIST REPUBLICAN POSITION

Increased migration into Europe, including the island of Ireland is a direct result of imperialist wars and the exploitative nature of the capitalist economic system prevalent across the globe.

Both capitalist economic systems and their associated governments in Ireland are deliberately underfunding public services in favour of growth in the private sector. This ideologically driven process has nothing to do with immigration, it will happen regardless of migrant numbers, and it seeks to undermine the public provision of services and reduce supply and access; this includes housing, healthcare and more. The purpose of this is to create a reduction in the state's public responsibility whilst overseeing the wholesale transfer of public funds into private hands.

It is not the case that increased immigration is the primary cause of placing strain on the provision of housing or healthcare but rather that the deliberate state-driven throttling back of provision and the underfunding of resources is creating an artificial resource reduction for the purposes of maximising profits. This especially applies to the respective healthcare and housing systems across Ireland.

Concerns about crime rates rising along with increasing migration are unfounded, in fact, all evidence is to the contrary - there are no links between increasing migration and increasing crime.

When it comes to housing, direct provision and other forms of state-provided shelter for Irish citizens and non-Irish citizens, we are all being viciously exploited by the state, the landlord class, and the capitalist economic system.

That system is deliberately designed to exploit those existing within the confines of both failed states and, as such, any changes within that system will not bring to an end all forms of exploitation. Only the creation of an Irish Socialist Republic will resolve that exploitation, by removing the very system that enforces it.

The evidence is clear - reduced access to housing, healthcare or other

public services, is not a migrant issue. It is an issue of capitalism and deliberate underfunding by governments.

As socialists, we recognise that fascism does not begin with goose-stepping black shirts, but with the acceptance of intolerance. It is a primary tool of the capitalist class when faced with a crisis. History informs us of this, and the present confirms it.

We must validate legitimate concerns from communities who have been victims of government-sanctioned under-resourcing. We must strive for class unity, unity between the Irish worker and the migrant worker. We have shared interests and are equally exploited.

History proves it is only through unity that we find success for our class.

We believe that these issues and more can be solved without delay in an Irish Socialist Republic. However, in advance of the establishment of that Republic, Lasair Dhearg supports and calls for the immediate implementation of the following positions:

1. A ban on the possession of any form of housing for profit.
2. The acquisition by the state, of all vacant property across the island, as well as all buildings and infrastructure in private ownership being used for the retention of capital or creating profits.
3. A ban on the ownership or exploitation of any natural resources and/or infrastructure by privately owned entities.
4. The nationalisation of all healthcare facilities, medical infrastructure and materials.
5. An end to the imperialist exploitation of other nation-states.
6. An end to the capitalist exploitation and destruction of our environment in the pursuit of profit.
7. An end to imperialist wars across the globe, which directly

contribute to the global increase in refugees and asylum seekers.

8. The funding of public services to levels necessary to meet the needs of the people of Ireland.

9. An end to the placement of migrants in communities where it is known that sufficient resources, public services and/or infrastructure do not exist to allow the accommodation of such a placement.

10. An end to the exploitative and demeaning system of Direct Provision.

11. The eradication of any organisations and/or ideologies which seek to foment division, hatred and unfounded fear around immigration.

IMMIGRATION IN A SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

As Socialist Republicans we support the creation of an Irish Socialist Republic through revolutionary means, encompassing all of Ireland's 32 counties, the purpose of which will be the enrichment of the largest class in society, the working class, and the deliberate persecution of all those who seek to subvert the existence of that Republic.

The Republic will be established upon the principles outlined in the Democratic Programme adopted by An Chéad Dáil Éireann in 1919; 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 . . . that all right to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare.” Further, in return for service to the nation it is the right of all those who call Ireland home to “an adequate share of the produce of the Nation’s labour.”

However, we cannot ignore that such a state will exist within a global capitalist order which would immediately seek to eradicate it. The safeguarding of the Socialist Republic from the forces of Capitalism will necessitate strong protections on its borders. Those protections would include strict immigration controls which would have several aims and objectives, chief among them being the curtailing of any attempt at counter-revolution by other states or state actors. Such protections would also be mindful of the need to attract the inward migration of those people with the specific skills necessary for the building and healthy functioning of a Socialist economy.

An Irish Socialist Republic would be internationalist in outlook, seeking to export revolutionary politics into neighbouring states and across the globe. It would seek to bring to an end, not just capitalism in Ireland, but the global system of capitalism and imperialism. Upon the inevitable establishment of Socialist Republicanism as the new global political and economic narrative, and the unity of the global working class, then, and only then, can the people of the world take the next step into the eradication of state borders and the withering away of state controls on immigration - a decision that can only be made in the absence of the exploitation of one human being by another.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY

Asylum Seeker - Known in the Twenty-Six Counties as an 'International Protection Applicant', a person who has made an application for refugee and/or subsidiary protection status ^[1].

Celtic Tiger - A name used to refer to the economy of the Twenty-Six County State between the mid-1990s and the late 2000's. It was characterised by massive increases in GDP driven by unsustainable borrowing, high levels of foreign investment and government deregulation ^[2].

Direct Provision - The accommodation, food, money and medical services that are provided while an international protection application is being assessed or while seeking asylum ^[3].

DOJ - The Department of Justice; A department in the Twenty-Six County government. It is responsible for An Garda Síochána, courts, prison and immigration services ^[4].

ESRI - The Economic and Social Research Institute is an organisation based in the Twenty-Six Counties. It publishes reports on social and economic issues ^[5].

Garda/An Garda Síochána - The law enforcement arm of the Twenty-Six County State.

GDP - Gross Domestic Product is a measure of all the economic activity of companies, governments and people in a country ^[6].

Global South - Which countries make up the global south is debated, but the term is typically used to refer to 'developing' nations in general, which have historically been mostly located in the southern hemisphere ^[7].

HAP - Housing Assistance Payment: A form of social housing support provided by local authorities to those on the housing waiting list in the Twenty-Six Counties. Local authorities make the payments to private landlords each month in return for a smaller payment by tenants. Tenants must find their own privately rented accommodation ^[8].

IDMC - The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre carries out research and analysis with the aim of effecting policy change by governments worldwide to reduce the risk of people experiencing internal displacement ^[9].

Investor Fund - A mechanism by which investors will pool their money to invest in assets e.g. property, natural resources, stocks etc. ^[10] Often referred to as a Vulture Fund when they target assets that are vulnerable or close to bankruptcy.

International Protection - Status in the State either as a refugee or as a person eligible for subsidiary protection ^[1].

IPAS - The International Protection Accommodation Services. A division of the Twenty-Six County government, it is responsible for providing accommodation to those people undergoing the International Protection application process ^[11].

IPPR - The Institute for Public Policy Research is a London-based think tank which publishes research relating to public services and social issues ^[12].

Mica scandal - Micas are a group of minerals naturally found in rock that can absorb and store water. They can also dramatically reduce the strength of concrete. For years potentially thousands of homes in western Ireland were constructed using defective building blocks containing these Mica impurities. This has resulted in many houses facing extensive repairs or having to be demolished altogether due to walls and foundations cracking or collapsing. Campaigners have been demanding full redress from the Twenty-Six County government to cover the costs of these repairs and rebuilds but have faced intransigence and barriers ^[13].

NATO - The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a military alliance of 32 Western states led by the United States, was set up in the aftermath of World War Two, to ensure American and capitalist control of Western Europe. It has been used as a tool of US imperialism, especially in Eastern Europe but also in the Middle East and East Asia ^[14].

NESC - The National Economic and Social Council is a Dublin-based organisation which advises the 'Taoiseach' on policy issues.

NISRA - The Six Counties Statistics and Research Agency. An agency of the Department of Finance which carries out social research and collates statistics on behalf of government departments and local councils ^[15].

OECD - The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, an organisation made up of 38 mostly Western countries, aims to encourage its members to adopt common, pro-market policies.

PSRI - Pay Related Social Insurance is the Twenty-Six County equivalent of National Insurance contributions. It is paid by employers and employees between 16 and 66 to fund Social Welfare benefits and state pensions ^[16].

Refugee - A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside his or her country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear,

unwilling to return to it ^[1].

Schengen Area - A free travel area in the EU and some non-EU countries, where internal border controls have been abolished.

'Taoiseach' - The Head of Government in the Twenty-Six Counties.

TD - Teachta Dála, a member of the lower house of the Twenty-Six County parliament.

Trope - An overused narrative, often used to convey something negative or to twist the meaning of a word. Similar to cliché.

UNHCR - The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, also known as the United Nations Refugee Agency. Advocates for the rights of refugees, it also provides shelter, food and water to people fleeing conflict and persecution ^[17].

VPN - A Virtual Private Network is software that encrypts internet traffic and can be used to obscure the location of the user.

APPENDIX 2: REFERENCES

CONTEXT – IMMIGRATION LEVELS

1. Irish Times, 2023. Most 'Ireland is full' and 'Irish lives matter' online posts originate abroad. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/crime-law/2023/12/05/most-ireland-is-full-and-irish-lives-matter-online-posts-originate-abroad/>
[Accessed September 2024].
2. Sky News, 2024. How international social media users are stoking Ireland's migration debate. [Online]
Available at: <https://news.sky.com/story/amp/how-international-social-media-users-are-stoking-irelands-migration-debate-13127034>
[Accessed September 2024].
3. Migration Policy Institute, 2024. A Small Country with a Huge Diaspora, Ireland Navigates Its New Status as an Immigration Hub. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/ireland-diaspora-immigration>
[Accessed August 2024].
4. Statista, 2024. Migration figures in the Republic of Ireland from 1987 to 2023. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/537502/immigrant-population-of-ireland/>
[Accessed September 2024].
5. Central Statistics Office, 2024. Population and Migration Estimates, April 2024. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2024/>
[Accessed September 2024].
6. Department of Foreign Affairs, 2017. Irish Emigration Patterns and Citizens Abroad. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/newspress/publications/ministersbrief-june2017/1--Global-Irish-in-Numbers.pdf>
[Accessed August 2024].
7. NISRA, 2022. Population and household estimates. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/2021-census/results/population-and-household-estimates>
[Accessed September 2024].
8. NISRA, 2024. 2023 Mid-Year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2023-mid-year-population-estimates-northern-ireland>
[Accessed September 2024].

CONTEXT – IMPERIALISM

1. Statista, 2024. Number of Ukrainian refugees 2024, by country. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1312584/ukrainian-refugees-by-country/>
[Accessed August 2024].

2. Irish Times, 2024. Dozens of Ukrainians at risk of homelessness as 90-day housing limit comes into effect. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/social-affairs/2024/06/12/dozens-of-ukrainians-at-risk-of-homelessness-as-90-day-housing-limit-comes-into-effect/>
[Accessed August 2024].

CONTEXT – HOUSING

1. Deloitte, 2024. Property Index - Overview of European Residential Markets, Prague: Deloitte.
2. Department for Communities, 2024. Northern Ireland Homelessness Bulletin October 2023 - March 2024. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-homelessness-bulletin-october-2023-march-2024>
[Accessed August 2024].
3. RTÉ, 2024. Over 14,000 in emergency accommodation last month. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2024/0726/1462023-homeless-figures/>
[Accessed August 2024].
4. Belfast Live, 2020. Coronavirus pandemic sees homeless people in Belfast all get a place to stay. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/belfast-news/coronavirus-pandemic-sees-homeless-people-18009375>
[Accessed August 2024].
5. NI Assembly, 2024. Register of Members' Interests. [Online]
Available at: <https://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/mlas/registerofinterests.aspx>
[Accessed September 2024].
6. Central Statistics Office, 2023. Vacant Dwellings. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpp2/censusofpopulation2022profile2-housinginireland/vacantdwellings/>
[Accessed August 2024].
7. Belfast Telegraph, 2023. Housing shortages in Northern Ireland: The causes, effects and potential solutions. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/business/northern-ireland/housing-shortages-in-northern-ireland-the-causes-effects-and-potential-solutions/a216576291.html>
[Accessed August 2024].

CONTEXT – THE CLIMATE CRISIS

1. UNHCR, 2023. Climate change and displacement: the myths and the facts. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/stories/climate-change-and-displacement-myths-and-facts>
[Accessed September 2024].

2. Friends of the Earth, 2023. What's the link between climate, migration and refugees?. [Online]
Available at: <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/system-change/whats-link-between-climate-migration-and-refugees>
[Accessed September 2024].
3. Clean Up Kenya, 2023. Clean Up Kenya Requests for Statements on the Illegal exportation of waste plastic clothing to Kenya. [Online]
Available at: <https://cleanupkenya.org/clean-up-kenya-requests-for-statements-on-the-illegal-exportation-of-waste-plastic-clothing-to-kenya/>
[Accessed September 2024].
4. International Organisation for Migration, 2023. Record High Displacement in DRC at Nearly 7 Million. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.iom.int/news/record-high-displacement-drc-nearly-7-million>
[Accessed September 2024].
5. RAID, 2024. New report exposes the environmental and human costs of DRC's cobalt boom. [Online]
Available at: <https://raid-uk.org/report-environmental-pollution-human-costs-drc-cobalt-demand-industrial-mines-green-energy-evs-2024/>
[Accessed September 2024].
6. Amnesty International, 2023. Powering Change or Business as Usual?. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/09/drc-cobalt-and-copper-mining-for-batteries-leading-to-human-rights-abuses/>
[Accessed September 2024].

CONTEXT – THE ECONOMY

1. ESRI, 2023. Comparing Migrant Integration In Ireland and Northern Ireland. ESRI Research Series, March. Issue 158.
2. International Organisation for Migration, 2006. Managing Migration in Ireland: A Social and Economic Analysis, Dublin: National Economic and Social Council.
3. Irish Times, 2024. Are asylum seekers good for the economy? Yes, if they are allowed to work. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/social-affairs/2024/01/20/are-asylum-seekers-good-for-the-economy-yes-if-they-are-allowed-to-work/>
[Accessed August 2024].
4. The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, 2009. Facts about Migrant Workers in Ireland, Dublin: The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland.
5. Nasc, 2024. Asylum in Ireland. [Online]
Available at: <https://nascireland.org/know-your-rights/asylum-ireland>
[Accessed August 2024].
6. UK Government, 2024. Asylum support. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/asylum-support/what-youll-get>
[Accessed August 2024].

7. Irish Refugee Council, 2023. Asylum Process Waiting Times. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/how-long-does-the-asylum-process-take>
[Accessed September 2024].
8. International Rescue Committee, 2022. Claiming asylum in the UK – the facts. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.rescue.org/uk/article/claiming-asylum-uk-facts>
[Accessed September 2024].

CONTEXT – CRIME

1. Tufail, M. et al., 2022. Does more immigration lead to more violent and property crimes? A case study of 30 selected OECD countries. Economic Research-Ekonomksa Istraživanja, 36(1), pp. 1867-1885.
2. TheJournal.ie, 2023. Debunked: No, '100,000 unvetted foreign nationals' did not receive free accommodation in a year. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.thejournal.ie/debunked-no-100000-unvetted-foreign-nationals-did-not-receive-free-accommodation-in-a-year-5986055-Feb2023/>
[Accessed August 2024].

CONTEXT – HEALTHCARE

1. BBC News, 2023. NI Health: 'More people than ever paying for private healthcare' [Online]
Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-64971161>
[Accessed August 2024].

CONTEXT – GLOSSARY

1. Nasc, 2024. Asylum in Ireland. [Online]
Available at: <https://nascireland.org/know-your-rights/asylum-ireland>
[Accessed August 2024].
2. Investopedia, 2024. Celtic Tiger: Definition, History, and How Irish Economy Thrived.[Online]
Available at: <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/celtictiger.asp>
[Accessed September 2024].
3. Citizens Information Board, 2024. Direct provision system. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/moving-country/asylum-seekers-and-refugees/services-for-asylum-seekers-in-ireland/direct-provision/>
[Accessed September 2024].
4. gov.ie, 2024. Department of Justice. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-justice/>
[Accessed September 2024].
5. ESRI, 2023. About the ESRI. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.esri.ie/about>
[Accessed September 2024].

6. BBC News, 2024. How fast is the UK's economy growing and what is GDP?. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-13200758>
[Accessed September 2024].
7. The Associated Press, 2023. Everyone's talking about the Global South. But what is it? [Online]
Available at: <https://apnews.com/article/what-is-global-south-19fa68cf8c60061e88d69f6f2270d98b>
[Accessed September 2024].
8. Twenty-Six County Government, 2024. How Does HAP Work?. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.hap.ie/howdoeshapwork/>
[Accessed September 2024].
9. International Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2024. About us. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.internal-displacement.org/about-us/>
[Accessed September 2024].
10. MoneyWeek, 2023. What you need to know about investment funds. [Online]
Available at: <https://moneyweek.com/investments/what-you-need-to-know-about-investment-funds>
[Accessed September 2024].
11. gov.ie, 2023. About IPAS. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/32a25-accommodation-services/>
[Accessed September 2024].
12. IPPR, 2024. Who we are. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.ippr.org/who-we-are>
[Accessed September 2024].
13. TheJournal.ie, 2021. The Mica controversy explained. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.thejournal.ie/mica-explainer-5467214-Jun2021/>
[Accessed September 2024].
14. Socialist Worker, 2022. Why Nato is an alliance built on war. [Online]
Available at: <https://socialistworker.co.uk/features/why-nato-is-an-alliance-built-on-war/>
[Accessed September 2024].
15. NISRA, 2024. About NISRA. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/about-nisra>
[Accessed September 2024].
16. gov.ie, 2024. PRSI - Pay Related Social Insurance. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/80e5ab-prsi-pay-related-social-insurance/>
[Accessed September 2024].
17. UNHCR, 2024. About UNHCR. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr>
[Accessed September 2024].

OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

DRUGS, ADDICTION & DECRIMINALISATION – LASAIR DHEARG POLICY

<https://www.lasairdhearg.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Drugs-Addiction-Decriminalisation-Lasair-Dhearg-policy.pdf>

THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT – CAPITALISM, POVERTY, IMPERIALISM AND THE POLICE STATE

<https://www.lasairdhearg.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/The-Good-Friday-Agreement-Capitalism-Poverty-Imperialism-and-the-Police-State-25-Years-of-the-GFA-Lasair-Dhearg.pdf>

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS INFORMATION CARD – SIX COUNTIES

https://www.lasairdhearg.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Know_Your_Rights_Card_Lasair_Dhearg_web.pdf

TEN POINT PROGRAMME – LASAIR DHEARG MANIFESTO

https://www.lasairdhearg.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Manifesto_Web_Version_11082017.pdf

AN SPRÉACH – SOCIALIST REPUBLICAN MAGAZINE

<https://www.lasairdhearg.com/anspreach/>

LASAIR DHEARG IS A GROWING MOVEMENT FIGHTING FOR A 32 COUNTY SOCIALIST REPUBLIC.

Formed from a collective of community and political activists in 2017, our primary concern is the liberation of the Irish working class and the establishment of a **32 County Socialist Republic** built upon the principles of the **Proclamation of the Irish Republic of 1916** and the **Democratic Programme of the first Dáil Éireann**.

We believe that Irish sovereignty, equality for all and the economic liberation of the Irish people, can only become a reality upon the establishment of a People's Republic where all **power and economic control** rests with the Irish people.

*"A free Ireland would control it's own destiny...
from the plough to the stars." – James Connolly*

WWW.LASAIRDHEARG.COM/JOIN

