

# THE LIBERTARIAN

Newsletter for the Liberties and Portobello

Produced by the Workers Solidarity Movement

[www.struggle.ws/wsm](http://www.struggle.ws/wsm)



Over the past fifteen years those in power made a lot of promises. They promised a country in which everybody would benefit from the economy, one in which poverty and other problems would be left behind. As usual they lied.

Low pay, homelessness, long hospital waiting lists, under funded schools, drug abuse and the high cost of housing are just some of the difficulties that ordinary people across the country still have to deal with. The illusion of the Celtic Tiger has disappeared and left in its place a lot of angry people. And we are right to be angry.

Over the past fifteen years a certain section of society made a lot of money off our work. Businessmen, Bankers, Landowners and Politicians all grew very rich by screwing the rest of us. But they can't admit this, they can't accept responsibility for the society that they shaped and the problems they caused.

Instead, helped by their rich newspaper owning friends, they try and find someone else to blame. Asylum Seekers are among the most vulnerable sectors in society. They are peo-

ple fleeing their homeland because of violence or persecution and hope to find shelter in Ireland. Refugees from war-torn countries like Afghanistan face incredibly dangerous and difficult conditions in their home countries – at the time of the Afghani's protest more than 50 people were being violently killed there every day. Last year in Ireland only 2,541 people applied for asylum but if you were to depend on the mainstream media you would get a very different picture.

They imply that we are being swamped by an army of asylum seekers here to sponge off the state. They help spread myths that asylum seekers get free cars and mobile phones, that they get houses ahead of Irish people and that they clog up the medical system. These myths are untrue. Like most other people in society Asylum Seekers are screwed by the government but because they are so vulnerable and isolated they often get treated even worse.

## FACTS ABOUT ASYLUM SEEKERS IN IRELAND

- Asylum Seekers are not allowed work. Ireland is one of the only countries in Europe in which it is illegal for an Asylum Seeker to

work. This means people are kept isolated from the local community and are dependent on the government for support

- Asylum Seekers are not on local Authority housing lists. They are housed in shared, hostel type accommodation. Many of these "centres" are located in remote regions and are often over crowded. This means, that entire families have almost no privacy and very little freedom; sometimes for a few years.

- Asylum Seekers do not get Social Welfare. Adult Asylum Seekers only get 19.10 a week while children get 9.60. This tiny amount is supposed to cover all costs, apart from food and accommodation.

- Asylum seekers do not get special treatment in the Medical System. Asylum seekers do get ordinary medical cards which are the same as all other people that receive them.

- Asylum Seekers are not allowed to attend 3rd level education. Along with the ban on working this results in many fit, hardworking and educated people being refused the opportunity to contribute to society.

- Some Asylum seekers have been in the Asylum process for over 5 years

- Many young Asylum Seekers have lived almost the whole of their lives in Ireland and yet are being faced with deportation.

**We hope you enjoy this issue of 'The Libertarian'. If you would like to meet with local anarchists or know of a local issue we should cover contact us at WSM, PO Box 1528, Dublin 8 or via email at [wsm\\_ireland@yahoo.com](mailto:wsm_ireland@yahoo.com)**

# THEN AND NOW ... SAME AS IT EVER WAS

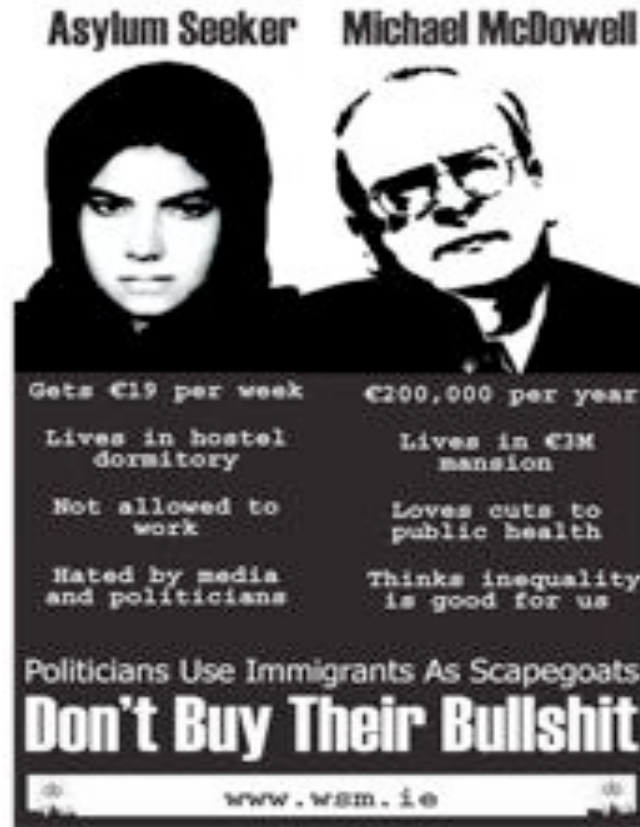
'The Liberties' gets its name from a number of areas which were outside the medieval walls of Dublin City. This doesn't mean that they were somehow free - it just means that instead of being under the city's jurisdiction they were ruled by a different group of masters. The Archbishop of Dublin was the boss of one section, the Earl of Meath was in charge of another, and so on. These men of wealth and power taxed the areas they controlled and made money from them but didn't really care about anyone who lived there.

Jump forward a few hundred years and things haven't changed too much. In Georgian Dublin, the rich were rebuilding the city. They threw up spectacular buildings and majestic roads and lived a life of splendour. Dublin was becoming a sophisticated city - architecture, music and the arts bloomed. However as is the case now, life was very different for the rich and the working class. In 1790 the Liberties was described as the "scene of the most abject poverty, deplorable sickness, and a magazine of fury".

The next couple of hundred years brought a lot of changes to Ireland - the Act of Union in 1800 abolished the Irish Parliament and the War of Independence brought it back. Once Ireland settled into the 20th Century the bosses of the Liberties were the politicians who ran the rest of the country - Fianna Fail (and the future Progressive Democrats), Fine Gael and the Labour Party. The Liberties stayed a working class area and its fortunes went up and down depending on the policies of different governments.

In the 1980's and 1990's working class areas in Dublin were suffering major unemployment - in some places as bad as 80%. Meanwhile Charlie Haughey was buying shirts worth 5 grand and stealing cob-

blestones from the streets to pave his drive at home. To make matters worse, working class areas were hit by the scourge of heroin. Communities suffered massively as young people got addicted and started engaging in anti-social crime.



Groups of people got together to try and stop dealers from making money off of other people's misery. In the 80's 'Concerned Parents against Drugs' was formed to try and defend working class areas from the menace of heroin and dealers. In the 90's, 'Coalition of Communities Against Drugs' took its place. When the politicians saw what these groups were doing they didn't like it. These politicians wouldn't provide the money to help addicts detox, or clean syringes off the streets and playgrounds but they managed to find the cash to fund a lot of police harassment.

Today, the likes of Mickey McDowell talks about protecting Irish Citizenship. He wants to tell you that the problem in Ireland today is that we have too many foreigners coming over and stealing our resources. He tries to portray himself as the hard man - defending us from refugees and asylum seekers. Michael McDowell knows well that foreigners

aren't a big problem in Ireland. They're not the reason working class areas don't have enough resources, class sizes in schools are too big and hospital waiting lists are so long. We've only had inward migration in Ireland for the last 10 years (at most) - if foreigners are the problem for the last 10 years, what was the problem before then? Politicians use prejudice against people as a way to split the working class. They know that if we spend all our time fighting over crumbs we'll never try to take whole cake (or even the bakery!). They say that we should 'look after our own first' when they're the ones who have been fucking everyone over all along. Lets not keep falling for the same old lines.

## THE AFHGAN HUNGER STRIKE AND IMMIGRATION INTO IRELAND

The Afghan hunger strike brought into sharp focus the new Ireland into which our country has been transforming over the last 10 years. Our booming economy and relatively high wage levels have drawn many thousands of immigrants into the country in search of a better life here. Much as the Irish once looked to America for the promise of a happier future, so many people from less well-off countries now look to Ireland.

Many immigrants come to Ireland in better circumstances though, with a job offer in their pocket and expectations of a better life. The oft-repeated accusation is that they are "taking our jobs". Although it seems logical, this idea is one of the most damaging of all. It stems from a false idea of scarcity that is encouraged by business owners, managers and the media as a whole.

The fact is we are a very rich country, and have more than enough wealth to go around - if it were distributed equally that is! There would be more than enough for us all to maintain a quite comfortable lifestyle. Most difficulties in our society stem from the fact that a small ruling class take most of this wealth for themselves. They spread the idea among the working class that there is not enough to go around and that other workers are a threat to our own income

This is nonsense of course, what we need to do is to stand together with our fellow workers, whether they are immigrants or not and ensure that we are all paid properly for the work that we do. In the last year we have seen many news stories which revealed the widespread exploitation of immigrant workers in companies like Irish Ferries, Tesco and

many others, especially in the construction industry. The tireless struggle of the workers involved to publicise these incidents and fight back against employers through unions or through the courts has made it impossible for the media to ignore them.

It was only when these situation were raised by workers in their trade unions that anything was done to improve things. Exploitation of any worker, including immigrants is a threat to everyone's income - if the company can pay someone less than you for the same work, why should they take you on? This is exactly why we must work together in unions with our fellow immigrant workers to ensure that none of us are exploited and we are all treated with the respect we deserve.