



## JCWI Publications

### IRP Discussion Pamphlet Series

#### **Tough as old boots? Asylum, immigration and the paradox of New Labour policy**

**by Don Flynn**

JCWI has launched the first of a series of pamphlets intended to broaden the forum for discussion and debate about immigration, asylum and nationality policy.

'Tough as old boots'? asylum, immigration, and the paradox of New Labour policy is the first comprehensive study of immigration and asylum policy as it has developed under the New Labour government. Addressing the apparent paradox of policies which have undermined the rights of refugees and asylum seekers whilst at the same time extending the scope for economic migration, Tough as old boots? argues that the underlying and unifying theme is a new utilitarianism, which seeks to impose 'British interests' on the management of all forms of global migration.

The study tracks the emergence of the new utilitarian approach through the earliest measures of the New Labour government (the abolition of the 'primary purpose rule') its two white papers, and legislative and policy innovations since 1997. It shows that these policies contain a genuinely radical strand, in their insistence that immigration is an essential component in the modernisation of Britain. But against this innovation, the pamphlet argues that the ideological structure of the utilitarianism emphatically denies the validity of 'human rights' considerations to the people involved in migration.

Tough as old boots? concludes by arguing that the new utilitarian approach, in asserting the importance of migration to the key government task of modernisation whilst simultaneously denying effective rights to forced and economic migrants, is bound to prove an unstable platform for the elaboration of a progressive policy of managed migration. It urges New Labour policy makers to acknowledge the fact that a wider range of interests exist in the field of migration than just those of British business, and to re-direct its efforts towards more comprehensive reform, with migrants and sending countries being admitted into full partnership in determining this process of change.